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Opinion

■ Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Saudi Arabia and UAE: The GCC crown jewels

WHEN wise and prudent leaders view fraternal cooperation between nations as a source of strength, it grants them more freedom to fully exercise their domestic, regional and international roles.

When a wise ruler, and a dynamic and young generation, are at the helm, it means the nation is in good hands.

Since Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz assumed the throne, and Prince Mohammed bin Salman was chosen as Crown Prince, new blood has been injected into Saudi state institutions, and its international and regional influence has grown, thus, giving the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) greater strength.

On the other hand, since Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed assumed the presidency of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), its economic and international power has increased with the support of the members of the Supreme Council of Rulers of the UAE. This is why the UAE is now an important international player with a prestigious standing among nations.

Consequently, the international and regional presence of the GCC has intensified. There is no doubt that Saudi Arabia and the UAE are the two fundamental pillars of the GCC, whose resilience against division or disintegration has been proven through various events.

The events that have transpired since the founding of the GCC in 1981 have demonstrated its strength and stability,

such as the Iran-Iraq War when the GCC was in its early years, Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, the subsequent defense of Kuwait, efforts to mobilize the world for its liberation, and the so-called 'Arab Spring'. Iran tried to exploit these events to destabilize regional security through its intervention in Bahrain, but the GCC military force (the Peninsula Shield Force) was vigilant and ready.

These events cannot be viewed as mere political casual moments, as they are rather the foundational steps for the future and a source of strength for the GCC, which the people of the Gulf see as a unifying force in a comprehensive process. This process is embodied in the GCC Charter, which reflects the visions of these peoples and is further strengthened by agreements between member states.

These facts reassure the people of the Gulf that the process is proceeding as planned. Regardless of differences in viewpoints, it remains within the same family. This family rests on solid foundations -- shared culture, common language, shared interests, family ties and common destiny.

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Ties reach new heights

Japan-Kuwait collab advances in AI, cybersecurity, materials

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Kenichiro Mukai held a press conference at his residence to provide an overview of 2025, while highlighting the Japanese aid provided to Gaza.

Mukai stated that 2025 was a year of active Japan-Kuwait diplomacy, during which bilateral relations achieved remarkable progress.

He cited the official visit of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to Japan in May, indicating the visit was highly productive, featuring an audience with His Majesty the Emperor, a cordial meeting with His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince, talks with Prime Minister Ishiba, and a visit to the Osaka Expo.

He affirmed that during the visit, both countries agreed to elevate their relationship to a "comprehensive strategic partnership", and signed five agreements on various fields, such as water and electricity.

He also talked about the Japan-GCC Foreign Ministers Meeting, which was held in Kuwait, and the visit of Foreign Minister Iwaya to Kuwait in September 2025. During the visit, Iwaya made courtesy calls on His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and held a bilateral meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya.

He stated that substantive discussions were held on advancing bilateral



Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Kenichiro Mukai during a press conference at his residence.

relations based on the "comprehensive strategic partnership."

He said other official visits include that of Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike, who was accompanied by startup companies, stressing that 2025 witnessed frequent exchanges of high-level officials throughout the year, strengthening ties between Japan and Kuwait at various levels.

He cited the awarding of His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah with the Japanese decoration, the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun, in November 2025.

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Newswatch

MUSCAT: The Royal Saudi Naval Forces and the Royal Navy of Oman have concluded their joint bilateral naval exercise, "Winds of Peace 2026," held at Al Batinah maritime zone in Oman since last Sunday.

The drills, which were supported by the Royal Army of Oman and its Air Force, included several training programs, practical applications, and the exchange of experiences between the crews of participating ships, the Omani army said in a press release.

The drills were overseen by high-ranking officials, including Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman Rear Admiral **Saif Al-Rahbi**, and Chief of Staff of the Saudi Navy Forces, Lt. Gen.

Mohammad Al-Ghareeb. (KUNA)

GAZA: Health authorities in the Gaza Strip announced on Saturday that the number of Palestinian fatalities since the early hours of the morning has risen to 28, with dozens of others suffering serious injuries following a series of intense airstrikes carried out by Israeli occupation warplanes.

Eyewitnesses told KUNA that Israeli aircraft launched heavy strikes at dawn on the Sheikh Radwan police center north of Gaza City, resulting in the deaths of 13 Palestinians, including members of the civil police force, among them women officers. (KUNA)



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Amir to attend flag-raising ceremony at Bayan Palace

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will graciously patronize and attend the flag-raising ceremony at Bayan Palace at 10:00 am on Sunday.

Kuwait siren test moved to noon following flag-raising ceremony

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: The Ministry of Interior announced a test run of the siren system at 12:00 pm on Sunday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The test was originally scheduled for 10:00 am on the same day.

The ministry explained that the postponement was due to the flag-raising ceremony, and the siren test will take place immediately afterward. It confirmed that the 10:00 am time slot remains reserved for the test run.

Speeding offenders risk jail time, KD 1,000 fine

3 nabbed in 24 hours for reckless driving

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: The General Traffic Department (GTD) continued to intensify its efforts to improve road safety and reduce traffic accident casualties.

According to security sources, the department intends to summon drivers repeatedly caught speeding, whose action endangers themselves and others, in order to initiate legal proceedings.

The penalties for such a violation are heavy. If settled, the fine is KD150. If the

case is referred to the court, offenders face imprisonment for one to three years, fines ranging from KD 600 to KD 1,000 or both penalties, while the vehicle will be impounded for two months.

Sources warned that the department strictly deals with violations recorded by speed cameras, asserting that these measures are crucial for protecting the lives and reducing traffic accidents.

In a demonstration of this commitment, the department apprehended three individuals for reckless and negligent driving within a 24-hour period. They were referred to the Traffic Detention Center.

The department stressed that these detentions are part of its ongoing campaign to guarantee traffic safety and full compliance with road laws.

Lung cancer screening targets high-risk patients

Minister highlights thoracic surgery progress in Kuwait

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi stated that advancing the field of thoracic medicine and surgery is a priority in reinforcing the health security system.

In his speech at the opening of the Kuwaiti Thoracic Surgery Association Conference on Saturday, Al-Awadhi stressed the need to invest in diagnostic, therapeutic and research capacities in this field, as well as to guarantee the readiness to respond to health emergencies and overcome challenges.

He explained that the conference is an advanced scientific forum that reflects the rapid progress achieved in this discipline and the increasing attention it receives at both the local and regional levels, with the participation of a distinguished group of international experts.

He pointed that the COVID-19 pandemic proved the importance of the respiratory system and its related medical and surgical specializations,

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Swiss President Parmelin in Kuwait for official talks

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31, (KUNA): Swiss Federal President Guy Parmelin is due to arrive in Kuwait on Sunday, accompanied by an official delegation, on an official visit to the country.

During the visit, President Parmelin will hold official talks with His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, on ways to strengthen bilateral relations.

A visit which coincides with the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Switzerland.

In a statement, the Swiss government said that President Parmelin will meet during the visit with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

According to the statement, the talks will focus on bilateral relations and ways to enhance economic cooperation, in addition to international cooperation.

The statement also added that the Swiss president intends to meet representatives of Swiss companies operating in Kuwait to discuss prospects for cooperation and investment.

The visit to Kuwait marks President Parmelin's first visit to an Arab country since assuming the presidency of the Swiss Confederation at the beginning of this year.

President Parmelin is scheduled thereafter to head to the United Arab Emirates to participate in the World Government Summit in Dubai.



Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi in a group photo during the opening of the Kuwaiti Thoracic Surgery Association Conference on Saturday.



8 Shaikha Al-Bahar: NBK's 2025 results reinforce its sustainable growth trajectory

10 ABK supports customers on their home-building journey with exclusive & exceptional discounts from ABYAT



11 Burgan Bank shows financial strength and operational resilience in 2025

'Exclusive' ground handling assigned to Kuwait Airways

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: The Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) said Kuwait Airways has been designated as the exclusive ground handling service provider for all airlines operating at Kuwait International Airport.

PACA Chairman Sheikh Humoud Al-Mubarak told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Saturday that this decision is aimed at supporting the national carrier in providing services to local, Arab and international airlines.

He affirmed this is a crucial step towards improving passenger services, enhancing operational efficiency, and developing and training national personnel in the air transport sector.

He revealed that the PACA's vision for the next 20 years is built on four pillars as follows:

■ Developing and modernizing the infrastructure at Kuwait International Airport to boost operational efficiency and enhance passenger services.

■ Training and developing national personnel in the fields

Continued on Page 5

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Prayer Timings			
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Sunrise ..	06:38	Maghrib ..	17:24
Zohr	12:01	Isha	18:44

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Warm with light variable wind, with speeds of 06-22 km/h with a chance for fog forming at night and some scattered clouds will appear.

By Night: Rather cold to cold

Weather

and partly cloudy with light variable wind, with speeds of 06-22 km/h with a chance for fog forming over some areas.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait Airport	22	10
Abdaly	21	09

Bubyan	15	07
Jahra	23	11
Failaka Island	18	11
Salmiyah	17	15
Ahmadi	25	10
Jal Aliyah	21	10
Nuwaisib	21	10
Salmiyah	20	08

Kuwait, NATO to up cooperation on women, peace, security

EU praises Kuwait for empowering women and protecting children's rights

BRUSSELS, Jan 31, (KUNA): Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah affirmed that the promotion and protection of human rights constitute a shared national responsibility among various state institutions.

This came in a speech delivered while chairing Kuwait's delegation at the sixth session of the informal Kuwait-European Union Human Rights Dialogue, held in the Belgian capital Brussels.

Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher said the convening of this session coincides with the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and the EU, reflecting the strength of the partnership and the importance of maintaining regular institutional dialogue channels.

She affirmed that the composition of Kuwait's delegation, which included representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Interior, Information and Health, as well as the Public Prosecution and the Public Authority for Manpower, reflects Kuwait's participatory national approach to human rights issues.

Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher highlighted recent legislative and human rights developments in Kuwait, including a comprehensive review of approximately 983 national laws to ensure the enjoyment

of rights by all in accordance with the law.

During the dialogue, the Kuwaiti delegation reviewed progress achieved in combating human trafficking, regulating the labor market and protecting contractual workers, in addition to ongoing efforts to support the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities and to enhance their full inclusion in public policies.

In turn, the EU side praised the tangible steps taken by Kuwait in the areas of women's and children's rights, particularly in empowering women economically and strengthening their role in the labor market and leadership positions, considering these efforts a model of positive development in the region. Participants concluded the session by stressing the importance of continuing institutional cooperation and substantive exchange between the two sides, and the need to consolidate dialogue channels to enhance mutual understanding and develop human rights-related policies and practices based on partnership and mutual respect, in a manner that serves shared interests.

Meanwhile, Sheikhha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah discussed with NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda Irene Fellin ways to further develop institutional partnerships.

In a statement to KUNA, Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher said the meeting took place on the sidelines of her chairing Kuwait's delegation participating in the sixth session of the Kuwait-EU Human Rights Dialogue, within the framework of strengthening channels of communication and cooperation with NATO in areas related to human rights and security.

She noted that the two sides discussed several issues related to enhancing women's participation in peacebuilding and mediation processes, as well as exchanging expertise on supporting relevant national and regional networks.

They also emphasized the importance of building effective bridges between official institutions, civil society and experts in a manner that supports sustainability and achieves tangible impact on the ground. Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to continuing the development of its national programs related to the Women, Peace and Security agenda and to enhancing international cooperation through an integrated institutional approach that aligns with the country's priorities and development vision.

She stressed the importance of expanding joint action with international partners on cross-cutting issues, noting that strengthening partnerships would help open broader horizons for cooperation.



KUNA photo
Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah discusses enhancing coordination with EU on human rights.

Kuwait expedites efforts to maintain 'health care'

MoH, WHO, experts hold series of workshops

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: The Antimicrobial Resistance Unit at Kuwait Center for Disease Prevention and Control, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and with the participation of leading international experts, organized a series of workshops aimed at supporting the national surveillance system and promoting the best healthcare practices.

Under the patronage of Health Minister Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, these workshops are in line with national efforts to combat antimicrobial resistance and maintain health security.

Dr. Hussein Al-Shammari supervised the workshops, which covered a plethora of technical and other topics, such as monitoring antimicrobial consumption among pharmacists using the WHO methodology.

This contributes to improving the quality of data collection and analysis, and supports evidence-based decision-making in managing pharmaceutical consumption.

The workshop series included a course to guarantee the implementation of rational antibiotic use programs in healthcare institutions and promote adherence to evidence-based practices, thereby, reducing resistance rates and improving the quality of healthcare.

On community outreach, a workshop was held to activate the role of



The Antimicrobial Resistance Unit at Kuwait Center for Disease Prevention and Control, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and with the participation of leading international experts, organized a series of workshops.

health media in raising awareness on the dangers of antimicrobial resistance and to formulate a national media tactic to support control efforts, convey credible health messages, and expand access to various segments of society.

A technical workshop on the WHONET program is aimed at improving laboratory surveillance of antimicrobial resistance and supporting the inclusion of private medical laboratories in the GLASS-AMR system of WHO. This workshop was conducted in collaboration with the new Mowasat Hospital.

The Center affirmed that the organization of these workshops is in accordance with the National Plan to Combat Antimicrobial Resistance with the aim of strengthening the national health surveillance and security system.

Ophthalmology conference
Head of the Ophthalmology De-

partments Council at the Ministry of Health Dr Ahmed Al-Foudari said the 25th Kuwait Ophthalmology Conference will be held on Feb 6-7, 2026, indicating this is one of the most prominent specialized scientific conferences in the field of ophthalmology in Kuwait and the region.

Al-Foudari disclosed that ophthalmologists, ophthalmic surgeons and specialists from Kuwait and abroad will participate in the conference, which is considered an advanced scientific platform for exchanging expertise and discussing the latest developments in the diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases.

He said the program of the conference includes lectures, panel discussions, scientific research presentations, training workshops and sessions on clinical cases. He added this will greatly contribute to developing the skills of doctors, expanding professional knowledge,

and supporting scientific research in various subspecialties of ophthalmology.

He indicated that the workshops in the conference will focus on the most advanced technologies in cataract surgery, retinal diseases, glaucoma, pediatric ophthalmology, diagnostic imaging and treatment updates, and practical sessions led by experts, which will impact the quality of services provided to patients.

He emphasized that the conference attracts prominent ophthalmologists and experts from Kuwait, the region, and other countries, within an intensive scientific program.

He added that details of the speakers will be announced in the detailed conference program, highlighting the commitment of the ministry to continue supporting such specialized scientific events that contribute to developing the healthcare system and ophthalmology services.

'Milestone in fraternal relations'

Kuwait, UAE ties marked by brotherhood, cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya and UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan affirmed strong and distinctive Kuwait-UAE ties, representing exceptional cooperation and mutual affection, reflected in strategic partnerships across all sectors.

Speaking at the opening of the sixth session of the Kuwait-UAE Joint Higher Committee on Thursday, Al-Yahya welcomed the meeting as a milestone in the historic fraternal relations between the two countries.

He noted the committee's key role in enhancing coordination and advancing bilateral ties in line with regional and international developments.

He said the guidance of the two countries' leaderships provides a clear strategic framework for deeper cooperation and addressing shared challenges.

Al-Yahya also praised UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan's initiative to launch a national campaign celebrating bilateral relations under the slogan "UAE and Kuwait: Brothers Forever," coinciding with the committee's meetings, as

a reflection of deep-rooted bonds and mutual esteem between the two peoples and leaderships.

For his part, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed said the relationship is founded on deep historical and human ties laid by the late Sheikh



Abdullah Al-Yahya

Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and the late Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and continues to grow under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed and His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He highlighted the UAE President's designation of a celebratory week

for bilateral ties as a new milestone honoring decades of shared values, aligned visions and a common destiny.

He reaffirmed the UAE's view of Kuwait as a strategic partner, citing record trade in 2024 exceeding USD 13.5 billion, with the UAE as Kuwait's top Gulf and Arab trading partner and second globally, and the leading destination for Kuwait's non-oil exports.

Other Voices

What did Schopenhauer say?

By Ahmad alsarraaf

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) was a German philosopher, best known for his book, "The World as Will and Representation".

He was among the first thinkers in the Western philosophical tradition to adopt key ideas from Indian philosophy, such as asceticism and the concept of selflessness.

After his death, Schopenhauer left a deep and lasting influence on many fields, including philosophy, literature and science. His writings shaped aesthetics, ethics and psychology, and influenced numerous thinkers, artists and ordinary people, myself included.

Schopenhauer was born to wealthy German parents from the aristocracy. Although both were Protestants, they were not particularly religious, they were republicans, admirers of English culture, and supporters of the French Revolution.

Schopenhauer is known for many powerful and profound sayings that I have always admired, much like those of the French philosopher Voltaire.

His sayings have influenced, perhaps unintentionally, Lebanese musician Ziad Rahbani and others.

One of these sayings states: "A man can be himself only when he is alone. If he does not love solitude, he will not love freedom, for a man is truly free only when he is alone." This is true. As long as we live with others, whether by choice or by necessity, we accept the loss of a significant portion of our freedom. Jean-Paul Sartre famously said, "Hell is other people."

Schopenhauer also said, "It is often through loss that we learn the value of things." This is equally true. We do not fully appreciate health, good companionship, family, homeland, security, and other blessings until we lose them.

He also stated, in meaning, that the more limited a person's understanding and the narrower their horizons, the more convinced they become that the universe ends where their own vision stops.

He further stated: "It is difficult to find happiness within oneself, but it is impossible to find it anywhere else. Every miserable fool who has nothing to be



alsarraaf

proud of takes pride in his nation as a last refuge. He is always ready to defend its faults and follies with all his strength, thereby, compensating for his own sense of inferiority." This aligns with his other saying that complex ideas should be expressed in simple words.

Among Schopenhauer's deep reflections is his view on reading: "When we read, another person thinks for us, we merely repeat their mental process. In learning to write, the student traces with his pen what the teacher has drawn in pencil, and so it is with reading. Most of the thinking has already been done. That is why we feel relaxed when we pick up a book after being preoccupied with our own thoughts. While reading, the mind becomes merely a stage for the thoughts of others."

Therefore, if a person spends most of their day reading and devotes their leisure time to hobbies that require no thinking, they gradually lose the ability to think. It is like someone who always relies on transportation and eventually forgets how to walk. This is the condition of many educated people who have read so much that they have, paradoxically, become ignorant.

Schopenhauer believed strongly in what he called the "art of not reading," meaning the ability to ignore whatever captures public attention at any given time.

When political or religious writings, novels or poems create a sensation, one should remember that those who write for the naive will always find a large audience. The fundamental condition for reading good books is to avoid reading bad ones.

What confirms this is that good books often remain unread, while bad ones are widely consumed. This is human nature, and it is unlikely to change.

Schopenhauer also said, "Most people sacrifice three-quarters of themselves in order to be like everyone else." This is true, as we are constantly influenced by others. If we examine our food, clothing, the films we choose to watch, and the cities we wish to visit, we will find that we often make these choices simply because others have done so before us, and so on.

* * *

Out of every hundred people, there is scarcely one worth arguing with. As for the rest, we let them say whatever they wish, because people have the right to rant.

□ □ □

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Kuwait University photo
Kuwait University, Google officials discuss ways to enhance cooperation in AI and digital fields.

KU, Google explore ways to boost ties in AI, digital fields

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Kuwait University recently held a meeting with a senior delegation from Google to explore avenues for cooperation in the fields of artificial intelligence and digital platforms in higher education. President of the University Dr. Dina Musaed Al-Mailem presided over the meeting, which was held at Sabah Al-Salem University City. This is in line with the commitment of the University to keep pace with rapid developments in the higher education sector, and to activate its academic and research roles in the digital era.

The University delegation consisted of acting Secretary General Dr. Noura Al-Suwaih, Vice President for Academic Support Services Dr. Abdullah Al-Mutawa, Vice President for Planning Dr. Osama Al-Omar, Vice President for Research Dr. Abdullah Sultan, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Huda Mahmoud, Assistant Vice President for Information Technology Dr. Mohammad Al-Marzouq and acting Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs for the Faculty and Cultural Relations Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Sulali.

The Google delegation was led by Google's Director of Education for Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific Colin Marson and General Manager of Google Cloud Kuwait Shaima Al-Tarkait, along with a number of representatives from Google Cloud Kuwait.

Discussions focused on the accelerating transformation of higher education in the digital age, and the expanding role of artificial intelligence technologies and digital platforms in advancing the educational process, enhancing scientific research, and improving institutional performance. This contributes to raising the quality of academic outputs and delivering an advanced educational experience in line with global best practices.

FM, US Mideast Advisor mull regional scenario

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received a phone call from US President's Advisor for African and Middle East Affairs Massad Boulos on Friday.

During the phone conversation, both sides discussed historical and firm bilateral relations between Kuwait and the US and the existing close strategic partnership between both friendly countries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a press release. They also addressed the latest regional and international developments and a host of issues of mutual interest.

'Count study period as actual time of service'

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: The Court of Appeals affirmed that the period a student spent studying at a military college must be included and calculated as part of his actual service period, together with all resulting effects, particularly the issuance of an amended service certificate reflecting this inclusion.

The court ordered the defendant – the director general of the Public Institution for Social Security, in his official capacity – to shoulder the litigation costs and pay KD200 as actual legal fees.

The plaintiff was represented by Attorney Houra Al-Habib, who requested that her client's four years of study be counted as part of his actual service period. Explaining its judgment, the court stated that Paragraph Three of Article Four of Decree-Law No. 69/1980 concerning military pension and retirement benefits states that periods of study successfully completed at military colleges, institutes and schools of the Army, Police and National Guard are included when calculating service periods.



Al-Habib

Davos transforms into a market for alliances

“MOST attendees at Davos spent their time analyzing the closing statements, policy pronouncements, and outcomes of the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum,” Social Researcher Dr. **Randa Diab Bahman** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“However, as a social researcher, I focused on a less prominent aspect of the discussions, yet one that is far more profound and impactful -- social behaviors and leadership skills in their lived reality. These skills are rarely highlighted when discussing strategies or economic reform, often being treated as secondary elements compared to figures, policy tools and growth projections.

“The Davos Forum demonstrated that these dynamics are not marginal, as they constitute the core of social science, influencing decisions that are subsequently embodied in policies and legislation. The way leaders interacted with one another was striking, revealing trust as an invisible infrastructure connecting vast swathes of the global system.

“Commitment is no longer based solely on institutional formalities, as it is rather deeply rooted in long-standing personal and professional relationships that have grown and matured over time. In an era of accelerating geopolitical shifts and deepening economic uncertainty, leaders no longer rely solely on procedures and regulations, but on the continuity of organic relationships that have proven their resilience.

“These variables, which economists tend to overlook, are precisely what quietly determine which alliances endure and which reforms falter. It was clear that the economics of traditional life were changing before our very eyes. Moreover, ambition emerged as a dominant, underlying force, not only as slogans or short-term goals, but as a genuine commitment to progress, empowerment and accountability.

“Leadership discourse has repeatedly emphasized that sustainable reform requires the courage to dismantle outdated systems, redistribute power, and take responsibility for long-term outcomes rather than being content with quick wins and immediate appearances. This ambition cannot be reduced to spreadsheets, as it forms the framework upon which everything that follows is built.

“It has become clear that simply possessing ambition is no longer enough to be present on the global stage, it requires a genuine belief in human capabilities and a real investment in empowering them. The most exciting moment came when the Saudi Minister of Communications and Information Technology addressed the issue of artificial intelligence sovereignty: where it originates, who manages it, and where it is headed.

“The Minister pointed out that a growing number of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are collaborating with global technology giants, opening up a serious discussion about digital sovereignty and data sovereignty.

“The Minister stressed that the world quietly moved from the technology race to the age of intelligence, where resources are no longer limited to oil, minerals and capital, but now include data, talent and the ability to manage innovation environments.

“Some of the projects that are underway are the first of their kind globally. This progress and ambition are showcased at every international forum, with Saudi Arabia’s pavilion in Davos embodying the pillars of innovation upon which its future vision is based. The final lesson is that expansion and growth do not happen in isolation. Progress in today’s world requires cooperation and building networks of allies.

“Nonetheless, not everyone at Davos was optimistic. In one of the most candid moments, the CEO of one of the world’s largest banks publicly criticized the global elite. He said that if the goal of the World Economic Forum meetings was to improve the world, then this mission failed to achieve its purpose. This was a stark reminder that elite consensus does not automatically translate into

tangible impact on the ground.

“Thus, through these dialogues and diverse perspectives, Davos transforms into a marketplace for alliances rather than a platform for speeches. Beyond the superficial trappings, Davos emerges as a true reflection of the deepest human instincts and behaviors, which are ultimately the true driving force of the world. Perhaps, this is the true power of the World Economic Forum in Davos.”

Also :

“‘And of His signs is that He created for you mates from among yourselves that you may find tranquility in them, and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought.’ (Surah Ar-Rum, Verse 21) Nagging within a marital relationship refers to persistent complaining, grumbling, bickering and the continual expression of dissatisfaction toward one’s spouse.” Dr. **Khalid Al-Janfawi** wrote in **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“This behavior also encompasses the recurring, irritating reproaches exchanged between spouses over daily family matters—issues that a psychologically mature individual will ordinarily handle with calmness and rational judgment.

“Naturally, the cumulative effect of excessive nagging is that the hearts of both spouses become saturated with anger, resentment and hostility toward one another, ultimately eroding and destroying the marital bond.

“Among the primary causes of marital discord include lack of mutual understanding stemming from psychological immaturity, interference from extended family members and negative peer influences, stark disparities in intellectual capacity, dissatisfaction on the part of one or both spouses, weak emotional intelligence, and failure to fulfill marital and familial responsibilities.

“Other contributing factors include excessive affluence, diminished mutual respect, absence of genuine affection between spouses, flawed understanding of marriage and its ethical obligations, poor communication skills, psychological manipulation, and the inability of both partners to manage a realistic family budget that reflects their actual financial circumstances and living conditions.

“Moreover, the inability to overlook minor verbal missteps or behavioral lapses exacerbates marital tensions. Spending excessive time in social gatherings and marketplaces while neglecting family duties—or delegating them entirely to domestic workers—constitutes another source of conflict.

“Certain neighbors may also play a disruptive role by encouraging unhealthy comparisons of living standards, fostering an illusion of luxury and superficial prosperity at the expense of addressing genuine familial needs.

“Persistent bickering carries grave consequences, foremost among them psychological estrangement between spouses, which may escalate into deep-seated animosity and resentment. This chronic negativity inevitably spills over into the psychological well-being of children.

“Over time, such conditions may deteriorate into verbal and physical abuse, tarnishing the family’s reputation among relatives and acquaintances and prompting sensible people to distance themselves socially from the couple. In extreme cases, some family members may turn to harmful substances—such as alcohol or drugs—as a means of coping with the intense psychological pressures of domestic life.

“This bleak atmosphere can also push some children to flee the home and become involved in illicit romantic relationships. It could result in loss of blessings due to ingratitude toward God. A child raised in an environment dominated by harsh arguments and ongoing psychological conflict between parents is likely to grow up harboring resentment toward them and may ultimately develop deep-seated hostility later in life.”

— Compiled by **Saeed Mahmoud Saleh**



Dr. Randa Diab-Bahman



Dr Al-Janfawi

Six months jail for smuggling contraband in Central Prison

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: The Misdemeanor Court, presided over by Judge Nasser Al-Otaibi, imposed six months imprisonment with hard labor on the defendants in two separate cases.

The first conviction involved two defendants charged with attempted theft and vandalism of a campsite in Subiya. The court sentenced one defendant, nicknamed ‘Jojo Al-Zalm’, to six months in prison, while deferring the sentencing for the second individual.

In the second case, the court found the defendant, known as ‘The Fraudulent Prisoner’, guilty of violating correctional institution regulations by smuggling contraband into the Central Prison. He was sentenced to six months in prison with hard labor.

□ □ □

3 years jail in libel suit: The Misdemeanor Court sentenced Abdullah

Focus on security, traffic in national holidays

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah had a meeting with Director of Farwaniya Security Directorate Brigadier General Mohammad Eid Al-Ghassab, Director of Farwaniya Traffic Department Colonel Raed Al-Sulaiman, acting Assistant Director of Farwaniya Investigations Lieutenant Colonel Khalifa Al-Suwailim, Director of the Operations and Patrols Department in the governorate Lieutenant Colonel Sultan Ammash Al-Mutairi, and Head of the Farwaniya Emergency Police Section Colonel Fahad Nayef Al-Mutairi.

During the meeting, security and traffic preparations for the national holidays were discussed, along with mechanisms for organizing traffic flow and strengthening security measures to ensure the safety of citizens and expatriates, and to maintain the civilized image of the country during this cherished national occasion.

At the end of the meeting, the security officials expressed their gratitude to the Governor for his support, constant communication, and continuous cooperation with security agencies, which contributed to strengthening the security system and stability in the governorate.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah meets senior security officials in Farwaniya Governorate.

Submit academic certs, Mol employees asked

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: The Ministry of Interior has instructed its departments to provide the Financial and Administrative Services and Maintenance Department with their employees’ academic certificates and transcripts of records, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The daily obtained a copy of the circular, indicating that employees with university degrees must submit their degree certificate and transcript. The same applies to graduates of applied education programs.

Employees who obtained their university degree outside Kuwait are required to submit their degree certificate, transcript and a letter of recommendation. High school graduates should submit their high school diploma.

Court overrules 10 years jail, fine in drugs lawsuit

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Ahmed Al-Sadiy, issued a landmark ruling overturning an in absentia conviction and acquitted a defendant who was sentenced to 10 years in prison with hard labor and fined KD10,000.

The defendant was cleared of all charges -- possession, trafficking and use of psychotropic substances.

The acquittal was based on the comprehensive and forceful argument presented by Attorney Abdullah Shujaa Al-Otaibi, lawyer of the defendant.

Al-Otaibi argued that the original judgment was void, as it was issued without investigation, interrogation or confronting the defendant with the evidence – a violation of the constitutional right to defense. He emphasized that the case file had no record of investigative procedures involving his client.

The defense challenged the admissibility of the evidence presented by the Public Prosecution, stressing that the charges were based solely on the testimony of a co-defendant.

Citing Court of Cassation jurisprudence, Al-Otaibi stressed that a defendant’s confession is binding only on the confessor and cannot serve as the sole basis for convicting another individual.

He also pointed out the absence of the legal elements required to establish drug trafficking. He stressed that the defendant was never found in possession of narcotics, related tools or proceeds. He added neither the defendant nor his residence was searched, and the prosecution failed to prove drug possession or intent to traffic.

The drug use charge was also dismissed, as the defendant was not caught in the act of using narcotics, no blood or urine tests were conducted, and the prosecution did not present any explicit confession.

The defense exposed serious procedural and investigative flaws, including contradictions in the arresting officer’s statements regarding the timing of the received information.

Al-Otaibi criticized the failure to employ technical investigative measures – such as surveillance footage or analysis of communication records – to substantiate the alleged drug delivery. He challenged the validity of the arrest report, which was issued four days after the execution of the warrant, in violation of the prosecution’s own directives. He said these procedural irregularities undermined the integrity of the entire case.

After examining the evidence and considering the defense arguments, the court found the arguments compelling. It then overturned the previous ruling and acquitted the defendant, reaffirming the principle that doubt must be resolved in favor of the accused and that criminal convictions must rest on conclusive and unequivocal evidence.

CID shuts illegal barber shops & stores in Jleeb

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: The General Department of Criminal Investigation, through the Farwaniya Governorate Investigation Department, conducted a security campaign in the Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh area recently as part of ongoing efforts to maintain security and public order, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The campaign resulted in the arrest of several violators and wanted individuals. Five suspects involved in various cases and violations were apprehended, along with the closure of an unlicensed vegetable warehouse and a barbershop operating without the required permits. In addition, a street vendor found in violation was arrested and legal action was taken against him.

Authorities also arrested one individual wanted on an arrest warrant for absence, as well as three others wanted in connection with different cases. Two individuals were deported following the completion of legal procedures. Furthermore, Kuwait Municipality issued two violations, and electricity was disconnected from two houses found to be in breach of regulations.

The Ministry of Interior reaffirmed its commitment to continuing security campaigns across various regions of the country to monitor and apprehend violators and wanted persons, and to take all necessary legal measures to enhance public safety and security.

No extradition, declares court

Case revived 40 years on

By **Jaber Al-Humoud**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Dr. Khaled Al-Amira, rejected a request to extradite and prosecute an individual internationally wanted by French authorities in connection with the 1982 bombing of an Israeli restaurant, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The ruling is based on arguments presented by the defendant’s lawyer, Attorney Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan, who stressed that his client enjoys legally protected rights that must be upheld, and that the extradition request concerns the fulfillment of legal requirements for extradition rather than an assessment of the validity of the accusations.

Al-Qattan cited Article Five, Paragraph 10 of International Cooperation Law No. 79/2025, which prohibits the extradition of a wanted person if there is a risk of torture or inhuman treatment, cruel or disproportionate punishment, or if guarantees of a fair trial are not ensured.

He emphasized that the law cannot be applied retroactively to incidents that occurred more than four decades ago, as per the principles of international legal doctrine, French legislation, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Geneva Conventions.

The Public Prosecution had earlier requested the extradition of the accused to France on charges related to alleged involvement in murders, attempted murders, and logistical and reconnaissance activities preceding operations intended to disrupt public order.

In its reasoning, the court affirmed that examining extradition requests does not amount to interference in the substance of the accusations, but is limited to verifying

the availability of legal conditions and safeguarding the rights of the defense.

The court noted that the passage of more than 40 years since the incident has led to the loss of crucial evidence and has hindered the effective exercise of the right to defense.

It asserted that the timing of the prosecution, along with the absence of evidence linking the accused to the alleged acts, indicates that the objective may be political in nature or

connected to past positions, in violation of the provisions of Decree-Law No. 79/2025 on international judicial cooperation.

It also clarified that the accused has been residing in Kuwait in a normal and stable manner since the 1990s, with no indication of evasion of justice, which further supported the decision to refuse extradition in order to preserve public order and ensure a fair trial.

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Ruling delayed in KFA issue: The Court of Cassation postponed until Feb 12 the issuance of its verdict on an appeal filed by the Public Prosecution against the acquittal of the former president, vice-president and secretary-general of the Kuwait Football Association.

The case was filed in view of statements made by the three officials following the Kuwait-Iraq football match, which the prosecution argued constituted offenses related to State security.

Earlier, the Court of Appeals upheld the acquittal ruling of a lower court, indicating that the elements of the alleged crime and criminal intent were not established.

The court concluded that the remarks of the defendants were made in reaction to events that occurred during an official sporting match.

The Appeals Court also pointed out that there was no evidence that the statements harmed State security or the international reputation of the country.

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Greywater reuse seen as vital to Kuwait water sustainability

Move cuts freshwater demand

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31, (KUNA): Considering the water resource challenges facing Kuwait, the use of greywater could contribute significantly to rationalizing freshwater consumption, particularly in ornamental agriculture, Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources (PAAFR) Eng. Salem Al-Hai said.

Greywater refers to wastewater generated from non-sewage sources, including sinks, showers and washing machines. It is less contaminated than sewage water and can be treated and reused safely for irrigation purposes.

In an interview with KUNA, Al-Hai said that using greywater for irrigation can help reduce production costs and support national directions toward environmental sustainability.

He explained that greywater reuse could ease pressure on desalinated water, which accounts for around 95 percent of Kuwait's freshwater sources, while also contributing to water conservation rates ranging between 20 and 35 percent, particularly in irrigation and service-related uses.

Al-Hai noted that greywater offers several environmental benefits, including reducing carbon emissions generated by desalination plants, which are considered high-carbon-footprint sectors, and limiting the discharge of wastewater into marine or desert environments, thereby improving environmental quality.

He added that greywater supports the sustainability of vegetation cover by providing a stable and continuous source of irrigation.

The PAAFR acting chief said that treated greywater supplies plants with natural nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus in low concentrations, which can partially reduce the need for fertilizers, though it does not replace a balanced fertilization program. This, he said, helps decrease reliance on chemical fertilizers.

He also highlighted that greywater improves irrigation efficiency when used with drip irrigation systems and supports environmental rehabilitation projects as well as the cultivation of local tree species adapted to desert conditions.

According to Al-Hai, several plant species can be irrigated with treated greywater, most notably shade trees such as sidr, ghaf, acacia, conocarpus and bougainvillea, as well as ornamental trees like oleander, tecoma and palm trees, grassy green areas and salt-tolerant desert plants.

He pointed out that greywater use contributes to enhancing water security and reducing risks associated with energy fluctuations or potential desalination plant shutdowns.

It also supports Kuwait's international environmental commitments and long-term sustainability plans related to resource efficiency and environmental protection, in line with the country's development vision "New Kuwait 2035."

Al-Hai stressed the importance of raising public awareness about the value of greywater, ensuring proper treatment quality and maintaining continuous monitoring of its use to achieve a more sustainable water future without compromising health or environmental standards.

He clarified that greywater use is safe when technical guidelines are strictly followed, recommending its application for irrigating ornamental plants, non-fruit-bearing trees, green belts and fodder crops.

He added that limited use is also possible for certain crops through subsurface drip irrigation systems, provided that the water does not come into contact with edible plant parts.

Al-Hai affirmed that there is no fundamental legal barrier to greywater use, noting that this approach aligns with existing environmental and health regulations that encourage rational use of natural resources and environmental protection.

He emphasized the need to establish a clear regulatory framework and adopt approved quality standards for treated greywater, including physical filtration, biological treatment and disinfection, while complying with health standards.

This also includes implementing systems for separating and treating greywater in buildings and farms, conducting regular water testing and launching pilot projects subject to monitoring and evaluation.

He concluded by stressing that the greywater sector requires enhanced public awareness, encouragement of environmentally friendly detergents and capacity-building for workers in the agricultural sector to ensure the safe and sustainable use of this valuable resource.



KUNA photo
Representatives of governments, international organizations, economic and environmental experts, and representatives of the private sector participating in the forum's activities.

Kuwait underlines Belt and Road Initiative as key co-op framework

BEIJING, Jan 31, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait stressed the significance of the Belt and Road Initiative as a strategic framework for promoting economic and developmental cooperation and backing transition towards a green economy.

This came during the participation of the Kuwaiti Embassy in Beijing in the Fourth Economic and Environmental Cooperation Forum within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, held in Beijing amid large participation from Arab and Middle Eastern representatives of governments and international organizations, economists and environmentalists.

The Kuwaiti embassy's counselor Abdulaziz Al-Dakheel addressed the event by highlighting Kuwait's stance on the Belt and Road Initiative, the embassy said in a press release.

Al-Dakheel pointed out that the State of Kuwait was the first Middle Eastern country to sign the documents of accession to the initiative in 2014, only out of its conviction of the significance of long-term international partnerships and its commitment to expanding aspects of cooperation with China, especially in infrastructure, clean energy and sustainable industrial development, in line with the New Kuwait 2035 vision.

7 more outlets headed for tendering phase

Mutlaa Coop opens 4 new branches

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Hamad Al-Dhafeeri, the newly appointed manager of Mutlaa Cooperative Society, announced on Thursday the opening of four new branches in the area.

In a press statement, Al-Dhafeeri confirmed that the branches have begun serving the public and providing consumer services in accordance with the directives of Minister of Social, Women and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, and under the supervision of Undersecretary Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi.

He affirmed that the new branches are part of the administrative strategy of the cooperative to expand services in the area. "This expansion is designed to keep pace with population growth, meet residents' needs, and enhance service efficiency and accessibility," he asserted.

He added that the cooperative fulfilled its commitment to open the new branches in January, indicating that all preparations were completed in line with the highest organizational and service standards. "This

reflects the cooperative's commitment to better serve the residents in the area," he stated.

He pointed out that the cooperative completed a major phase of its approved expansion plan, following the official opening and commencement of operations of the four branches. He emphasized that this is a qualitative addition to the cooperative sector, indicating that the new branches will enhance competitiveness and improve the quality of products and services. He believes this will provide residents with a comprehensive shopping experience and strengthen the ability of the cooperative to meet daily consumer needs.

He confirmed that the cooperative is moving forward at an accelerated pace to complete tendering procedures for furnishing seven additional branches, which will be announced in the next phase once all legal requirements are fulfilled and approvals are obtained from the relevant authorities.

He asserted this stage is included in the expansion plan aimed at developing performance and establishing a modern cooperative environment.

Oxford expertise drives innovation

Taher Group, Oxentia to launch IP & patent programs in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Taher Group for Training has announced a strategic partnership with Oxentia, the global innovation consultancy originating from the University of Oxford, to launch specialised training programs in Intellectual Property Rights, Patents, and Innovation Commercialisation in Kuwait and the wider region.

The collaboration is designed to strengthen Kuwait's innovation ecosystem through internationally benchmarked, practice-driven programs that focus on protecting intellectual assets and converting research and ideas into commercially viable outcomes. The programs will be delivered to government entities, universities, research institutions, entrepreneurs, and corporate innovation teams.

Dr. Fawaz Khaled Alkhateeb, Managing Partner of Taher Group for Training, commented: "This partnership is a strategic step toward building a mature intellectual property and innovation culture in Kuwait. It reflects our commitment to transferring global expertise and positioning the Group as a regional platform for world-class, impact-driven education."

Kanwal Mackenzie, CEO of Taher Group for Training, added: "Our focus is on execution and measurable impact. Through this collaboration with Oxentia, we are bringing globally proven frameworks into structured, market-ready programs that enable institutions and innovators to move confidently from ideas to protected, commercialised assets."

Dr. Adel AlKoot, international trainer and innovation expert, noted that the programs cover the full innovation lifecycle from patent strategy and protection to valuation and market deployment bridging theory with real-world application.

Mr. Anwar Al-Sharhan, Oxentia's representative in the Middle East, emphasized



Executives from Taher Group for Training and Oxentia pose together following the announcement of their strategic partnership to launch specialised Intellectual Property, Patents, and Innovation Commercialisation programs in Kuwait and the region.

the importance of localising global best practices to support sustainable innovation ecosystems across the region.

The launch took place in the presence of Dr. Steve Cleverley, CEO of Oxentia, who highlighted the strategic value of partnering with Taher Group for Training to expand Oxentia's footprint in the Middle East through a strong regional partner.

This collaboration further strengthens Taher Group for Training's portfolio of international alliances, including its representation of Brian Tracy Solutions in Kuwait and MENA, reinforcing its role in delivering transformative global solutions across leadership, innovation, and institutional development.

Coop supervisor applications surge

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Dr. Sayed Issa, acting Assistant Undersecretary for Financial and Administrative Affairs and Director General of the Department of Planning and Administrative Development at the Ministry of Social Affairs, announced that the total number of applicants for the administrative and financial supervisory positions in cooperative societies reached 2,255.

Issa made the announcement upon conclusion of the online registration period specified by the ministry.

He said the high turnout reflects the interest in working in this vital sector and its important role in strengthening the oversight and governance systems in cooperative societies. He added the re-

view of applications and verification of the required documents will be done next week, followed by a training course at the Gulf University, before selecting the successful candidates.

He affirmed that the application review will be conducted as per criteria stipulated in Ministerial Resolution No. 306/2025.

He added that the ministry needs 30 financial supervisors and 60 administrative supervisors, stressing that acceptance will be based on the exam scores. He said that in the event of a tie, a lottery will be held.

The registration for Kuwaitis wishing to work in supervisory posts in cooperatives, who hold a university degree and have experience, started on Jan 18 and ended on Jan 29.

Kuwait mourns playwright Abdulaziz Al-Suraie

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: The Kuwaiti and Gulf cultural and theatrical scene mourned the loss of playwright Abdulaziz Mohammed Al-Suraie, who passed away on Saturday, after a life rich in contributions and creativity, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Suraie left an indelible mark in the history of Kuwaiti theater. He was a pioneer of the theatrical movement in Kuwait, co-founding the Arabian Gulf Theater Troupe and contributing significantly to the establishment of institu-

tional theater and the development of local and Gulf theatrical experience.

He is considered one of the pillars of Kuwaiti and Gulf theaters, having contributed to his noteworthy works and experiences to the cultural movement and its advancement.

Deeply saddened by this loss, the newspaper extends its heartfelt condolences to the family of the deceased, praying to Allah Almighty to have mercy on him and admit him to Paradise.



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KUNA photo
Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Arab League Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit.

India, Arab League leaders meet ahead of 2nd India-Arab Summit

NEW DELHI, Jan 31, (KUNA): Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met on Friday, Secretary General of the League of Arab States Ahmad Aboul Gheit, and a few ministers in New Delhi ahead of the 2nd India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi Saturday.

Jaishankar posted on his official X account that he held wide ranging conversation with Secretary General of the League of Arab States Ahmad Aboul Gheit about cooperation and strengthening it across various domains. The Indian minister also exchanged views

on the recent developments in the region.

Jaishankar also met Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of State of Palestine Varsen Aghabekian Shahin and exchanged views on the Gaza Peace Plan and regional developments.

Both the sides reviewed development cooperation and agreed on initiatives to take it forward.

Indian External Affairs Minister also discussed cooperation in health, sports, infrastructure and capacity building with Foreign Minister of Comoros, Mbae Mohamed.

Continued from Page 1

Saudi Arabia

We all know that there are many opportunists, especially in this era of social media, which has opened the floodgates for everyone to vent their gibberish. What is published on these platforms should not be taken seriously.

Facts are gleaned from official statements and positions, as these alone reflect the stances of nations.

Hence, the statement of the Saudi Minister of Information was clear, as was the statement of the Saudi Minister of Finance in Davos, where it was emphasized that Emirati officials are brothers and are welcome to visit the Kingdom any time.

The positions of Emirati officials reflected this fraternal spirit. Let us not pay attention to the loud noise on 'social media', emanating from obscure names and fake accounts with malicious intentions.

Yes, there are countries that wish for a Gulf rift. These countries do not understand how matters are managed within the same family. I would like to remind them that the 2017 crisis between Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE was settled without any external intervention.

We all vividly remember the crucial role played by HH the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, may Allah have mercy on him, in resolving that crisis. Despite his illness, his fasting during Ramadan and the need to take his medication on schedule, he tirelessly traveled across those capitals.

HH the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad exerted tremendous efforts until the crisis was resolved, fulfilling the Quranic verse: "As for the scum, it vanishes, [cast] away, but as for that which benefits the people, it remains on earth."

The leaders of the Gulf states are fully aware of what is in the best interest of their people, because they are an integral part of their peoples.

The GCC is moving towards integration along a pre-defined path, established by the founding fathers and implemented by current leaders in the spirit of the union stipulated in the founding charter.

Differences in viewpoints are a natural part of life, but their positive aspect is that they help to identify and avoid mistakes. All GCC members believe that the hand of Allah is with the community and its unity.

Indeed, the GCC has reached a level of strength that makes it resistant to division. Indeed, it is developing daily towards integration – economically, politically and socially.

Therefore, there will be no foothold for those who seek to dismantle the GCC. The entire Arabian Gulf is a homeland for its people.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE are the two jewels of the Gulf crown. The people of the GCC understand that no matter how loud the voices of malice are, they will not be able to harm it or its precious members.

Minister highlights

highlighting the necessity of supporting these vital areas within a comprehensive health vision that keeps pace with scientific and technological developments and contributes to enhancing the quality of healthcare services provided to citizens and residents.

He clarified that the Ministry of Health puts emphasis on strengthening health infrastructure, developing national competencies, and improving continuing medical education programs, alongside expanding specialized medical fields.

He also referred to the notable progress achieved in respiratory and chest diseases, including advancements in sleep medicine, establishment of specialized centers equipped with the latest diagnostic and treatment technologies, and wider use of advanced endoscopic procedures.

On thoracic surgery, the minister affirmed that the Kuwait has recorded remarkable achievements at the regional level, including the performance of advanced and unique surgical procedures and the introduction of modern robotic surgeries, which helped improve treatment results and shorten recovery periods. He asserted that this progress is consistent with global trends toward minimally invasive and highly precise surgical techniques, in addition to the development of the chest unit into an integrated thoracic surgery department.

In the field of prevention and early de-

tection, he stated that the ministry is implementing a lung cancer screening program targeting high-risk groups, based on scientific evidence and international guidelines.

He said this initiative strengthens early detection and enhances treatment outcomes, indicating the ministry is also working on the development of specialized clinics, such as those for pulmonary hypertension, interstitial lung diseases and severe asthma, through a multidisciplinary team-based approach.

He emphasized that the achievements realized in this sector are the result of close integration between health, educational and research institutions, as well as the efforts of qualified national professionals.

He affirmed the ministry's unwavering support for specialized scientific conferences, given their important role in raising scientific and professional standards and reinforcing Kuwait's status as a regional hub for specialized medical fields.

He is hoping for the success of the conference, with the participation of prominent Gulf and international experts from Europe and North America. He added that such participation will help enrich scientific discussion, encourage the exchange of expertise, and support the continuous advancement of healthcare services.

'Exclusive' ground

of air transport and civil aviation.

■ Increasing non-oil revenues and strengthening financial resources.

■ Knowledge transfer and leveraging global expertise in airport operations, air navigation and aviation safety.

He commended Kuwait Airways and its operational sectors for their pioneering initiative in providing ground handling services to civil aviation companies operating at the airport, effective immediately, wishing them success in this endeavor.

He expressed deep gratitude to the political leadership for their unwavering support for infrastructure development projects in Kuwait's civil aviation sector and for enhancing services at the airport.

He acknowledged the diligent follow up and continuous support of Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ali, contributing to the success of the civil aviation projects.

He thanked the government entities that supported this project, particularly the Ministry of Interior, Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) and Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC), stressing that they played a vital role in providing all the necessary facilities to the national carrier.

He also praised the officials and employees at PACA for their efforts in ensuring the success of this operation.

He expressed gratitude to National Aviation Services (NAS), which provided ground handling services at the airport for 22 years, working alongside Kuwait Airways.

Japan-Kuwait

He clarified that this recognition was in appreciation of his contributions to Japan-Kuwait relations, including facilitating Kuwait's support for Japan during the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake.

He also shed light on His Highness Sheikh Nasser's visit to Japan to attend the awarding ceremony, during which he received the decoration from His Majesty the Emperor.

"At the Osaka-Kansai Expo, the Kuwait Pavilion, which featured exhibits such as desert sand and a planetarium, became a hot topic among the Japanese public and was widely covered on social media, remarkably increasing the popularity of Kuwaiti culture at the grassroots level throughout Japan," Mukai stated.

He outlined his outlook for 2026, stressing his belief that Japan and Kuwait still hold substantial potential for expanding cooperation. "In existing fields, such as power and water, we can further deepen collaboration by leveraging the technologies possessed by Japanese companies, contributing to the realization of Kuwait Vision 2035," he stated.

He unveiled his aim to develop relations between the two friendly countries

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31, (KUNA): Kuwait Air Sports Club and Jazeera Aviation Club, of the United Arab Emirates, co-organized a ceremony on Friday to honor the participants in the March of Affection, a joint airshow from the UAE to Kuwait.

Air sports event materialized the depth of the sisterly ties and cooperation between both countries, said chairman of Kuwait Air Sports Club Ahmad Al-Shallahi in statements to KUNA.

He praised the pilots for the efforts they made in the successful initiative, appreciating the call of UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed on November 21 for launching this initiative as part of week-long celebration of historical ties.

On his part, Abdullah Al-Naimi, head of the public relations dept of Jazeera Aviation Club, said the UAE President's initiative mirrored the noble values of fraternity and cooperation between both countries.

The deep-rooted people-to-people relations gain momentum in the course of time under the wise instructions of the leaders of both countries, he said in a speech to the ceremony.

Showing deep fraternal and historical ties between Kuwait and the UAE, Emirati and Kuwaiti pilots arrived at Kuwait International Airport as part of a joint air show that started from the UAE in an

'March of Affection' marks unity and cooperation

Pilots of Kuwait-UAE joint airshow honored



KUNA photo

Part of the honoring ceremony for the pilots participating in the joint air parade.

initiative that reflects people-to-people solidarity.

The gesture came under the initiative of UAE President Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan to celebrate historical bilateral bonds between both sisterly countries.

Speaking to KUNA, Kuwait Airways' Acting CEO Abdulwahab Al-Shatti said

that the national carrier's participation in this event confirms deep fraternal relations and aligns with the state's trends of backing initiatives purposed to bring both peoples closer.

He commended such joint activities as marking a message of mutual amity and appreciation between both peoples and reflecting the advanced level of

shared coordination and integration at all levels.

In a similar statement, Chairman of the Kuwaiti Air Sports Club Ahmad Al-Shalahi said this initiative comes in the context of a previously concluded cooperation agreement between the club and the UAE's Jazirah Aviation Club.

Kuwait set to host 27th Gulf Engineering Forum

Panels to explore future-ready projects

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: The Kuwait Society of Engineers has finalized preparations for the 27th Gulf Engineering Forum and the Investment Challenges and Sustainability of Smart Infrastructure Conference, scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday under the patronage and in the presence of Minister of State for Municipal and Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari.

In a press statement, Vice President of the Society and Chairman of the Higher Committee for the two events Eng. Rashid Al-Atol said the Society warmly welcomes the engineering delegations from various engineering associations

and bodies in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Federation of Arab Engineers, Gulf Commercial Arbitration Center, and Arab and international universities,



Al-Atol

port for the forum and conference, and the registration of more than 400 specialists and engineers, affirm the importance of the topics that will be discussed.

He added that the scientific committee approved 57 research papers, 45 of which will be presented at the conference. Five panel discussions will be held, with the participation of several

Kuwaiti and Gulf undersecretaries and project managers.

He said the workshops will tackle financial sustainability, investment challenges, engineering projects, environmental sustainability in the GCC countries, smart technologies for infrastructure project sustainability, and the sustainability of housing and environmental projects.

He confirmed that a special exhibition will be held alongside the conference, during which the Gulf engineering associations and organizations will showcase their activities and achievements.

He expressed his gratitude to the American University of the Middle East (AUM) in Kuwait and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) for their platinum sponsorship of the event, as well as Kuwait Fund for Development for its silver sponsorship.

He commended the efforts exerted by 150 individuals who volunteered and supported State plans related to development, investment, and performance of Kuwaiti infrastructure, which is undergoing a new phase.



MoE photo

Dr. Sultan bin Saif Al Neyadi with Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei pose with students during an interactive forum.

Students engage in interactive forum

MoE hosts UAE's Youth Affairs minister

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: The Ministry of Education on Thursday hosted Minister of State for Youth Affairs in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Dr. Sultan bin Saif Al Neyadi, on the sidelines of his official visit to the State of Kuwait, with Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei in attendance.

In a press statement, the ministry revealed that the visit aims to strengthen cooperation and exchange expertise in the educational and youth sectors, while exploring ways to support joint initiatives that contribute to developing young people's capabilities and refining their scientific and cognitive skills.

In this context, Al Neyadi spoke during the student forum held at Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Secondary School, which is affiliated with the Capital Educational District.

A number of officials attended the forum.

This step is an embodiment of the shared interest in expanding engagement with the educational field, and motivating students toward excellence and innovation.

During the forum, Al Neyadi shared to the secondary school students his experience during his mission to the International Space Station as part of 'Zayed's Ambition 2' mission, highlighting the most important scientific and humanitarian milestones of the journey.

He also conducted an interactive dialogue with the students, answering their questions and emphasizing the importance of scientific ambition, belief in one's own abili-

ties, and continuous pursuit of achievements in the fields of Science, technology and scientific research.

Meanwhile, Abdulrazzaq Salem Al-Mutawa, a student at Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Secondary School, expressed his happiness over the patronage and attendance of Education Minister Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, and the presence of the UAE Minister of Youth Affairs and astronaut Dr. Sultan Al Neyadi. He said the meeting provided insight into many events of the six-month journey, allowed students to benefit from the lecture, and offered an overview of the scientific experiments conducted in space.

Saeed Fahmi bin Fadl, a Grade 12 Science student, stated that the lecture opened new horizons regarding the space journey and the challenges faced by astronauts from Earth to space. He disclosed that the most difficult challenges include learning new languages to communicate with the mission crew, coping with harsh climate reaching 25 degrees Celsius below zero, and the difficulties encountered in space, such as performing acts of worship like prayer and fasting. He added the students also learned about the scientific experiments conducted in space.

He affirmed that the lecture gave students the opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussion with an Arab astronaut, extending his thanks to the Minister of Education and the UAE Minister of Youth Affairs for the meeting that was filled with new challenges and adventures.



Hundreds of people gather at a protest at the Texas Capitol as part of nationwide protest against actions by US Immigrations and Customs Enforcement on Jan 30, in Austin, Texas. (AP)

Anti-ICE protests held across US

Protesters gathered across the United States on Friday for a nationwide general strike against federal immigration enforcement operations and the recent fatal shootings by immigration agents. According to tracking by Payday Report, a labor news organization, the demonstrations, organized under the banner "National Shutdown," took place in at least 300 cities, with actions ranging from business closures to student walk-outs and street marches. The protests were triggered by the deaths of two Minneapolis residents shot by federal agents this month. Renee Good, a 37-year-old mother of three, was fatally shot on Jan. 7 by an agent from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the federal agency responsible for enforcing immigration laws. (Xinhua)

Conservatives keep Poilievre as leader

Canada expects US to respect sovereignty

OTTAWA, Jan 31, (Agencies): Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said he expects the United States to "respect Canadian sovereignty" after media reported that US officials had met with a group advocating for the separation of the province of Alberta from Canada. Speaking at a press conference after a meeting with the country's premiers, Carney addressed the issue when asked about the meetings between US officials and the Alberta Prosperity Project (APP), a group pushing for a referendum on the province's independence. "I expect the US administration to respect Canadian sovereignty," Carney said, adding that the topic of separatism has not come up in his conversations with US President Donald Trump. The prime minister's comments echoed those of Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, who also spoke at the press conference. "I would expect that the US administration would respect Canadian sovereignty and that they would confine their discussion about Alberta's democratic process to Albertans and to Canadians," Smith said. She mentioned she would direct her government's representative in Washington to convey her concerns to the U.S. administration. Other provincial leaders have also rebuked the meetings between U.S. officials and the Albertan separatist group, with British Columbia Premier David



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney speaks at the Prime Time screen and media industry conference gala in Ottawa, on Jan 29. (AP)

Eby terming them as "treason." "To go to a foreign country and to ask for assistance in breaking up Canada, there's an old-fashioned word for that, and that word is treason," Eby told reporters on Thursday. The controversy arose after the Financial Times reported that leaders of APP had met with U.S. State Department officials in Washington several times since April last year. The group is reportedly seeking another meeting to request a 500-billion-U.S.-dollar credit facility to support the province in the event of a successful independence vote. No such referendum is currently planned. Also: TORONTO: Members of Canada's Conservative opposition party voted to keep Pierre Poilievre as their leader despite his election loss last year and recent defections. Poilievre received 87.4% support in a leadership review vote announced early Saturday at the party's convention in Calgary, Alberta. Poilievre lost the last election to Prime Minister Mark Carney's Liberals in April and even his own seat in Parliament, but has since rejoined the House of Commons.

Resolution expected soon

US government partially shuts down despite Senate passage of funding bill

WASHINGTON, Jan 31, (Agencies): The United States has partially shut down despite the Senate's passage of a government funding bill covering the remainder of the current fiscal year, except for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The partial shutdown is due to the House of Representatives being in recess until next Monday, meaning the shutdown is expected to last at least two days. Its impact, however, is expected to be minimal, as it falls on the weekend. The Senate approved funding for federal departments and agencies that had not yet received full-year appropriations, excluding DHS, amid ongoing disputes over immigration operations during which two US citizens were killed in the state of Minnesota. The Department of Homeland Security will instead receive a temporary two-week funding extension, pending further negotiations between Republicans and Democrats, as disagreements intensify over the department's handling of immigration issues. The budget legislation must still secure approval by a majority in the House of Representatives before being sent to President Donald Trump for signature. The US experienced its longest government shutdown last autumn, which lasted more than 40 days and had significant economic repercussions, including a slowdown in national economic growth. The Senate voted Friday to fund most of the government through the end of September while carving out a temporary extension for Homeland Security funding, giving Congress two weeks to debate new restrictions on federal immigration raids across the country. "The nation is reaching a breaking point," Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said after the vote. "The American people are demanding that Congress step up and force change." As lawmakers in both parties called for investigations into the fatal shootings, US President Donald Trump said he didn't want a shutdown and negotiated the rare deal with Schumer, his frequent adversary. Trump then encouraged members of both parties to cast a "much needed Bipartisan 'YES' vote." The bill passed 71-29 and will now head to the House, which is not due back until Monday. That means the government could be in a partial shutdown temporarily over the weekend until they pass it. ernment shutdown last autumn, which lasted more than 40 days and had significant economic repercussions, including a slowdown in national economic growth. The Senate voted Friday to fund most of the government through the end of September while carving out a temporary extension for Homeland Security funding, giving Congress two weeks to debate new restrictions on federal immigration raids across the country. "The nation is reaching a breaking point," Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said after the vote. "The American people are demanding that Congress step up and force change." As lawmakers in both parties called for investigations into the fatal shootings, US President Donald Trump said he didn't want a shutdown and negotiated the rare deal with Schumer, his frequent adversary. Trump then encouraged members of both parties to cast a "much needed Bipartisan 'YES' vote." The bill passed 71-29 and will now head to the House, which is not due back until Monday. That means the government could be in a partial shutdown temporarily over the weekend until they pass it.



US Sen Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, joined by Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-NY and Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash, speaks during a news conference after the Senate passed a government funding deal at the Capitol in Washington on Jan 30. (AP)

Speaker Mike Johnson, who held a conference call Friday with GOP lawmakers, said he expects the House to vote Monday evening. But what is uncertain is how much support there will be for the package. Johnson's right flank has signaled

an extension of Homeland Security funding in two weeks "unless it reins in ICE and ends violence," Schumer said. "If our colleagues are not willing to enact real change, they should not expect Democratic votes." Similarly, House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries told reporters that any change in the homeland bill needs to be "meaningful and it needs to be transformative." Absent "dramatic change," Jeffries said, "Republicans will get another shutdown." Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said the two sides will "sit down in good faith," but it will be "really, really hard to get anything done," especially in such a short amount of time. "We'll stay hopeful, but there are some pretty significant differences of opinion," Thune said. Irate Democrats have asked the White House to "end roving patrols" in cities and coordinate with local law enforcement on immigration arrests, including requiring tighter rules for warrants. They also want an enforceable code of conduct so agents are held accountable when they violate rules. Schumer said agents should be required to have "masks off, body cameras on" and carry proper identification, as is common practice in most law enforcement agencies. Alex Pretti, a 37 year-old ICU nurse, was killed by a border patrol agent on Jan. 24, two weeks after protester Renee Good was killed by an ICE officer. Administration officials, including Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, originally said Pretti had aggressively approached officers, but multiple videos contradicted that claim. The president's concessions to Democrats prompted pushback from some Senate Republicans, delaying the final votes and providing a preview of the coming debate over the next two weeks. In a fiery floor speech, Trump ally Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina warned that Republicans should not give away too much. "To the Republican party, where have you been?" Graham said, adding that ICE agents and Border Patrol agents have been "slandered and smeared." Several Republicans have said that if Democrats are going to push for restrictions on ICE, they will push for restrictions on so-called "sanctuary cities" that they say do not do enough to enforce illegal immigration.

America

Powerful storm threatens East Coast: A powerful storm bore down on the East Coast on Saturday, with forecasters warning of howling winds, flooding and heavy snow, including in some Southeast coastal communities more accustomed to hurricanes than blizzards. Temperatures plummeted even as tens of thousands of homes and businesses remained without power.

In Myrtle Beach, South Carolina - whose official seal is the sun, palm trees and a seagull - 6 inches (15 centimeters) of snow was expected. The city has no snow removal equipment, and authorities planned to "use what we can find," Mayor Mark Kruea said.

Subfreezing weather was forecast into February, with heavy snow in the Carolinas, Virginia and northeast Georgia over the weekend including up to a foot (30 centimeters) in parts of North Carolina. Snow was also said to be possible from Maryland to Maine. (AP)

1 dead after boat sinks off Gloucester: There wasn't a mayday call from the commercial fishing vessel Lily Jean as it navigated the frigid Atlantic Ocean Friday morning on its way home to Gloucester, Massachusetts, America's oldest fishing port. The US Coast Guard was notified by the boat's beacon that alerts when it hits the water. When rescuers arrived they found one person dead, floating in the water, along with a debris field and an empty life boat. Six people remain missing. The fate of the Lily Jean, a 72-foot fishing vessel owned by a beloved member of Gloucester's historic fishing community, is the latest maritime tragedy to befall America's oldest seaport. The city that inspired "The Perfect Storm" is tied to its fishing heritage in a way that has brought 400 years of history and, sometimes, tragedy. That book and movie were inspired by the FV Andrea Gail, which went missing at sea in 1991. (AP)

Seattle ordered to pay over \$30M: A jury ordered the city of Seattle to pay more than \$30 million over the unsolved, fatal shooting of a teenager at the "Capitol Hill Occupied Protest" zone, which arose in 2020 following the murder of George Floyd. The King County jury returned the verdict following 12 days of deliberation, finding that the city was negligent in its emergency response to the shooting of Antonio Mays Jr., 16, and that that negligence caused his death. The Seattle Times reported. Because first responders wouldn't come to the protest zone, witnesses tried to bring Mays by private vehicle to get medical care from paramedics. They tried to flag down an ambulance that drove away from them, and it was about 24 minutes before they met with medics in a parking lot. (AP)

Trump claims Putin agreed to temporary halt in energy attacks on Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine, Jan 31, (AP): The terms of a Russian commitment to US President Donald Trump to temporarily halt its bombardment of Ukraine during one of the country's bleakest winters in years remained unclear Friday, as Ukrainians braced for even worse conditions to come next week. Trump said late Thursday that President Vladimir Putin had agreed to a temporary pause in targeting Kyiv and other places as the region experiences freezing temperatures that have brought widespread hardship to civilians. "I personally asked President Putin not to fire on Kyiv and the cities and towns for a week during this ... extraordinary cold," Trump said during a Cabinet meeting at the White House. Putin has "agreed to that," he said, without elaborating on when the request to the Russian leader was made. The White House didn't immediately respond to a query seeking clarity about the scope and timing of any limited pause. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov confirmed Friday that Trump "made a personal request" to Putin to stop targeting Kyiv until Feb. 1 "in order to create favorable conditions for negotiations." The mention of Feb. 1 was confusing since it is only two days away. Also,



Rescue workers clear the rubble of a residential building which was heavily damaged after a Russian strike in Odesa, Ukraine on Jan 27. (AP)

the cold weather is forecast to get much worse from Sunday, with temperatures dropping even further and making the time frame for a pause in attacks hard to understand. Russia has sought to deny Ukrainian civilians heat, light and running water over the course of the war, in a strategy that Ukrainian officials describe as "weaponizing winter." Asked if Moscow agreed to Trump's proposal, Peskov said, "Yes, of course." But he refused to answer further questions about whether the agreement covered only energy infrastructure or all aerial strikes, and when the halt on strikes was supposed to start. Russia struck Ukrainian energy assets in several regions of Ukraine on Thursday but there were no strikes on those facilities overnight, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Friday.

Trump's Greenland ambitions 'wake-up call' for Europe: Jetten

THE HAGUE, Netherlands, Jan 31, (AP): The political leader in line to become the Netherlands' next prime minister on Friday said concerns about US President Donald Trump's territorial ambitions in Greenland were a "wake-up call" for Europe at a fraught time. Centrist D66 leader Rob Jetten emphasized the need for stronger European cooperation to ensure security and prosperity - rather than focusing on the United States. "We can continue talking and complaining about the US, but what we should do instead is make sure that the European cooperation is strengthened - that we can guarantee security and prosperity for our own citizens," he told The Associated Press. Once in office, one of the first things Jetten will do is "talk to my colleagues in Europe to see what role the Dutch can play again in strengthening the European cooperation," he said. Still, Jetten stressed he also would seek to boost cooperation with Washington, "mainly on topics of security, the war in Ukraine, but also on an economic level, because the Dutch economy and American economy are very much, interlinked." Trump has repeatedly argued that the US needs Greenland, a self-governing



From left: Dutch coalition partners Dilan Yeşilgöz-Zegerius of the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, Rob Jetten of the centrist D66 and Henri Bontenbal of the right-leaning Christian Democrats speak to reporters as they present a coalition deal in The Hague, Netherlands, on Jan 30. (AP)

territory of NATO member Denmark, to counter threats from Russia and China. But last week he scrapped the tariffs he had threatened to impose on eight European nations - including the Netherlands - to press for U.S. control over Greenland. Jetten was speaking to media after he and the leaders of two other parties that will form a minority coalition government following elections three months ago presented a policy blueprint Friday with their plans for the coming four-year term. The plan includes spending billions on the Dutch military and ongoing support for Kyiv in Russia's war on Ukraine.

Europe

Portugal declares state of calamity: Portugal's government declared a state of calamity in areas most affected by Storm Kristin. The Prime Minister's office announced the decision in a statement, adding that Prime Minister Luis Montenegro would visit storm-hit areas in the districts of Leiria and Coimbra. Storm Kristin, which has battered the country since Wednesday, has caused six fatalities. The hardest-hit regions include Leiria, about 140 km north of Lisbon, Coimbra, roughly 195 km north of the capital, as well as the district of Santarem and Lisbon. Between midnight Wednesday and Thursday morning, the storm has caused more than 190 incidents, most involving fallen trees and structures, road and railway line closures or restrictions. Electricity, water and telecommunications supplies were disrupted, with nearly 450,000 households left without power during the storm. (AP)

Romania to face severe cold in Feb: Romania will face a sharp cold snap in early February, with nighttime temperatures dropping to minus 15 degrees Celsius in mountain depressions and daytime highs falling below zero in the northeastern area, the weather service said on Thursday. Warmer-than-usual conditions would persist briefly, with temperatures rising slightly on Thursday and possibly Friday, reaching 14 to 15 degrees Celsius in southern and southeastern regions and about 10 to 11 degrees in Bucharest, said Elena Mateescu, director general of the National Meteorological Administration (ANM), on local broadcaster Digi24. Rain is expected in lowland areas, while there will be sleet and snow above an altitude of 1,500 meters due to lower temperatures in mountainous regions. (Xinhua)

Unlicensed driver detained: The driver of a car that overturned on Lake Baikal in Russia on Wednesday did not have a driver's license and had never obtained one, the Russian Investigative Committee said on Thursday. The 41-year-old driver has been detained over charges of breaching safety regulations resulting in fatalities, said the committee in a statement on its Telegram channel. A Chinese tourist died and four others sustained minor injuries after a car carrying tourists overturned on the frozen surface of Lake Baikal. (Xinhua)

‘Maybe to some degree, they can start to de-escalate violence’

ASEAN to stick to Myanmar peace plan despite its failure to stop deadly civil war

CEBU, Philippines, Jan 31, (AP): A peace plan agreed on by Southeast Asian leaders five years ago has failed to end Myanmar’s civil war but it could still serve as a basis for working with the new government that will emerge from recent elections there, Thailand’s top diplomat said Friday.

The nationwide violence that followed the Myanmar army’s forcible seizure of power from Aung San Suu Kyi’s elected government in February 2021 has become one of the biggest challenges and sources of embarrassment for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The 2021 army takeover was met by widespread protests which were violently put down by the army, leading to armed resistance and brutal fighting all over the country.

Thai Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuanketkeow told The Associated Press in an interview that ASEAN’s “five-point consensus” plan has failed to halt the violence in Myanmar.

ASEAN, however, could try to re-engage with Myanmar’s new leaders who would emerge from recently held elections, which could be a “new starting point for continued efforts on dialogue, reconciliation and as a part of a broader peace process,” Sihasak said.

“We don’t seek to isolate Myanmar,” he said. “We seek to bring Myanmar back to the ASEAN family.”

The peace plan - agreed on by ASEAN heads of state in April 2021 - called for an immediate end to fighting and hostilities, dialogue among all parties that a special envoy of the bloc would help initiate, and the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Myanmar’s military government has allowed limited humanitarian aid on its own restrictive terms but has not complied with the other terms of the plan.

If there would be moves to deescalate the tensions and violence, “we can re-engage with Myanmar more,” possibly by gradually lifting a restriction on the attendance of its political delegates to annual ASEAN meetings, Sihasak said.

“Maybe to some degree, they can start to de-escalate the violence. First, avoid



Thai Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuanketkeow, center, attends the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Cebu, Philippines on Jan 29. (AP)

attacks against civilians and also avoid the use of air attacks, which really affect civilians ... these are the benchmarks for us,” he added.

On Thursday, ASEAN’s foreign ministers, in their first major meeting this year

in the central seaside city of Cebu in the Philippines, decided to stick with the peace plan.

“We all reaffirmed that the five-point consensus remains the basis of our collective efforts to address and resolve the crisis in Myanmar,” Sihasak said. “We don’t seek to isolate Myanmar. We seek to bring Myanmar back to the ASEAN family.”

The still-unofficial results of the new polls give the pro-military Union Solidarity and Development Party a large majority of the seats contested, and assure the military, which is automatically granted 25% of the legislative seats, retains control over the government.

Although imperfect, the elections could serve as a new opportunity to encourage change in Myanmar, Sihasak said.

ASEAN has not recognize Myanmar’s elections, the first since the army’s 2021 takeover, Philippine Foreign Secretary Theresa Lazaro said Thursday. The Philippines is this year’s ASEAN chair, giving it the most influential voice.

Lazaro told reporters Thursday that ASEAN “has not endorsed the three phases of the elections that were held” over December and January in Myanmar and did not explain what could change the bloc’s stance.

Critics say the election was neither free nor fair. Opponents were arrested and Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy party, which won a landslide victory in 2020, was dissolved by the military government in 2023 for refusing to register under conditions it rejected.

Sihasak told The AP that in a recent meeting with officials in Myanmar, he renewed a proposal for Suu Kyi, 80, to be moved from detention to house arrest to give her more access to doctors.

“It’s a good humanitarian gesture that will be well-received by the international community,” Sihasak said.

Suu Kyi is serving a 27-year prison term on charges widely viewed as spurious and politically motivated. She has been kept in isolation and reportedly has not even seen her lawyers since December 2022.

Asia

Xi’s special envoy visits Vietnam: Liu Haixing, special envoy of General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee Xi Jinping, visited Vietnam from Thursday to Friday to congratulate the successful convening of the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) and To Lam on his election as general secretary of the CPV Central Committee.



Liu

Liu, head of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, delivered a congratulatory letter from Xi to To Lam.

Liu said that China stands ready to work with Vietnam to faithfully implement the important consensus reached by the top leaders of the two parties, and promote new and greater development in building the China-Vietnam community with a shared future.

To Lam expressed his sincere appreciation and extended warm greetings to Xi.

He noted that the new leadership of the CPV Central Committee is willing to continue deepening relations between the two parties and countries.

During his visit, Liu also met with Le Hoai Trung, member of the Political Bureau of the CPV Central Committee and minister of foreign affairs of Vietnam. (Xinhua)

14 dead in Japan heavy snowfall: Persistent heavy snowfall driven by winter pressure patterns has hit many parts of Japan in recent days, leaving at least 14 people dead and 198 others injured nationwide, the country’s Fire and Disaster Management Agency said on Friday.

As of Friday morning, Niigata prefecture recorded the highest death toll with seven fatalities, followed by Akita prefecture with three. One death each was reported in Hokkaido, Aomori, Yamagata and Shimane prefectures.

According to fire authorities, many of the deaths occurred during snow-removal operations, including falls from rooftops, sudden illnesses and incidents in which

individuals were buried under accumulated snow.

Rail services have been severely affected by the heavy snowfall. JR Hokkaido said more than 1,400 train services were suspended over three consecutive days starting Jan. 25, affecting about 414,000 passengers.

Meanwhile, roughly 9,000 travelers were stranded at New Chitose Airport on the nights of Jan. 25 and 26 due to a combination of train suspensions and flight cancellations.

The Japan Meteorological Agency said the winter pressure system has brought heavy snowfall mainly on the Sea of Japan side of northern and western Japan, with snow accumulation in some regions exceeding twice the average for this time of year.

Snowfall is expected to continue in affected areas into next week, and the weather agency urged residents to remain alert to risks such as traffic disruptions, avalanches, falling roof snow and accidents during snow-clearing work. (Xinhua)

Thailand fireworks blast kills 1, injures 3: One person was killed and three others sustained injuries when a fireworks explosion ripped through a home-based manufacturing site in central Thailand’s Suphan Buri province on Friday, authorities said.

According to the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, the blast occurred at a private residence doubling as a fireworks factory in Don Chedi district, leaving the property significantly damaged.

Local authorities, police and volunteer foundations responded immediately to the scene, the department said, adding that it had deployed an emergency response team, heavy disaster machinery and a multi-purpose water truck to suppress the hazard.

In a statement, officials said the situation has been brought under control, though personnel remained on site to ensure area safety while police investigated the cause of the detonation.

The department stated that it has issued urgent instructions to all provincial offices and regional centers to maintain strict vigilance, particularly in provinces known for fireworks manufacturing or a history of similar accidents.

It also directed all units to keep disaster machinery and personnel in a state of readiness to support local agencies and ensure that public safety is restored swiftly in the event of future incidents. (Xinhua)

Special counsel files appeal against S.Korean ex-first lady Kim’s verdict

SEOUL, Jan 31, (Xinhua): South Korea’s special counsel on Friday filed an appeal against a first-instance court ruling on former first lady Kim Keon-hee that acquitted her of charges related to alleged stock price manipulation and other charges.

The special counsel issued a statement explaining its decision to appeal a first-instance court ruling that acquitted Kim of multiple charges, including alleged stock price manipulation, arguing that the court made serious errors in fact-finding and legal interpretation in acquitting her on several charges, and that the sentence imposed for the convictions was “unduly lenient.”

According to the special counsel, the court failed to properly recognize Kim’s alleged role as a joint offender. The special counsel also challenged the court’s acquittal on alleged violations of the Political Funds Act and the Act on the Aggravated Punishment of Specific Crimes.

Kim Keon-hee was sentenced to 20 months in prison for corruption charges, live footage showed Wednesday. The Seoul Central District Court handed down the prison sentence with a forfeiture of 12.81 million won (about 9,010 U.S. dollars), saying Kim exploited her position as the first lady for private profit.

The team of special counsel Min Joong-ki, who led the investigation into corruption allegations involving Yoon and his wife, demanded a 15-year jail term with 2 billion won (1.4 million dollars) in fine and about 948



A TV screen shows a live footage of Kim Keon Hee, the wife of South Korea's former President Yoon Suk Yeol, second from right, wearing a mask, during a news program, at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea on Jan 28. (AP)

million won (667,130 dollars) in forfeitures for Kim.

Also:

SEOUL: Two workers remain unaccounted for after a fire broke out Friday afternoon at a household goods manufacturing factory in Eumseong County, North Chungcheong province in South Korea.

A total of 81 of the factory’s 83 employees were immediately evacuated, YTN reported.

According to the report, the two missing workers are a man in his 20s from Nepal and a man in his 50s from Uzbekistan. Fire authorities have raised the emergency response to Level 2 and are continuing firefighting and search efforts.

Authorities said the factory produces wet wipes and diapers and does not handle hazardous chemicals. An investigation into the cause and damage will be conducted once the fire is brought under control.

Chile’s Kast visits El Salvador mega-prison and plans to talk security with Bukele

SAN SALVADOR, Jan 31, (AP): Chile’s far-right President-elect José Antonio Kast visited El Salvador’s mega-prison for accused gang members on Friday ahead of a meeting with President Nayib Bukele to discuss organized crime.

The Terrorism Confinement Center, or CECOT, has fueled a steady stream of accusations of human rights abuses, but has also become a symbol for many right-leaning politicians in Latin America as they seek to mirror Bukele’s rhetoric of a heavy-handed crackdown on criminal groups.

Kast, who promised to crack down on crime in the lead up to Chile’s elections last year, posted a photo on social media platform X showing him aboard a helicopter en route to the prison, accompanied by his security minister.

He said Chile needs to “import good ideas and proposals” to combat organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism.

El Salvador’s presidential office said Chile’s incoming government wants to learn firsthand about the country’s security model and assess how it could be adapted to Chile’s reality.

“We are ready to work hand-in-hand



Chile's President-elect Jose Antonio Kast is given a tour of the mega prison known as Detention Center Against Terrorism (CECOT) in Tecololuca, El Salvador on Jan 30. (AP)

with our Chilean brothers,” the statement said.

The visit comes just weeks after Costa Rican President Rodrigo Chaves held a groundbreaking for a maximum security prison in his own country modeled off of CECOT to

address a crime wave affecting the country.

Honduras previously proposed building a prison for gangs on a remote island, and countries like Ecuador and, most recently, Guatemala have taken measures to fight gangs.



Miners work at the D4 Gakombe coltan mining quarry in Rubaya, Congo on May 9, 2025. (AP)

‘Landslide was caused by heavy rain’

At least 200 killed in Congo mine collapse

GOMA, Congo, Jan 31, (AP): A landslide earlier this week collapsed several mines at a major coltan mining site in eastern Congo, leaving at least 200 people dead, rebel authorities said Saturday.

The collapse took place Wednesday at the Rubaya mines, which are controlled by the M23 rebels, Lumumba Kambere Muyisa, the spokesperson of the rebel-appointed governor of North-Kivu province told The Associated Press. He said the landslide was caused by heavy rains.

“For now, there are more than 200 dead, some of whom are still in the mud and have not yet been recovered,” Muyisa said. He added that several others were injured and taken to three health facilities in the town of Rubaya,

while ambulances were expected to transfer the wounded Saturday to Goma, the nearest city around 50 kilometers (30 miles) away.

The rebel-appointed governor of North Kivu has temporarily halted artisanal mining on the site and ordered the relocation of residents who had built shelters near the mine, Muyisa said.

A former miner at the site told The Associated Press there have been repeated landslides because the tunnels are dug by hand, poorly constructed, and left without maintenance.

“People dig everywhere, without control or safety measures. In a single pit, there can be as many as 500 miners, and because the tunnels run parallel, one collapse can affect many pits at

once,” Clovis Mafare said.

Rubaya lies in the heart of eastern Congo, a mineral-rich part of the Central African nation which for decades has been ripped apart by violence from government forces and different armed groups, including the Rwanda-backed M23, whose recent resurgence has escalated the conflict, worsening an already acute humanitarian crisis.

Congo is a major supplier of coltan, a black metallic ore that contains the rare metal tantalum, a key component in the production of smartphones, computers and aircraft engines.

The country produced about 40 percent of the world’s coltan in 2023, according to the US Geological Survey, with Australia, Canada and Brazil being other big suppliers.

IS claims responsibility for Niger air base attack

DAKAR, Senegal, Jan 31, (AP): The Islamic State extremist group claimed responsibility on Friday for an attack on an air force base in Niger’s capital that wounded four soldiers and damaged an aircraft.

The claim of responsibility was contained in a statement on Amaq News Agency, the group’s propaganda wing, that said it was “a surprise and coordinated attack” in Niamey that inflicted heavy losses.

State television reported that Niger’s forces responded quickly to the

assault early Thursday, killing 20 of the attackers and arresting 11 others.

The State Department on Friday ordered nonessential embassy staff and their families to leave Niger due to “security concerns” following the attack.

Video footage that appeared to be taken at the scene captured loud blasts and the sky glowing following explosions that began around midnight and lasted about two hours in the area of Diori Hamani International Airport.

The military leader of the West Afri-

can country has accused the presidents of France, Benin and Ivory Coast of supporting the armed group behind the attack, without providing any evidence to support the claim.

“We remind the sponsors of those mercenaries, who are Emmanuel Macron (president of France), Patrice Talon (president of Benin) and Alassane Ouattara (president of Ivory Coast), we have sufficiently heard them bark, and they should now in turn be prepared to hear us roar,” Gen. Abdourahamane Tchiani told state television late Thursday.

Lat/Am

8 killed in Brazil shootout: Eight suspected criminals were killed and a military police officer was wounded Thursday during a shootout with police in the city of Eunapolis, Brazil’s northeastern state of Bahia, authorities said.

According to Bahia’s Public Security Secretariat, the operation targeted a criminal group allegedly planning an attempt to break inmates out of a municipal prison.

Police intercepted the group in a wooded area near the Jequitinhonha River in the early morning hours, triggering an armed confrontation.

All eight suspects were wounded in the exchange of gunfire and later taken to a local medical facility, where they died, local media reported. (Xinhua)

‘Cause of plane crash under probe’: Colombian airline company Satena said it had not received any prior warning of adverse weather conditions that would have prevented the flight of a plane that crashed and killed 15 people, but that it is awaiting the results of a formal investigation.

The aircraft, which crashed in the rural area of the municipality of La Playa de Belen in the northeastern Catatumbo region, lost communication with air traffic control around midday on Wednesday, shortly after taking off from border city Cucuta.

Satena’s president, Gen. Oscar Zuluaga, said that communication between the crew and air traffic control was normal. (AP)

Separatists kill 21 in SW Pakistan: authorities

QUETTA, Pakistan, Jan 31, (AP): Separatists from Pakistan’s Balochistan province claimed responsibility for nearly a dozen coordinated attacks across southern Pakistan early Saturday that targeted civilians, a high-security prison, police stations and paramilitary installations. Eleven civilians, 10 security personnel and 67 insurgents were killed, authorities said.

Though Baloch separatists and the Pakistani Taliban frequently target security forces in Balochistan and elsewhere in the country, coordinated attacks on this scale are rare. Authorities said at least 108 militants have been killed across Balochistan over the past 48 hours, including 67 on Saturday.

The dead included 11 civilians, among them three women and three children, in the city of Gwadar in Balochistan, police official Ibad Khan said. He said the dead civilians were ethnic Baloch. Khan said police quickly responded to the attack and killed all the attackers.

Pakistan’s Interior Minister **Mohsin Naqvi** said in a statement that 10 security officers were killed.

The Baloch Liberation Army, or BLA, claimed responsibility for the attacks, during which some of the banks were also robbed.



Naqvi

In an interview with CNBC International

Al-Bahar: NBK’s 2025 results reinforce its sustainable growth trajectory



Shaikha Al-Bahar

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer of National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), affirmed that the Bank’s financial results for 2025 reflect the strength of its financial position and its ability to deliver sustainable operating growth.

Speaking in an interview with CNBC International, Al-Bahar said: “Net profit reflected the impact of the newly introduced tax regime applicable to multinational corporations, which resulted in a doubling of the effective tax rate from 8.2% in 2024 to 16% in 2025. However, when viewed on a pre-tax basis, profits increased by 5.4% year-on-year to reach KD 734.6 million. We also delivered solid growth in net operating income of 3.6%, reaching KD 1.3 billion.”

She explained that core banking activities were a key driver of the Bank’s operating income growth in 2025, alongside an improvement in the cost of risk. She added that the Bank recorded strong growth in both total assets and its loan portfolio, with each increasing by more than 13% on a year-on-year basis.

Moreover, Al-Bahar noted that the Bank capitalized on the improving domestic business environment, while enhancing the contribution of its international operations to revenues and profitability and expanding cross-selling across the Group’s markets.

A Balanced Mix

Al-Bahar explained that the notable growth in total assets and the loan portfolio was driven by a balanced mix of healthy performance in the domestic market and sustained momentum across the Group’s international markets. She noted that this growth was well diversified across both retail and corporate lending, reflecting the expansion of the customer base and the Bank’s ability to capture opportunities across a wide range of sectors.

Al-Bahar added that NBK continues to reinforce its position as a leading financial institution through the disciplined expansion of its international operations, emphasizing that this broad geographic footprint provides the Bank with a solid platform to strengthen its business model, diversify income streams, and capitalize on attractive

opportunities in regional and global markets.

Interest Rates

Addressing the easing interest rate cycle, Al-Bahar noted that the US Federal Reserve kept interest rates unchanged at its most recent meeting last week, after having cut rates by a cumulative 75 basis points during 2025. She pointed out that most global central banks, as well as GCC central banks, tend to follow the Federal Reserve’s interest rate path, with the exception of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), which continues to adopt a more gradual approach. She added that this policy stance is expected to remain in effect over the coming period.

Al-Bahar said: “While lower interest rates inevitably exert pressure on profit margins, we continue to diversify our revenue streams



NBK Headquarters

- We achieved strong balance sheet expansion, with both total assets and the loan portfolio growing by more than 13%
- Profit before tax rose by 5.4% year-on-year, reflecting the underlying strength of our core operations
- We capitalized on the improving business environment in Kuwait while further enhancing the contribution of our international operations to revenues and profitability
- Core banking activities remain a fundamental driver of our operating income growth
- We aim to capitalize on the strong momentum in government project awards in Kuwait and to further diversify our revenue streams across the Group’s regional and international markets
- The mortgage law has made significant progress toward its final stages of approval
- Further improvements in the domestic business environment are expected to support higher credit demand and stronger liquidity conditions
- We are optimistic about 2026 outlook and remain firmly focused on delivering strong and sustainable returns for our shareholders

across the Group’s various markets and to capitalize on the strong momentum in major development projects launched by the government in line with Kuwait Vision 2035.”

Al-Bahar noted that the total value of awarded projects in Kuwait reached KD 4.3 billion in 2025, representing a significant increase compared with the previous year. She added that the value of projects currently in the tender phase is estimated at around KD 11.7 billion, the majority of which are aimed at strengthening infrastructure to meet the requirements of population growth.

Mortgage Regulations

Al-Bahar added that the anticipated approval of the mortgage law is expected to have a significant positive impact. She noted that the draft law has made substantial progress toward its final stages, in parallel with the roll out of major tenders to develop three new residential cities under the real estate developer model. She explained that these initiatives will strengthen the role of the private sector and expand homeownership options, which is expected to have a positive impact on banks’ loan portfolios.

Optimistic Outlook

Commenting on her expectations for the Bank’s performance in 2026, Al-Bahar expressed an optimistic outlook, reaffirming the Bank’s ongoing commitment to delivering strong and sustainable returns for its shareholders.

She explained that further improvements in the domestic business environment, supported by the introduction of new legislation such as the mortgage law, continued momentum in the award of major development projects, and ongoing sovereign issuances under the public debt framework, are expected to have a positive impact on the banking sector by driving higher credit demand, improving liquidity conditions, and supporting the growth of fee-based income.

Al-Bahar emphasized that NBK’s diversified business mix, together with its geographic footprint spanning 13 countries, provides the Group with a strong platform to capitalize on attractive opportunities across a wide range of markets.

Other Voices

Russian oil giants set for takeover

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

The two largest Russian oil companies, Rosneft and Lukoil, are reportedly being taken over—effectively “sold,” albeit reluctantly—by two US oil companies, Chevron and Carlyle. The two Russian companies have an extensive global geographical presence, from Iraq to Mexico. This development is the result of



Al-Harami

US sanctions imposed following Russia’s war on Ukraine and its occupation of large parts of Ukrainian territory. Chevron, the second-largest American oil company in the world, is currently in advanced talks to acquire the non-Russian assets of Lukoil, while purchasing other global assets, including oil and gas fields and gas stations in more than 20 countries. These assets include several refineries in Bulgaria and Romania. The acquisition by the US-based Chevron must receive approval from the US government. It appears that the US government has been informed and is close to reaching a satisfactory conclusion and granting approval. This follows the US government’s refusal to allow another company, Gunvor, of Swiss ownership, to proceed, as it was believed to be linked to, or influenced by the Russian government.

It is estimated that the acquisition price could be in the range of \$22 billion, based on the most recent assessment of Rosneft’s total asset value in 2024. The final valuation will depend on how much additional value Rosneft can extract from its investments and how attractive the deal is to the American companies in terms of gaining access to operations in 22 countries. It will also depend on whether Chevron can add synergies that enhance shareholder

value, not through cash generation, but through significant added asset value.

Most, if not all, international oil companies aspire to undertake major acquisitions, not only to grow larger but also to increase profitability and provide shareholders with greater asset value. Such acquisitions offer the possibility—however ambitious—of eventually surpassing the world’s number one oil company, ExxonMobil. For many, this is a long-held dream.

The question remains as to how many oil companies participated in the auction to acquire the Russian companies, and whether the awarded price was fair and competitive. This may never be known.

However, the opportunity itself is rare. The scale of operations and the number of countries in which Lukoil operates—including Iraq, Azerbaijan, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Nigeria and Mexico—are significant. These are countries with extensive experience in oil production and high proven reserves, and such an opportunity is unlikely to arise again for many years.

With the Carlyle Group acquiring the Lukoil Group, this effectively ends the international operations of Russian oil companies outside Russia. The question now is whether this marks the definitive end of Russian oil companies operating beyond their national borders, or whether the time will come for Russia to reacquire these assets once the Ukraine conflict ends.

Certainly, there will be further breakups of the assets recently acquired from the two Russian companies. The main issue will be whether these assets are sustainable in the long term or will later be disposed, following additional assessment, evaluation and alignment with the acquiring companies’ core activities.

Yes, this is a difficult and lengthy process. Nevertheless, the breakup of a company after an acquisition is a normal practice in today’s business environment.



Email: nafikuwaiti@yahoo.com

Reinforcing its commitment to innovation and entrepreneurship growth

Markaz participates as Gold Sponsor at GCC Connect E2I

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: The Kuwait Financial Centre “Markaz” announced the successful conclusion of its participation as a Gold Sponsor of GCC Connect E2I – Entrepreneurs to Investors Forum, held on Saturday, January 31, 2026, at the Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait. The forum convened entrepreneurs, investors, venture capital firms, and key decision-makers from across Kuwait and the GCC to accelerate the growth of startups and foster innovation. It was held under the patronage of H.E. the Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, and featured a distinguished lineup of regional and international speakers.

The forum focused on creating partnership opportunities between investors and startup founders, while highlighting successful GCC-based entrepreneurial stories. It addressed key themes including digital transformation, the development of a sustainable innovation ecosystem, mechanisms for financing startups, and the role of institutions in supporting economic growth, reflecting the region’s strategic shift toward a knowledge-based economy driven by innovation and entrepreneurship. The forum also served as a regional platform for dialogue on cross-



Ahmed Al-Falah

border investment opportunities and innovation frameworks, reinforcing Markaz’s contribution to the GCC’s integrated economic vision. Furthermore, the conference highlighted practical approaches to enhancing public-private collaboration, expanding access to capital, and enabling innovation-led invest-

ments across priority sectors.

Commenting on Markaz’s participation, Mr. Ahmed Al-Falah, Managing Director, Investment Banking at Markaz said: “Innovation requires a strong infrastructure that brings together capital, talent, regulatory clarity, and institutional support. Platforms such as GCC Connect E2I play a vital role in connecting entrepreneurs with investors and enabling constructive dialogue that supports long-term economic growth. The forum also underscored the importance of equipping the next generation of entrepreneurs with the tools, capital, and institutional frameworks needed to scale innovative ideas into sustainable businesses.”

Markaz’s sponsorship aligns with its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy, which emphasizes support for entrepreneurship, innovation, and knowledge-sharing, while reinforcing the company’s objectives of strategic engagement and thought leadership within the regional financial and investment landscape. The participation further reflects Markaz’s role as a strategic connector between innovative enterprises and institutional capital, contributing to the continued development of the regional investment ecosystem.

Increased trading across real estate sector drives profit-taking & portfolio diversification: Al-Hasawy

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Executive Manager – Real Estate Valuation, Eng. Hamad Al-Hasawy, stressed the resilience and capability of the real estate sector to enhance value momentum for investors, while offering alternative investment opportunities through the achievement of quarterly growth rates across various the various real estate segments, most notably housing, investment and commercial properties.

He advised investors to diversify their real estate portfolios to achieve optimal and sustainable returns, by capitalizing on the steady growth in demand across different real estate sectors throughout the year.

Al-Hasawy indicated that during Q4 of last year investment real estate recorded exceptional activity, with the commercial real estate maintaining high performance levels. In addition, real estate trading increased in the private housing real estate, craftsmanship and warehouses properties. The total real estate trading values reached approximately KD 4.6 billion during 2025, representing a 22.8% growth from the high levels recorded in 2024.

Al-Hasawy explained that the total real estate trading value on a monthly basis during Q4 2025 rose to over KD 1.3 billion, marking a 5.6% quarterly increase. This growth was driven mainly by a rise in private housing transactions, which reached about KD 587 million, up by 48.3% compared to the previous quarter. This was supported by higher demand in Q4, as the number of transactions climbed to 1,247 deals, an increase of 20.5% from the previous quarter. In Q4 2025, the investment real estate reclaimed its lead, recording KD 436 million in trades, up 7.3% via 421 transactions. This segment surpassed the commercial real estate, which dominated the previous quarter. During the same period, commercial real estate experienced a sharp contraction, with trading values plummeting 38.4% to KD 272 million and transaction volume tapering to 70 deals, down 7.9% from Q3 levels.



Hamad Al-Hasawy

Al-Hasawy further indicated that these market developments represent a significant opportunity for investors, highlighting the importance of portfolio diversification and avoiding investing in a single segment. “This allows investors to earn higher returns and benefit from the shifting in trading values across different segments of the real estate market.”

He pointed out that diversification reduces risk, maximizes exposure to market developments, and ensures good cash flow for investors despite varying market conditions. This is because investors benefit from the growth of any real estate segment while avoiding the impact of declining demand or activity in the rest of the segments.

Al-Hasawy added: “Private housing real estate segment regained its top rank in terms of trading value during Q4 of 2025, accounting for 43.7% of the total real estate transactions, after ranking third in Q3 2025 with a share of 31.1%. Investment real estate maintained second place with 32.4% of total transactions in Q4, compared to 31.9% in Q3 2025. Commercial

real estate ranked third, accounting for 20.2% of total transactions, after having recorded exceptional activity in Q3 2025 when it represented around 34.6% of the total trading value. Meanwhile, coastline properties accounted for 2.4% of total transactions, compared to 0.2% in Q3 of 2025.”

According to the monthly data and indices of the Land Registration and Documentation Department in the Ministry of Justice, the total real estate trading value exceeded KD 1.3 billion during Q4 2025, higher by 5.6% from Q3 2025. It is also remarkably higher by 19.9% on an annual basis, driven by the rising demand across various real estate segments, which is reflected in the number of deals during the year. Demand for commercial real estate segment nearly doubled compared to 2024. Similarly, investment real estate segment saw a significant surge in demand, in addition to a notable increase in the other real estate segments including private housing and the coastline, craftsmanship properties and warehouses.

Furthermore, Al-Hasawy emphasized that real estate valuation is a cornerstone of the industry, operating at multiple levels. It facilitates seamless financing and organizes market transactions through transparency, professional standards, and fair appraisals that reflect current market realities.

He highlighted the exceptional caliber and professionalism of KFH’s valuation team, which continues to bolster the deep trust placed in them by a diverse customer base. Moreover, KFH’s robust organizational structure ensures market-leading performance. Combined with decades of experience, impartiality, and a reputation for reliability, KFH has become the preferred choice for valuation services across all sectors. As an accredited entity, KFH leverages an extensive database and a specialized technical team (comprising engineering, legal, and accounting experts) to deliver valuations rooted in rigorous market studies and real-time monitoring.

The Board of Directors of Digitus Group for Digital Infrastructure, Data Centers & Communications K.S.C.P. (the “ **Issuer** ” or the “ **Digitus** ” or “**the Company**”) would like to invite the shareholders who are registered on the share register of the Issuer at the end of trading on 3 February 2026 (“ **Record Date** ”) and the holders of the pre-emption rights who received the pre-emption rights (“ **Pre-Emption Rights** ”) during the Pre-Emption Rights Trading Period to participate in the Issuer’s share capital increase and subscribe to up to 60,000,000 new ordinary issuance shares with a nominal value of KWD 6,000,000 and at an Issue Price of 100 Kuwaiti fils per Issue Share with no issuance premium (the “ **Issue Shares** ”) during the Subscription Period commencing on 4 February 2026 (inclusive) and closing on 18 February 2026 at 1:00pm.

Overview of the Offering

Issuer:
Digitus Group for Digital Infrastructure, Data Centers & Communications K.S.C.P

Commercial Registration No:
77127

Total Value of the Issuance:
KWD 6,000,000

Issue Price:
100 Kuwaiti fils per share (including the nominal value of 100 Kuwaiti fils and no issuance premium).

Eligible Shareholders and Owners of Acquired or Transferred Pre-emption Rights (“Eligible Subscribers”) or (“Subscribers”):

Include:
(a) Eligible Shareholders: Registered holders of existing shares recorded in the Company’s shareholder register with the Kuwait Clearing Company K.S.C. at the close of trading on Boursa Kuwait on the Record Date (any trade of the Company’s shares prior to the Record Date, but which have not completed the trade settlement process of Boursa Kuwait as of the Record Date (Ex Rights Date), and as a result have not yet been registered on the Company’s shareholder registry, will not be considered in determining the Eligible Shareholders of record as of the Record Date); and
(b) Other right holders who have obtained such rights by way of transfer without consideration or purchase during the Preemption Rights Trading Period, which commences on the first day of the Subscription Period and ceases five Business Days prior to the day of closing of the Subscription Period.

If the share capital increase has not been fully subscribed for during the Subscription Period, the Board of Directors of the Company may decide to extend the Subscription Period. If the share capital increase has not been fully subscribed for during the extended Subscription Period, the Board of Directors of the Company may decide to either, (i) Offer the Issued Shares to the Public, including existing shareholders and non-shareholders, right holders and and those without rights, or (ii) retract the share capital increase and Preemption Rights holders shall not be entitled to compensation or recourse against the Issuer, the Clearing and Depositary Agent, or the Subscription Agent, or (iii) limit the share capital increase to the amount actually subscribed for. Subscribers for the Issue Shares will not have a right of retraction except as per the Law permits.

Issue Shares Entitlement:
Approximately 126.61% of their total existing shares held as of the Record Date. Holders of Preemption Rights shall be entitled to subscribe for the number of Issue Shares corresponding to the acquired rights.

Minimum Subscription:
One (1) Issue Share.

Maximum Subscription:
Subscribers may apply for any amount of Additional Issue Shares, which will be allocated only in the event that unsubscribed Issue Shares remain after the Rights Issue Subscription Period. Such unsubscribed shares will be allocated to applicants for Additional Issue Shares on a pro-rata basis.

Subscription for Additional Issue Shares:
Subscribers have the right to subscribe for additional Issue Shares (“Additional Issue Shares”) in addition to their entitlement to Issue Shares. Such subscription shall be made at the Issue Price of 100fils per Additional Issue Share.

Subscription Period:
The Subscription Period will commence on 4 February 2026 and will end on 18 February 2026 at 1:00pm Kuwait time.

Consequences of non-Subscription of Eligible Shareholders:
Eligible Shareholders who choose not to subscribe to the Issue Shares will be subject to a reduction in their percentage of ownership in the Issuer’s capital in addition to what they may face from a change in the value of their existing shares.

Means of Disposal of Pre-Emption Rights:
Any person who disposes of their Preemption Rights, whether by sale or transfer without consideration, shall no longer be entitled to subscribe for the Issue Shares represented by such rights. However, the transferee of such rights shall be entitled to subscribe for the corresponding number of Issue Shares or further dispose of them in accordance with the applicable laws, regulations, and procedures of the Kuwait Capital Markets Authority, Boursa Kuwait, and the Kuwait Clearing Company, provided that such disposal by means of trading or transfer occurs at least five Business Days prior to the closing of the Subscription Period (i.e., latest by 11 February 2026 (inclusive)).

The transferor and transferee shall visit Boursa Kuwait, Fifth Floor to complete the transfer. Individuals shall provide copies of their civil identifications and the authorized representatives of non-natural entities shall provide To Whom It May Concern Letter (Ministry of Commerce and Industry) along with the authorized signatories extract

Holders of Pre-emption Rights shall have the following options in respect of the Issue Shares:

- Exercise their Preemption Rights, in whole or in part, to subscribe for Issue Shares;
- Exercise their Pre-emption Rights to subscribe for the Issue Shares and apply for Additional Issue Shares;
- Trade their Preemption Rights by sale and/or purchase during the Subscription Period and up to five Business Days prior to Subscription Period closing, in accordance with the relevant rules of Boursa Kuwait
- Transfer, without consideration, their Preemption Rights (in whole or in part) to another party during the Subscription Period and up to five Business Days prior to its closing, in accordance with the applicable rules of Boursa Kuwait and the Kuwait Clearing Company; or
- Choose not to exercise, assign, or trade their Preemption Rights, in which case their entitlement to subscribe for Issue Shares shall lapse and such rights may be allocated to other Eligible Subscribers.

Pre-Emption Rights ISIN Code:
KW0000660264

Issuance Advisor and Subscription Agent:
Kamco Investment Company K.S.C. (Public) – “Kamco Invest”

Clearing and Depositary Agent:
Kuwait Clearing Company K.S.C.

Legal Advisor to the Issuer:
Ayan Law Firm

This announcement is prepared for promotional purposes and does not omit any essential information related to the investment in the financial security subject of this announcement.

Invitation to Participate in the Increase of the Share Capital of

Digitus Group for Digital Infrastructure, Data Centers & Communications K.S.C.P.

Subscription Instructions

Subscription Process

Subscriptions and all required documents must be submitted through the Subscription Website or Mobile Application operated by Kuwait Clearing Company.

General subscription procedures:

The Subscriber shall:

1. Login to the Subscription Website via the link: <https://www.ipo.com.kw> or download the IPO Kuwait Mobile Application operated by Kuwait Clearing Company.
2. In the event the Subscriber is an individual, they shall register their Civil ID number, and then the system will verify the eligibility of the Subscriber (the Eligible Subscribers' information will only be visible during the Subscription Period).
3. In the event the Subscriber is a legal entity or a company, the Subscriber must enter the commercial registration number, and then the system will verify the eligibility of the Subscriber.
4. Record the number of shares to be subscribed for.
5. The Subscriber must make the payment through either K-NET service or bank wire transfer as follows:

For Subscribers paying through K-NET service, the Subscriber shall:

- Pay from their own account (no other person may pay on behalf of the Subscriber except in the cases provided for under the law). If the payment is successful, the system will display a confirmation containing the subscription payment details, and an automatic email will be sent with a PDF receipt to the Subscriber’s registered email address, along with a text message to the Subscriber’s registered mobile phone confirming the successful completion of the subscription process.

Subscribers are advised to confirm with their bank that their payment limit on their K-NET card will enable them to pay for their subscription.

Or,

For Subscribers paying through bank wire transfer, the Subscriber shall:

- Print the Subscription Application Form from the Subscription Website and present it to their own bank to transfer the amount required to the Subscription Bank Account (net amount without any charges by the transferring bank and the receiving Bank) stated below:

Name of Bank:	Burgan Bank
Account number:	023160356800014402014
IBAN:	KW96 BRGN 0000 0000 0000 6035 6801 48
SWIFT:	BRGNKWKK
Beneficiary:	Kamco Investment Co Digitus Subscription Account
Reference/Description:	Subscription Application Form number + subscriber civil identification (for residents and citizens)/ passport (for non-residents and non-citizens)/commercial registration number (for corporates) + subscriber contact number (<i>all the information mentioned in the Reference/Description is required in the transfer receipt, failure to provide the above information may result in the rejection of the subscription</i>)

- The Subscriber shall upload the copy of the transfer receipt of the amount transferred from his/her own bank in addition to the documents listed in “Required Documentation” through the electronic link that will be sent from the Subscription Website to the Subscriber via their e-mail and a text message on the registered phone.

Required Documentation
The Subscription Application Form must be submitted through the Subscription Website or Mobile Application along with the following documentation, as applicable to the nature of and payment method chosen by the Subscriber:

a) Individual Subscribers • Signed Subscription Application Form; • Copy of passport to verify the signature; • Copy of personal civil identification card; • Copy of the bank transfer receipt; • Copy of the IBAN number; • Copy of special legal proxy for subscribing in shares (for proxy subscriber); • Copy of Certificate of Guardianship for orphans; • Copy of Certificate of Guardianship for minors; or • Copy of a Limitation of Succession Deed for beneficiaries. • Copy of Guardianship rule	b) Corporate Subscribers • Signed Subscription Application Form; • Copy of the bank transfer receipt; • Copy of the IBAN number; • Copy of Commercial Registration Certificate (authorized activities in the Commercial Registration Certificate must include owning of shares); • Copy of the Authorized Signatories Certificate or the Extract of the Commercial Register; as the case requires; and • Copy of the personal identification card of the authorized signatory; • Copy of the Authorized Signatory issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs or certified by the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and • A letter issued by the authorized signatory of the legal entity confirming its approval to subscribe.	c) Non-Kuwaiti Subscribers • Non-resident subscribers (whether corporates or individuals, as the case may be) are required to provide the equivalent of the aforementioned documentation as issued by their jurisdictional authorities if they do not have Kuwaiti issued documentation as highlighted further above.
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Review of bank-transfer applications may take up to 24 hours. If the subscription is not approved, an email will be sent to the Subscriber's registered email indicating the reason for the rejection, and the Subscriber may try again. A Subscriber is permitted to submit multiple subscription requests in case they have not subscribed to the full amount of their Preemption Rights. However, Subscribers are advised to submit their applications sufficiently in advance of the end of the Subscription Period, as the review period of up to 24 hours does not extend or exempt them from the Subscription Period deadline. Any applications submitted at or near the closing time of the Subscription Period remain subject to the same review timeline and may therefore risk non-acceptance if found non-compliant after the deadline.

In case the subscription is successful, an email will be sent with a PDF receipt to the Subscriber’s registered email address, along with a text message to the Subscriber’s registered mobile phone confirming the successful completion of the subscription process. Failure of any Subscriber to submit a duly completed Subscription Application Form (together with all applicable supporting documentation thereto) to the Subscription Website or Mobile Application, after the transfer or deposit of the subscription funds (the “Subscription Monies”)as required in the Prospectus, shall render the Subscription Application Form of a Subscriber null and void. Subscription Monies shall not be accepted in cash.

The Subscription Monies must be paid in full upon submitting the Subscription Application Form on the Subscription Website or the Mobile Application by authorizing a debit of the appropriate amount from the subscriber’s account with the bank, or by bank transfer. The Subscriber must, in any event relating to the Issue Shares or the Additional Issue Shares, ensure that the bank debit or the bank transfer has been processed from their respective bank account and that the subscription account with the Issuer has been credited with the appropriate amount at the time of the submission of the Subscription Application Form to the Clearing and Depositary Agent.

Without prejudice to the other grounds of rejection of the Subscription Application Forms, the Subscription Agent, the Clearing and Depositary Agent and the Issuer shall have the right to reject the Subscription Application Form in the event the Subscription Monies are not received in the subscription account at the time of submission of the Subscription Application Form to the Clearing and Depositary Agent.

Risk Factors:
There are some risks related to investing in the Issue Shares, including commercial and legal risk factors such as:

Commercial Risks: Risks Related to Revenue Volatility and Project Pipeline Risks - Execution of Strategic Initiatives – Market Expansion Risks – Competitive Environment and Margin Pressure – Investments Portfolio Risk.

Legal Risks and Risks Related to the Issue Shares: Legal and Regulatory Environment, Suitability of investment, Liquidity and volatility of the Share price, Dividend payments, Dilution of existing shareholdings who do not exercise their rights to subscribe for Issue Shares, Risks Related to the Issue Shares - Taxation risks, and Change in Law.

For further details on any such risk factors, please refer to the downloadable/printable version of the Prospectus relating to the offering on the Subscription Website (www.ipo.com.kw), the Issuer’s website (www.digitusg.com), the Issuance Advisor and Subscription Agent’s website (www.kamcoinvest.com), or Boursa Kuwait’s website (www.boursakuwait.com.kw).

Prior to investing in any Issue Shares, Subscribers should carefully consider, together with all other information contained in the Prospectus relating to the Offering, the risk factors highlighted above and seek professional advice before investing. This announcement does not contain all the information that prospective investors should consider before deciding to invest in the Issue Shares and does not purport to be complete.

Subscription Information
The necessary information regarding the investment in the Issue Shares is included in the Prospectus.

The terms and conditions in the Prospectus and the Subscription Application Forms shall apply. You are hereby advised to seek the advice of an advisor licensed by law and which specializes in advising on the subscription prior to making a decision to subscribe.

The Kuwait Capital Markets Authority or other Regulatory Bodies in Kuwait assumes no responsibility whatsoever for the contents and accuracy of this announcement or damages resulting from relying on any part of this announcement.

For any technical support related to the Subscription Website or Mobile Application, please email Kuwait Clearing Company at:
support@ipo.com.kw

For Inquiries related to the Offering, please contact:

Kamco Invest Email: Digitusci@kamcoinvest.com	Tel: (965) 2233-6790 / 2233-6976
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Issuance Advisor & Subscription Agent



ABK supports customers on their home-building journey with exclusive & exceptional discounts from ABYAT

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) continued to support its customers throughout the journey of building their dream home at every stage, from design to execution, through strategic partnerships that help meet their financing needs. This comes as part of the recently launched ABK Build platform, in collaboration with a select group of partners in the local market.



Al Qattan
In this context, the Bank signed a strategic cooperation agreement with ABYAT to offer exclusive and exceptional discounts to ABK customers. The signing of the agreement was attended by **Mohammad Al Qattan**, Chief Consumer Officer at ABK, and Mohammed Khaled Abul, Chief Executive Officer of ABYAT, along with several representatives from both entities, at the Bank's headquarters. The event highlighted the key benefits of the partnership and how customers can take advantage of them.

Under the agreement, ABK staff will be present at ABYAT showrooms to serve customers, respond to their inquiries, and swiftly meet their financing requirements. This aligns with the objectives of the ABK Build platform, which aims to strengthen the Bank's position as an ideal financial partner



ABK and ABYAT partner to power dream home financing.



for customers throughout the various stages of building their dream homes.

On this occasion, Al Qattan stated, "We are proud to collaborate with a strong brand such as ABYAT to simplify the financing journey for our customers when it comes to home furnishing, and to provide them with financial tools that offer both purchasing power and convenience."

He added, "We continuously seek partnerships that resonate with our customers' aspirations and deliver real added value. Our collaboration with a leading company like ABYAT reflects our commitment to supporting a lifestyle centered on excellence and quality, and to helping our customers build their dream homes."

Al Qattan noted that the Bank believes customers deserve to obtain

their dream homes without incurring additional financial burdens. He explained that this agreement enables customers to benefit from diverse packages at exceptional and exclusive prices, turning their home visions into tangible reality.

He further emphasized that ABK is always keen to offer the best banking and financial products and solutions. The Bank's goal goes beyond providing financial facilities; it seeks to design integrated financial solutions that align with customers' economic cycles. This is particularly for vital sectors such as home furnishing, thereby enhancing purchasing power and improving cash-flow efficiency for individuals.

Al Qattan also highlighted that alignment of vision with a partner of

ABYAT's stature enables the Bank to deliver flexible and innovative banking products. He stressed that integration between the banking sector and specialized retail is a key driver in enhancing the overall customer experience across the market.

He concluded by saying, "Our collaboration with ABYAT represents a qualitative leap in how banking services are delivered. We reaffirm our role as a partner throughout the customer journey by providing instant financial solutions powered by data analysis, enhancing purchasing power aimed at improving quality of life. We are committed to leveraging all our capabilities to deliver added value beyond traditional products and to strengthen our competitive position within Kuwait's banking sector."

For his part, Abul said, "We are delighted to welcome ABK customers to our showrooms. This partnership aims to facilitate their access to our premium products at competitive prices, alongside flexible financing solutions that enhance their shopping experience with us."

He added, "Our shared vision with ABK of putting the customer first is what made this partnership possible. We are always keen to offer the best international products, and through this collaboration, we will ensure these products are accessible to everyone through innovative and simple solutions."

He continued, "At ABYAT, we believe customers always deserve the best, not only in terms of product and service quality, but also in terms

of ease of ownership. Our partnership with the Bank is an investment in customer comfort, as we provide a fully integrated experience that transforms their home-design aspirations into reality. It enables them to obtain all their dream-home needs with high quality and convenient payment options, helping accelerate project completion and reduce financial burdens."

This initiative comes as part of ABK's ongoing efforts to introduce innovative solutions through the ABK Build platform, ensuring a smooth transition for customers from the planning stage to occupancy, in line with the highest standards of financial stability, and granting them access to all home-building requirements according to the best specifications available in the market.



KPMG concludes Talking Tax 2026 conference in Kuwait.

Event puts spotlight on DMTT

KPMG Kuwait organizes 8th Talking Tax 2026 conference

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: KPMG in Kuwait successfully concluded the eighth edition of its flagship tax conference, Talking Tax 2026, at the Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait, bringing together representatives from corporates, ministries, business councils, embassies, and regulatory bodies to examine Kuwait's rapidly evolving tax landscape.

The event served as a key platform for businesses to gain clarity on the practical implications of the Domestic Minimum Top-Up Tax (DMTT), which has been in force since 1 January 2025, and to better understand the broader regulatory developments shaping compliance, reporting, and governance expectations for 2026 and beyond.

Reflecting on the legacy and impact of the event, Dr. Rasheed Al-Qenae, Chairman of KPMG's CASA Region and Managing Partner of KPMG in Kuwait, noted: "We have been hosting Talking Tax for nearly a decade now, consistently bringing together leading voices from across the industry to discuss the issues surrounding tax. Our goal has always been to gather like-minded professionals, stimulate meaningful dialogue, and help shape a stronger and more connected tax ecosystem in Kuwait. As the landscape continues to evolve, this platform becomes even more important in supporting businesses with clarity, collaboration, and confidence."

The conference opened with remarks from Dr. Rasheed Al-Qenae and Zubair Patel, Partner and Head of Tax for KPMG's CASA Region, who emphasized that Kuwait has moved firmly into the implementation phase of global tax reform. With DMTT now in its second year, both speakers underscored the need for organizations to strengthen data quality, enhance internal tax controls, and adopt more integrated approaches across tax, finance, and technology.

A macroeconomic overview delivered by keynote speaker Daniel Kaye, Chief Economist at the National Bank of Kuwait, provided participants with an outlook on Kuwait's economic trajectory and the expected performance of key sectors in the coming year.

This was followed by an in-depth technical session led by Fahim Bashir, Partner – Tax and Corporate Services, supported by Naveen Bohra and Shashank Chaudhary from KPMG in Kuwait. The session provided detailed guidance on DMTT and transfer pricing compliance, outlining key considerations for year-two reporting, including data consistency, intercompany transactions, effective tax rate (ETR) calculations, and the operational adjustments multinational groups must embed to avoid year-end surprises.

Technology's growing role in tax compliance was addressed by Nerses Nersisyan, Partner and Head of Tax and Legal at KPMG Armenia & Uzbekistan, who illustrated how automation and structured data governance are becoming essential for ensuring accuracy and auditability under new global tax requirements.

Two panel discussions followed, moderated respectively by Zubair Patel and Hanan Tariq, Partner – Tax, KPMG in Kuwait, bringing real-world perspectives from senior finance and tax leaders across prominent Kuwaiti and multinational organizations. The first panel examined the practical challenges businesses face in operationalizing DMTT, while the second explored Kuwait's evolving regulatory environment from tax, legal, and investment standpoints, offering insights into how organizations can better prepare for future reforms.

A major highlight of this year's event was the launch of the KPMG Kuwait Tax Guide 2026, a comprehensive bilingual (English&Arabic) publication designed to support businesses navigating both legacy Kuwaiti tax rules and the new regulations introduced under DMTT and related reforms. The guide builds on KPMG's previous tax publications for the Kuwait market and continues the firm's commitment to providing accessible, practical and consolidated reference materials for tax leaders.

Speaking after the launch, Zubair Patel said: "Our aim with this guide is to bring the legacy and the new frameworks together in one accessible resource so taxpayers can clearly understand their obligations, distinguish between the two regimes, and make informed decisions. As the tax ecosystem continues to evolve, we want to ensure organizations have a dependable reference to support accurate compliance and forward-looking tax planning."

Int'l Finance recognizes company's digital innovation leadership

Zain wins Best & Most Innovative Telecom awards

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Zain Kuwait has been named the 'Best Telecom Company' and 'Most Innovative Telecom Company' in Kuwait 2025 during the annual excellence awards organized by International Finance. The step marks a new achievement that reflects the company's leading track record in delivering digital innovations for its customers, and its solid leadership position in the local telecom sector through an advanced infrastructure that keeps pace with the needs of the digital economy.

During the 13th edition of the ceremony held in Dubai, Alia Al-Awadhi, Media Relations Department Manager at Zain Kuwait, received the two awards. The annual ceremony by International Finance, headquartered in London, brought together business leaders and major regional institutions, and highlighted the most distinguished entities through its annual rankings specializing in economy, finance, and business.

This recognition builds on Zain's strong history of accolades reflecting its operational and commercial excellence. The two recent awards spotlight Zain's innovation journey, which centers on preparing networks for next-generation technologies with the launch of 5G-Advanced (5G-A), adopting smart AI-powered solutions and automation operations, in ways that enhance performance efficiency and service quality, and improve the digital experience across multiple scopes.

This is in addition to the company's continued focus on investing in the development of network infrastructure and accelerating the shift toward digital operating models that are more efficient, agile, and intelligent, while strengthening its role in supporting Kuwait's national development priorities through a digital infrastructure capable of enabling the country's vital sectors.

This excellence is further reflected in a high-impact technical achievement recently delivered by Zain Kuwait, after becoming the first in the region to complete a trial achieving an ultra-high network throughput of 31 Gbps, using advanced multi-carrier spectrum aggregation by combining sub-6 GHz bands with millimeter wave (mmWave). This test confirms the network's readiness to deliver exceptional capacity, low latency, and advanced performance to support the next generation of digital services.

Zain continues to cement its leadership in 5G-Advanced innovations through a wide-scale infrastructure designed to the highest standards to support smart cities and IoT applications, alongside initiatives that en-



Alia Al-Awadhi receives the two awards in Dubai.

hance connectivity reliability and make the digital experience simpler and more impactful in everyday life.

This innovation-driven approach is also reflected in the development of network experience and services by deploying AI tools in the field, such as a smart digital assistant for site engineers to accelerate fault resolution and reduce downtime, as well as leading Open RAN trials and improving energy efficiency across network infrastructure.

On the operational transformation and customer experience front, Zain continues to accelerate its digital systems modernization program through key projects, including the development of Business Support Systems (BSS) platforms to enhance business efficiency and speed up the omnichannel digital journey.

This is supported by integrating smart recommendations, automating operations, strengthening real-time monitoring, and implementing predictive maintenance, serving its customer base across individuals, enterprises, government entities, and SMEs.

NFTSS forum spotlights talabat's sustainability vision

talabat partners as main sponsor of NFTSS forum

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: As part of its leading role in advancing Kuwait's digital transformation ecosystem, talabat, the leading on-demand online ordering platform in the MENA region, announced its participation as the Main Partner of the National Forum for Transport and Smart Services (NFTSS). The forum is organized by ALGAS Events, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and The General Traffic Department under the patronage of His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah.

The one-day forum is scheduled to take place on 3 February at the Four Seasons Hotel, bringing together experts from both the public and private sectors. Participants will include government officials and decision-makers, representatives from online ordering platforms, transport and logistics companies, as well as technology innovators, entrepreneurs, academics, and a distinguished group of specialists.

This partnership reflects talabat's commitment to strengthening collaboration with government entities and working closely with all relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment of efforts and support the balanced and sustainable growth of the sector. It also underscores the company's dedication to adopting smart technologies and solutions as a core pillar of its operations, contributing to improved working environments and enhanced quality of professional life for delivery riders. This comes in parallel with talabat's ongoing role in promoting road safety and contributing to a safer environment for all road users.

On this occasion, **Abdullah Al-Mansour**, Director of Corporate Affairs at talabat Kuwait, said: "We are proud of our strategic partnership with the Ministry of Interior at this national fo-



talabat's Abdullah Al-Mansour

rum. At talabat, we firmly believe that the smart services sector is a key pillar of Kuwait's non-oil economy. Our commitment goes beyond service delivery to actively contributing to the development of governance frameworks that ensure sector sustainability and the safety of all road users."

He added: "This partnership reflects talabat's vision of transitioning from a 'traditional operating model' to a 'sustainable partnership model,' through which the company leverages its smart solutions and institutional expertise to help build a safer and more efficient transport ecosystem, enhance quality of life for citizens and residents, and uphold the highest standards of road safety."

The forum's agenda includes a keynote address by Abdullah Al-Mansour titled "From Governance to Sustainability," alongside the participation of Amal Bukhamseen, Corporate

Affairs Manager at talabat Kuwait, in a panel discussion entitled "Regulation, Legislation, and Collective Responsibility," during which she will highlight the company's experience and practical expertise in this field.

The forum will feature a distinguished lineup of speakers and experts, including Brigadier Khaled Abdullah Al-Adwani, Assistant Director General of the General Traffic Department for Education and Coordination Affairs; Eng. Mohammed Al-Mansouri, Road Safety Awareness Specialist at the Integrated Transport Centre – Abu Dhabi; and Dr. Rami Al-Sahhar, Managing Director and Technology Consultant at Provitii, alongside a number of local and international specialists.

Discussions throughout the forum will cover a range of key topics, most notably road safety within the framework of Kuwait Vision 2035, relevant regulatory and legislative frameworks, traffic violations and modern penalty systems, principles of corporate responsibility and governance, applications of smart technologies, and global best practices. Participants will also review successful international case studies with the aim of identifying practical, implementable solutions that enhance safety standards, improve operational efficiency, and elevate service quality in Kuwait.

It is worth noting that talabat continues to play an active role in national initiatives aimed at improving working conditions and enhancing quality of life for delivery riders, most notably through its pivotal contribution to the success of the National Road Safety Week. This forms part of a strategic collaboration led by the company in partnership with several government entities and prominent community institutions, including the Ministry of Interior, the National Bureau of Human Rights, and logistics sector partners.



Regional smart tech showcase draws major retail partners.

New AI earbuds, robot vacs transform smart living

Future Integrated Tech launches AI smart portfolio

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Future Integrated Technologies, in collaboration with Techmart, proudly announced the successful official launch of the region's latest AI-powered smart technology portfolio on 27 January 2026 at the Millennium Hotel and Convention Centre in Salmiya.

The event commenced with a welcome address by Mr. Salah Al Awadhi, CEO of Future Communications Company, who welcomed attendees and acknowledged the participation of both legacy Kuwaiti tax rules and the new regulations introduced under DMTT and related reforms. The guide builds on KPMG's previous tax publications for the Kuwait market and continues the firm's commitment to providing accessible, practical and consolidated reference materials for tax leaders.

Mr. M. P. Sharma, Managing Director of Techmart, delivered insightful remarks on the rapid evolution of the

mobile accessories sector and conducted a live demonstration of the Soul Clip AI Smart Earbuds, highlighting their advanced AI-driven features and user-centric design.

Guests were given an exclusive first look at the newly launched products through an immersive and interactive showcase. Live demonstrations enabled attendees to experience firsthand the performance, innovation, and technological capabilities behind each solution, underscoring their practical applications and market potential.

The launch represented a major milestone with the unveiling of three cutting-edge smart technology solutions designed to redefine intelligent living:

■ Soul Clip AI Smart Earbuds, delivering an adaptive and immersive audio experience powered by artificial in-

telligence

■ Narwal Robotic Vacuum Cleaners, offering intelligent, hands-free home cleaning through advanced automation

■ Aoso Smart Home Security Technology, introducing next-generation safety, surveillance, and smart monitoring solutions

The event concluded with a networking lunch that provided a valuable platform for dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge exchange. Strong engagement and positive feedback throughout the day reflected the growing regional interest and confidence in smart technology solutions.

This successful launch reaffirms the ongoing commitment of Future Integrated Technologies and Techmart to innovation, excellence, and shaping the future of smart living.

Sustained profitability driven by diversified revenues, strong risk management, and a robust balance sheet

Burgan Bank shows financial strength and operational resilience in 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Burgan Bank K.P.S.C. (“Burgan” or “the Bank”) announced its financial results for the year ended 31 December 2025 (FY’25), reporting a resilient performance underpinned by disciplined strategy execution, diversified revenue streams, prudent risk management, and a robust balance sheet. The Bank’s results were achieved amid a complex global and regional backdrop shaped by evolving economic conditions and ongoing geopolitical developments.

For FY’25, total revenues increased 17% y-o-y to KD 268 million, driven by strong growth across both interest and non-interest income streams. Net interest income rose 13% y-o-y to KD 178 million, supported by continued loan growth and stable net interest margins of 2.3%, reflecting effective balance sheet management in a changing interest-rate environment. Non-interest income grew 25% y-o-y to KD 90 million, driven by higher fee income, securities gains, and the successful integration and contribution of United Gulf Bank (UGB), including its key subsidiary, Kamco Investment Company K.S.C.P. (KAMCO Invest). This performance further strengthened revenue diversification and enhanced overall earnings quality.

Operating profit increased by 6% year-on-year to KD 105 million, supported by higher revenues, while net income for the year ended 31 December 2025 reached KD 47 million, broadly in line with the prior year, underscoring the stability of earnings and the resilience of the Bank’s business model, even amid heightened market uncertainty.

Burgan continued on its growth trajectory in FY’25, with total assets reaching KD 9.1 billion, up 12% y-o-y, supported by broad-based growth across key markets. The Bank’s flagship operations in Kuwait led the momentum, with assets rising 6% y-o-y to KD 6.9 billion. The loans portfolio expanded by 8% y-o-y to KD 4.8 billion, primarily supported by the Kuwait business and solid performance across key subsidiaries. Asset quality remained solid, with the non-performing loan (NPL) ratio stable at 1.9% and net NPLs, after collateral, at a low 0.4%, underscoring the conservative risk profile of the portfolio. NPL coverage remained prudent at 239%.

Customer deposits rose 11% y-o-y to KD 5.5 billion, reflecting growth across all entities but led by Kuwait operations. In Kuwait, the deposit base reached KD 4.1 billion, marking a robust 9% y-o-y increase. The deposit mix remained healthy, supported by high CASA balances that continue to underpin liquidity and cost-efficient funding.

The Bank maintained a strong liquidity and capital position throughout the year, with a Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) of 186% and a Net Stable Funding Ratio (NSFR) of 112%, both comfortably above the regulatory minimum of 100%. Burgan’s capital strength remained solid, with a Tier 1 ratio of 13.3%, and a total Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) of 16.8%, well above the respective regulatory minimums of 12.0%, and 14.0%. Together, these robust liquidity and capital metrics reflect prudent financial management, robust loss-absorbing capacity, and resilience, supporting strategic initiatives and long-term growth.

In recognition of the Bank’s solid performance in 2025, Burgan’s Board of Directors has proposed a cash dividend of 6 fils per share, along with a 5% bonus share issue for the full year ended 31 December 2025. These recommendations are subject to approval by shareholders at the upcoming Annual General Meeting and reflect the Board’s commitment to delivering sustainable shareholder returns while maintaining the Bank’s robust capital and liquidity position.

Commenting on the Bank’s financial results, Burgan’s Chairman, **Sheikh Abdullah Nasser Al-Sabah**, said that “Burgan’s performance in 2025 reflects the strength of its financial foundations and the disciplined execution of its strategic plan, even amid a year of uncertainty and external challenges. The Bank’s ability to maintain stability, preserve asset quality, and sustain profitability underscores the effectiveness of its governance framework and prudent risk management approach, while reaffirming the Bank’s commitment to delivering long-term value for all stakeholders.”

The Chairman further added that, “Our progress is anchored in balancing the strengthening of core operations in Kuwait, advancing our transformation agenda, investing in talent, and embedding sustainability and ESG practices across the business – ensuring resilience today while building a strong foundation for the future.”

Burgan Bank’s strong financial performance and credit profile were affirmed by leading international rating agencies, with the Bank maintaining its investment-grade ratings and stable outlooks. These include an ‘A+’ long-term foreign currency rating from Capital Intelligence, an ‘A’ issuer default rating from Fitch, a ‘Baa1’ long-term deposit rating from Moody’s, and a ‘BBB+’ long-term credit rating from S&P Global, reflecting its sound financial position, strong capitalization, and prudent risk management.

Executing a Focused Growth Strategy Across Core and International Markets

In 2025, Burgan Bank advanced its refreshed strategic agenda, focusing on scaling its core franchise in Kuwait while pursuing selective, disciplined growth across international markets.

In Kuwait, Corporate Banking remained a key driver of performance, underpinned by broader portfolio diversification, reduced concentration risk, and deeper client engagement. The Bank strengthened existing relationships, expanded into emerging sectors, and onboarded new corporate clients, resulting in higher deposit volumes, enhanced connectivity, and increased cross-selling – further reinforcing Burgan Bank’s role as a trusted financial partner to the business community. In Private Banking and Wealth Management, the Bank enhanced its advisory-led model for high-net-worth and ultra-high-net-worth clients, delivering tailored solutions, faster execution, and greater service integration. Retail Banking sustained strong momentum through targeted product innovation, disciplined credit growth, and service enhancements, supporting expansion in consumer



Sheikh Abdullah Nasser Al-Sabah
Chairman of Burgan Bank



Mr. Tony Daher
Group Chief Executive Officer – Burgan Bank

lending and card portfolios while maintaining a consistently high standard of customer experience.

Across its international network, Burgan Bank maintained a disciplined, risk-aware approach to growth, emphasizing diversification, operational resilience, and efficiency. Despite a challenging external environment, the Bank’s international franchises delivered steady progress, supporting sustainable performance and long-term value creation.

Commenting on this progress, **Mr. Tony Daher**, Group Chief Executive Officer of Burgan Bank, said: “In 2025, our focus was on scaling core operations in Kuwait while pursuing disciplined, selective growth internationally. By deepening client relationships, diversifying portfolios, and enhancing service offerings, we reinforced Burgan’s foundations and delivered sustainable, long-term value across all markets.”

Robust Funding Initiatives Support Growth Ambitions

Burgan Bank successfully issued a USD 500 million five-year senior unsecured bond under its USD 1.5 billion Euro Medium Term Note (EMTN) program through Burgan Senior SPC Limited. The bond carries a fixed coupon of 4.875% (115 basis points over US Treasuries) and attracted robust international demand, with the order book reaching approximately USD 1.9 billion – nearly four times the issue size. Investor participation was geographically diverse: 30% from the Middle East, 29% from the UK and Europe, 38% from Asia, and 3% from the US. The issuance strengthens the Bank’s funding flexibility, enhances liquidity, broadens its investor base, and supports strategic growth ambitions across Kuwait and the wider region.

During the year, the Bank launched a USD 500 million Certificates of Deposit (CD) program, a new funding instrument designed to diversify sources and strengthen liquidity. The CDs were well received by institutional investors, and approximately USD 200 million remained outstanding at the end of FY’25, contributing to enhanced balance sheet efficiency and funding flexibility.

In addition, Burgan Bank increased its authorized capital by KD 200 million to KD 600 million, following approval from the Extraordinary General Assembly. This move supports future growth and ensures continued regulatory compliance.

Mr. Tony Daher, Group Chief Executive Officer, commented: “Our successful return to the international debt markets with a USD 500 million bond represents a key milestone for the year. Together with our other funding initiatives, this strengthens financial flexibility, optimizes funding costs in a highly competitive environment, and positions us to pursue growth opportunities across Kuwait and the region while creating sustainable value for our stakeholders.”

Expanding Capabilities and Market Reach Across the GCC

Burgan Bank successfully completed the acquisition of United Gulf Bank (UGB) in Bahrain and fully integrated its operations during the year, delivering significant progress across integration and value-enhancement initiatives. These efforts included the recapitalization of UGB through, alongside a series of measures aimed at strengthening its financial position, revitalizing UGB as a standalone banking franchise, and enhancing shareholder value. In parallel, the partnership with KAMCO Investment Company (KAMCO) – of which UGB holds a 60% stake – has already delivered tangible results, while close collaboration with Burgan’s Kuwait teams across private banking, retail, investment, and treasury continues to enhance client offerings. Collectively, these initiatives expand the Bank’s GCC footprint, strengthen capabilities, unlock cross-selling opportunities, and generate new revenue streams, reinforcing Burgan Bank’s commitment to regional growth and sustainable value creation.

Accelerating Digital Transformation and Technology Enablement

Digital transformation remains a cornerstone of Burgan Bank’s strategy, with sustained investment in platforms that enhance transparency, efficiency, and the overall experience for customers and stakeholders. The Bank strengthened its corporate banking proposition through a digital trade finance solution, enabling clients to issue and amend Letters of Credit and Letters of Guarantee entirely online via TBS Online – reducing paperwork, accelerating turnaround times, and reinforcing Burgan’s role as a digitally empowered partner for corporates across Kuwait and the region.

Tailored for SMEs and mobile merchants, the Bank also introduced SoftPOS by KNET, a secure and flexible digital payment solution that allows merchants to accept card payments directly via An-

droid smartphones, eliminating the need for traditional POS devices and supporting business growth.

In parallel, Burgan advanced its digital initiatives by deploying SAP solutions, including SuccessFactors, to drive operational efficiency, data-driven decision-making, and an enhanced employee experience. Demonstrating the strength of its digital infrastructure and IT governance, the Bank successfully renewed its ISO/IEC 20000-1:2018 certification, following an external audit validating the efficiency, scalability, and continuous improvement of its IT operations.

The Bank’s ongoing core banking platform upgrade, implemented in partnership with TCS, progressed as planned, enhancing operational resilience, streamlining processes, and elevating client experiences across retail, corporate, and private banking.

Burgan further strengthened stakeholder engagement through its Investor Relations mobile application on iOS and Android, providing real-time access to financial disclosures, reports, share performance, and corporate updates via a dedicated, best-practice digital channel.

Across its international footprint, the Bank’s digital platforms continued to achieve key milestones, with the ON platform in Turkey reaching 1.5 million customers since its launch in late 2021. An award-winning solution, ON has driven rapid adoption and high remote customer acquisition share, while Burgan also expanded digital banking services in Algeria and Tunisia, enhancing accessibility and delivering innovative, scalable solutions across the region.

“As we continue to modernize our operating model, our focus is on deploying technology where it delivers tangible impact – whether by simplifying processes, improving decision-making, or enabling better experiences for customers, investors, and employees,” said Mr. Tony Daher, Group Chief Executive Officer. He added that “Burgan’s digital agenda is driven by practical execution and strong governance, ensuring that innovation supports resilience, scalability, and long-term competitiveness.”

Elevating the Customer Journey Across All Segments and Offerings

Burgan Bank continued to elevate the customer journey across retail, corporate, and private banking segments by strengthening strategic partnerships and introducing advanced digital payment solutions. Among the Bank’s long-standing partnerships renewed during the year was its collaboration with Visa, the global leader in digital payments, reflecting Burgan’s commitment to delivering secure, seamless, and innovative payment experiences.

On the customer experience front, Burgan became the first bank in Kuwait to adopt and roll out Visa Click to Pay, a biometrics-powered digital payment solution that enables faster, safer, and more convenient in-store and online transactions. By entering card details once at registration, customers can complete subsequent payments with a single tap and approve transactions using fingerprint or facial recognition technologies.

“As a Bank that is Driven by You, our focus remains on understanding our customers’ evolving needs and translating them into practical, technology-enabled solutions,” said Mr. Daher, highlighting “the Bank’s commitment to delivering a differentiated and intuitive banking experience across all segments.”

Investing in Human Capital to Build Future-Ready Capabilities

Human capital development remained a strategic priority for Burgan Bank throughout 2025, as the Bank continued to invest in building future-ready capabilities and empowering its people. Burgan advanced its human capital strategy through structured leadership and development programs, including Ro’ya, Empower Her, and specialized internal academies designed to support employee growth and leadership readiness.

The Bank reinforced this commitment by celebrating employees who completed advanced training programs, including executive education at Harvard Business School and certifications from the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies, while continuing to nurture emerging leaders through its flagship Ro’ya program. Additional initiatives under Empower Her were launched to recognize and support the achievements of the Bank’s female workforce.

Beyond its internal teams, Burgan extended its investment in talent development to the wider community by sponsoring Academy X, Kuwait’s largest women-led tech empowerment initiative, in partnership with CODED Academy and Kuwait University, and by participating in major university career fairs. In Q3, the Bank launched Data Champion, a first-of-its-kind internal bootcamp developed with CODED, equipping selected employees with practical data analytics and storytelling skills through real-world banking case studies.

Internally, Burgan organized “Values Unlocked,” an interactive Augmented Reality-based team-building experience reinforcing collaboration and culture, and concluded its platinum sponsorship of the fourth Wathfeeti national career fair, supporting national talent development and recruitment. The Bank also signed a strategic partnership with SAP to deploy the SuccessFactors human resources management system, strengthening its position as an employer of choice through a holistic, data-driven learning and development ecosystem.

“Our investment in human capital is deliberate and outcome-driven. We focus on developing capabilities that directly support our strategy – whether in leadership, digital skills, or specialist expertise – so our people are prepared to operate effectively in an increasingly complex banking environment,” said Mr. Daher.

Advancing ESG Commitments and Creating Lasting Community Impact

Burgan Bank continues to integrate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles across its operations, risk management, and capital allocation, ensuring sustainability is a core driver of long-term performance and growth. Inclusion in the FT-SE4Good Index underscores the Bank’s strong ESG credentials and alignment with globally recognized standards for responsible business practices.

On the environmental front, Burgan has made significant progress in advancing decarbonization, improving energy efficiency, promoting sustainable procurement, and reducing its overall environmental footprint. The Bank has also integrated climate-related risks into its credit decision-making framework, reflecting a forward-looking approach to environmental stewardship and supporting Kuwait’s broader sustainability ambitions. Additional initiatives include enhanced waste management, resource efficiency programs, and the adoption of sustainable operational practices across branches and offices.

The Bank’s social initiatives focused on empowering employees, advancing financial inclusion, and strengthening customer protection. Throughout the year, the Bank strengthened its community engagement and inclusive health awareness efforts, supporting diverse segments of the community – including youth, women, entrepreneurs, and others – through the organization and participation in a wide range of workshops, seminars, on-ground activations, and community events.

From a governance perspective, ESG metrics are embedded into executive performance scorecards, ethical and anti-corruption controls have been strengthened, and cyber resilience and operational continuity are maintained through internationally certified frameworks.

Together, these efforts reflect Burgan Bank’s commitment to responsible, disciplined growth, operational excellence, and delivering lasting value for stakeholders across economic cycles.

Mr. Tony Daher, Group Chief Executive Officer, said: “Sustainability is at the heart of how we operate, manage risk, and create long-term value. By advancing our environmental initiatives, strengthening social programs, and embedding ESG principles across governance and decision-making, we are ensuring Burgan Bank grows responsibly and delivers meaningful impact for our employees, clients, and the wider community.”

Driving Market Leadership and Shaping Industry Dialogue

Throughout 2025, Burgan Bank continued to reinforce its leadership position within Kuwait’s financial sector by actively contributing to market dialogue, innovation, and ecosystem development. During the year, Burgan Bank and Kamco Invest co-hosted the second edition of the Burgan-Kamco Invest Investment Conference under the theme “Exploring Trends: Ideas That Move Markets.” The conference convened regional and international experts, institutional investors, and high-net-worth individuals to exchange insights on global economic developments, capital markets, and investment opportunities.

The Bank’s commitment to advancing industry growth also extended to supporting innovation and entrepreneurship. Burgan concluded its strategic sponsorship of NEXUS 2025, introducing Kuwait’s first-of-its-kind Investathon, a financial simulation designed to enhance financial literacy, investment readiness, and strategic thinking among youth and aspiring entrepreneurs.

Commenting on this approach, the Chairman noted that the Bank’s leadership role goes beyond financial performance, emphasizing Burgan’s responsibility to contribute to market development, knowledge sharing, and the long-term sustainability of Kuwait’s financial ecosystem.

An Award-Winning Milestone Year for the Bank

Burgan Bank’s performance and institutional progress in 2025 were recognized through multiple regional and international accolades. These included the Elite Quality Recognition Award from J.P. Morgan Chase, the Brandon Hall Gold Award of Excellence for Best Learning Strategy, recognition by The Legal 500 with senior executives named to the GC Powerlist Kuwait 2025, the “Best Client Service” Award at the MEED MENA Banking Excellence Awards 2025, and the Digital Transformation Excellence Award at SAP Business Suite Innovation Day.

On a national level, Burgan was recognized by the Public Authority of Manpower as one of Kuwait’s most distinguished organizations for its outstanding achievements in Kuwaitization, reaching 84% in 2025, among the highest rates in the banking sector.

In conclusion, the Chairman reaffirmed that Burgan Bank moves into 2026 from a position of strength, supported by the momentum generated over the past year and the disciplined execution of its strategy. He added that the launch of Burgan’s refreshed and expanded brand at the start of this new year reflects the Bank’s readiness for its next stage of growth, reinforcing its presence in the market while remaining anchored in strong fundamentals, prudent governance, and a clear long-term vision.

De Araújo delivers emotional speech on rape culture and survivors

Channing Tatum drama ‘Josephine’ wins top jury and audience awards

PARK CITY, Utah, Jan 31, (AP): Beth de Araújo’s potent family drama “Josephine,” about an 8-year-old girl who witnesses a sexual assault, won top prizes at the 2026 Sundance Film Festival. The juries announced the winners Friday in Park City, Utah.

“Josephine,” starring Channing Tatum and Gemma Chan as the girl’s parents, became one of the festival’s early consensus hits despite its difficult subject matter, which was based on the filmmaker’s own experience at that age. The young girl is played by newcomer Mason Reeves, whom de Araújo discovered at a San Francisco farmer’s market. The film won both the US dramatic grand jury prize and the festival’s audience award but does not yet have distribution.

De Araújo wiped tears while accepting the award and gave an emotional speech about rape culture and survivors.

“It’s very hard to talk about rape. Even just saying the word makes people uncomfortable. But because of this there only leaves more shame and silence for survivors,” De Araújo said.

“In order to honor survivors we must try to understand the people who rape in an attempt to prevent it from happening again. We have the resources, we just don’t make it a priority.”

Filmmakers Janicza Bravo, Nisha Ganatra and Azazel Jacobs were the jury for the U.S. Dramatic Competition. They cited the film’s “depth and nuance of storytelling” and its “delicate and elegant execution of a challenging subject matter.” Other titles in the U.S. dramatic competition included Josef Kubota Wladyska’s “Ha-chan, Shake Your Booty!,” which got a special prize for directing.

The grand jury prize for best U.S. documentary was awarded to “Nuisance Bear,” about a polar bear navigating a human world.

“It took us 10 years to make this movie,” said “Nuisance Bear” co-director Gabriela Osio Vanden, who was visibly emotional accepting the prize.

“We all do have a story to tell, including animals.”

“To Hold a Mountain,” about a mother and daughter in the remote highlands of Montenegro defending

their land from becoming a NATO military training ground, took the international documentary prize. “Shame and Money,” about a Kosovar family who has to move from a village to the capital, picked up the narrative world cinema award.

Louis Paxton’s quirky Scottish film “The Incomer,” about a pair of siblings on a remote island whose lives are upended when an awkward government official (Domhnall Gleeson) arrives to try to evict them, won the innovator award in the festival’s NEXT section.

Other films that won audience awards included documentaries “American Pachuco: The Legend of Luis Valdez,” about the pioneering playwright and screenwriter, and “One in a Million,” which chronicled a family’s journey from Syria to Germany and back again across 10 years.

“American Pachuco” director David Alvarado said Valdez came to the first ever Sundance in 1981, when it was still called the U.S. Film and Video Festival, with the film “Zoot Suit.” That a documentary about him played at the last Sundance in Park City is a



Channing Tatum, (from left), Mason Reeves, and Gemma Chan attend the premiere of ‘Josephine’ during the Sundance Film Festival on Friday, Jan. 23, at Eccles Center in Park City, Utah. (AP)

full circle moment.

“It shows the full commitment to the Latino story that Sundance has always championed,” Alvarado said.

The festival previously awarded the

Alfred P. Sloan Feature Film Prize, which celebrates outstanding films representing science or technology, to Andrew Stanton’s “In the Blink of an

Eye.”

High profile Sundance films like Olivia Wilde’s “The Invite,” the queer horror “Leviticus” and the Charli cxc movie “The Moment” did not premiere in competition and were not eligible for jury or audience awards.

Sundance prizes can sometimes be the first stop for eventual Oscar nominees and winners, which notably happened with “CODA” and “Summer of Soul.” Documentaries more so than narrative films have a better track record of making it to the Oscars stage. Three of last year’s special prize winners are nominated for best documentary this year, “The Perfect Neighbor,” “Cutting Through Rocks” and “Mr. Nobody Against Putin” and the two others were among the festival favorites, “Come See Me in the Good Light” and “The Alabama Solution.”

Last year’s US Dramatic grand jury prize went to the war satire “Atropia,” while the audience award was given to the dark comedy “Twinless,” with Dylan O’Brien.

The Sundance Film Festival runs through Sunday.

Film

From stilettos to state events

‘Melania’ chronicles first lady’s return to public life

WASHINGTON, Jan 31, (AP): The new documentary “Melania” opens on a close-up of the trademark stilettos of first lady Melania Trump as she walks the halls of Mar-a-Lago, her Palm Beach home, in early January 2025, following her as she climbs into a dark SUV for the short drive to the airport and a flight aboard her husband’s personal plane to New York and their Trump Tower penthouse home.

The movie, which stretches nearly two hours, is a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the first lady’s life during the 20 days before she resumed the role last year. The first lady, who is known to fiercely protect her privacy, had film crews follow her in Palm Beach, Florida; New York City and Washington, during that window to show her transition from a private citizen to public figure to an audience that mostly regards her as kind of a mystery.

“With this film, I want to show the American people my journey,” she says in the documentary, which opened Friday in theaters in the US and around the world.

Here are some takeaways:

Viewers follow Melania Trump through a variety of meetings - and fittings - where the former fashion model appears keenly focused on the precise fit of her inaugural coat and hat and the gown she plans to wear to the balls. In one of the scenes where she’s wearing the coat, she asks for it to be tightened around her hips. In another, after she comes downstairs in the strapless gown, her request is for the black trim at the top to be fixed straight across and to not flop.

She reviews the minute arrangements for a pre-inaugural candlelight dinner in Washington for President Donald Trump’s donors, such as the invitations and the caviar served inside a golden egg. And she works on furnishing the family’s private living quarters on the second floor of the White House. She asks her interior designer for a bigger bed for their son, Barron, “because he’s much taller now” than in Trump’s first term.

Development

Melania Trump, who was involved in every aspect of the film’s development, includes scenes from meetings with some powerful women before Inauguration Day: a video call with Brigitte Macron, the French president’s wife, to discuss working together on children’s initiatives, and a sit-down with Queen Rania of Jordan.

She also meets with Aviva Siegel, who had been held hostage by Hamas militants after the Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, and whose husband of 44 years was still in captivity at the time of the meeting. The film’s credits say Melania Trump played a key role in winning the release of Siegel’s husband.

She and President Trump attend a meeting with Secret Service officials to review plans for the day. Told that there will be several points along the parade route where they could get out of the limousine to walk along Pennsylvania Avenue, she asks, “Is it safe?”

She doesn’t appear reassured by the answer, and says she knows Barron will not get out of the car. Trump had been the target of two assassination attempts during his campaign, including one at a rally in Pennsylvania in which his ear was grazed by a bullet and a supporter standing behind him was fatally shot.

Trump eventually moved the traditional outdoor inauguration ceremony indoors due to concerns about bitterly cold weather, and the parade was moved indoors to the Capital One Arena.

Melania Trump, who narrates the documentary, calls it a “practical decision” to move the parade. “But in truth, I was relieved,” she says.

She says in the film that she wants to move beyond the traditional “social duties” of first ladies. In some ways, she’s already done so, especially with the documentary.

Presidents and first ladies generally wait until they leave the White House to pursue such projects to avoid questions about possible conflicts of interest or ethics.

The film, announced before the Trumps returned to the White House, is the product of a reported \$40 million deal with AmazonMGM Studios. Amazon does business with the federal government, and co-founder Jeff Bezos has sought to improve relations with the president.

Melania Trump also has not been tied to living in the White House. In Trump’s first term, she took the unusual step of living in New York for several months so that Barron, then in elementary school, could finish the school year. In the second term, she spent much of the first year in New York and Florida working on the film.



First lady Melania Trump speaks before the premiere of her movie ‘Melania’ at The John F. Kennedy Memorial Center For Performing Arts, Thursday, Jan. 29, in Washington. (AP)

Obituary



Catherine O'Hara, a cast member in the Apple+ series 'The Studio,' poses for a portrait on Thursday, March 20, 2025, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Tributes pour in for ‘Schitt’s Creek’ and ‘Home Alone’ star

Catherine O’Hara, comic legend, dies at 71

LOS ANGELES, Jan 31, (AP): Catherine O’Hara, a gifted Canadian-born comic actor and “SCTV” alum who starred as Macaulay Culkin’s harried mother in two “Home Alone” movies and won an Emmy as the dramatically ditzzy wealthy matriarch Moira Rose in “Schitt’s Creek,” died Friday. She was 71.

O’Hara died at her home in Los Angeles “following a brief illness,” according to a statement from her representatives at Creative Artists Agency. Further details were not immediately available.

O’Hara’s career was launched with the Second City comedy group in Toronto in the 1970s. It was there that she first worked with Eugene Levy, who would become a lifelong collaborator - and her “Schitt’s Creek” costar. The two would be among the original cast of the sketch show “SCTV,” short for “Second City Television.” The series, which began on Canadian TV in the 1970s and aired on NBC in the US, spawned a legendary group of esoteric comedians that O’Hara would work with often, including Martin Short, John Candy, Andrea Martin, Rick Moranis and Joe Flaherty.

O’Hara would win her first Emmy for her writing on the show.

Her second, for best actress in a comedy series, came four decades later, for “Schitt’s Creek,” a career-capping triumph and the perfect personification of her comic talents. The small CBC series created by Levy and his son, Dan, about a wealthy family forced to live in a tiny town would dominate the Emmys in its sixth and final season. It brought O’Hara, always a beloved figure, a new generation of fans and put her at the center of cultural attention.

She told The Associated Press that she pictured Moira, a former soap opera star, as someone who had married rich and wanted to “remind everyone

that (she was) special, too.” With an exaggerated Mid-Atlantic accent and obscure vocabulary, Moira spoke unlike anyone else, using words like “frippet,” “pettifogging” and “unasinous,” to show her desire to be different, O’Hara said. To perfect Moira’s voice, O’Hara would pore through old vocabulary books, “Moiratizing” the dialogue even further than what was already written.

O’Hara also won a Golden Globe and two SAG Awards for the role.

At first, Hollywood didn’t entirely know what to do with O’Hara and her scattershot style. She played oddball supporting characters in Martin Scorsese’s 1985 “After Hours” and Tim Burton’s 1988 “Beetlejuice” - a role she would reprise in the 2024 sequel.

She played it mostly straight as a horrified mother who accidentally abandoned her child in the two “Home Alone” movies. The films were among the biggest box office earners of the early 1990s and their Christmas setting made them TV perennials. They allowed her moments of unironic warmth that she didn’t get often.

Her co-star Culkin was among those paying her tribute Friday.

“Mama, I thought we had time,” Culkin said on Instagram alongside an image from “Home Alone” and a recent recreation of the same pose. “I wanted more. I wanted to sit in a chair next to you. I heard you. But I had so much more to say. I love you.”

Meryl Streep, who worked with O’Hara in “Heartburn,” said in a statement that she “brought love and light to our world, through whipsmart compassion for the collection of eccentrics she portrayed.”

Roles in big Hollywood films didn’t follow “Home Alone,” but O’Hara would find her groove with the crew of improv pros brought together by Christopher

Guest for a series of mockumentaries that began with 1996’s “Waiting for Guffman” and continued with 2000’s “Best in Show,” 2003’s “A Mighty Wind” and 2006’s “For Your Consideration.”

“Best in Show” was the biggest hit and best-remembered film of the series. She and Levy play married couple Gerry and Cookie Fleck, who take their Norwich terrier to a dog show and constantly run into Cookie’s former lovers along the way.

“I am devastated,” Guest said in a statement to the AP. “We have lost one of the comic giants of our age.”

Born and raised in Toronto, O’Hara was the sixth of seven children in a Catholic family of Irish descent. She graduated from Burnhamthorpe Collegiate Institute, an alternative high school. She joined Second City in her early 20s, as an understudy to Gilda Radner before Radner left for “Saturday Night Live.” (O’Hara would briefly be hired for “SNL” but quit before appearing on air.)

Nearly 50 years later, her final roles would be as Seth Rogen’s reluctant executive mentor and freelance fixer on “The Studio” and a dramatic turn as therapist to Pedro Pascal and other dystopia survivors on HBO’s “The Last of Us.” Both earned her Emmy nominations. She would get 10 in her career.

“Oh, genius to be near you,” Pascal said on Instagram. “Eternally grateful. There is less light in my world.”

Earlier this month, Rogen shared a photo on Instagram of him and O’Hara shooting the second season of “The Studio.”

O’Hara is survived by her husband, Bo Welch, sons Matthew and Luke, and siblings Michael O’Hara, Mary Margaret O’Hara, Maureen Jolley, Marcus O’Hara, Tom O’Hara and Patricia Wallace.

Variety

LAS VEGAS: A Nevada jury on Friday convicted “Dances With Wolves” actor Nathan Chasing Horse of sexually assaulting Indigenous women and girls in a case that sent shock waves through Indian Country.

The jurors in Las Vegas found Chasing Horse guilty of 13 of the 21 charges he faced. Most of the guilty verdicts centered on Chasing Horse’s conduct with a victim who was 14 when he began assaulting her. He was acquitted of some sexual assault charges when the main victim was older and lived with him and his other companions.

Chasing Horse, 49, faces a minimum of 25 years in prison. His sentencing is scheduled for March 11.

He has also been charged with sex crimes in other states as well as Canada. British Columbia prosecutors said Friday that once Chasing Horse has been sentenced and any appeals are finished in the US, they will assess next steps in their prosecution.

Friday’s verdict marked the climax of a yearslong effort to prosecute Chasing Horse after he was first arrested and indicted in 2023. Prosecutors said Chasing Horse used his reputation as a Lakota medicine man

to prey on Indigenous women and girls. (AP)



LOS ANGELES: Journalist Don Lemon, who dared the Trump administration to come after him after he covered an anti-immigration enforcement protest that disrupted a service at a Minnesota church, was indicted for civil rights crimes.



Lemon

The four were charged with conspiracy and interfering with the First Amendment rights of worshippers during the Jan. 18 protest at the Cities Church in St. Paul,

where a US Immigration and Customs Enforcement official is a pastor. Lemon, who was fired from CNN in 2023, was due to appear Friday in federal court in Los Angeles. He has said he has no affiliation to the organization that went into the church and he was there as a solo journalist chronicling protesters. (AP)



NEW YORK: More than 20 years after the release of the multimillion-selling “The Time Traveler’s Wife,” author Audrey Niffenegger has completed her long-awaited sequel.

Hanover Square Press announced Friday that “Life Out of Order” will come out Oct. 27. The protagonist this time is violinist Alba DeTamble, the daughter of time traveler Henry DeTamble. She shares his Chrono-Displacement Disorder, which involuntarily propels her out of the present.

“Alba’s story has been a long time coming; when I began, in 2012, her dystopian world seemed far from mine,” Niffenegger said in a statement. “As I wrote through the pandemic and through societal upheaval, our worlds merged. ‘Life Out of Order’ has been an all-consuming book for me; I will miss living in it, but I am happy to offer it to readers, at last.” (AP)

‘Diet culture increases your risk of unhealthy behaviors’

All foods fit in a balanced diet and flexibility can boost health

By Charlotte Carlson
Colorado State University

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

□ □ □

At this, not that. This one food will cure everything. That food is poison. Cut this food out. Try this diet. Don't eat at these times. Eat this food and you'll lose weight. With society's obsession with food, health and weight, statements like these are all over social media, gyms and even health care offices.

But do you need to follow rules like these to be healthy? Most often the answer is no, because health and nutrition is much more complex and nuanced than a simple list of what to eat and what to avoid. Despite this, rules about health and nutrition are so common because of diet culture - a morality imposed by society that sees falling outside the arbitrary ideal of thinness as a personal failure. Diet culture and the people promoting it expect you to pursue or maintain thinness at all times.

Diet culture norms have led to a multibillion-dollar industry promoting diets that each come with their own set of rules, with each claiming it's the only way to be healthy or lose weight. When access to nutrition information is at an all-time high online, people are often left digging through conflicting information when trying to figure out what to eat

or what a healthy diet look likes.

As a registered dietitian specializing in eating disorders, the majority of my clients have been, and continue to be, harmed by diet culture. They wrestle with guilt and shame around food, and their health is often negatively affected by rigid rules about nutrition. Rather than improving health, research has shown that diet culture increases your risk of unhealthy behaviors, including yo-yo dieting, weight cycling and eating disorders.

If the solution to health isn't following the rules of diet culture, what is the answer? I believe an all-foods-fit approach to nutrition can offer an antidote.

All foods fit may sound like "eat whatever you want, whenever you want," but that is an oversimplification of this approach to nutrition. Rather, this model is based on the idea that all foods can fit into a healthy diet by balancing food and nutrition in a way that promotes health. It does this by enabling flexibility in your diet through listening to internal body cues to decide what and when to eat instead of following external rules.

All foods fit allows for nuance to exist in health and nutrition. Diet culture is black and white - foods are either "good" or "bad." But nutrition and health are much more complex. For starters, many factors beyond diet affect health: exercise, sleep, stress, mental health, socioeconomic status, access to food, and health care, to name a few.

Similarly, while general guidelines around nutrition are available, everyone has individual needs based on their preferences, health status, access to food, daily schedule, cook-

ing skills and more. The flexibility of all foods fit can help you make empowered food choices based on your health goals, tastes, exercise habits and life circumstances.

A common pushback to the all-foods-fit approach is that you can't be healthy if you are eating "unhealthy" foods, and giving yourself permission to eat all foods means you'll primarily eat the "bad" ones. However, research shows that removing the morality around food can actually lead to healthier food choices by decreasing stress related to food decisions. This reduces the risk of disordered eating, resulting in improved physical health.

To see what an all-foods-fit approach might look like, imagine you're attending a social event where the food options are pizza, a veggie and dip tray and cookies. According to the diet you're following, pizza, cookies and dips are all "bad" foods to avoid. You grab some of the veggies to eat but are still hungry.

You're starving toward the end of the event, but the only food left is cookies. You plan on eating only one but feel so hungry and guilty that you end up eating a lot of cookies and feel out of control. You feel sick when you go home and promise yourself to do better tomorrow. But this binge-restrict cycle will continue.

It can be incredibly hard to divest from diet culture and adopt an all-foods-fit approach to nutrition and health. Here are some tips to help you get started:

- Remove any moral labels on food. Instead of good or bad, or healthy or unhealthy, think about the name of the food or the nutritional components it has. For example,

chicken is high in protein, broccoli is a source of fiber, and ice cream is a dessert. Neutral labels can help determine what food choices make sense for you in the moment and reduce any guilt or shame around food.

- Focus on your internal cues - hunger, fullness, satisfaction and how food makes you physically feel. Becoming attuned to your body can help you regulate food choices and determine what eating pattern makes you feel your best.

- Eat consistently. When you aren't eating regularly, it can be hard to feel in control around food. Your hunger can become more intense and your body less sensitive to fullness hormones. Implement an eating schedule that spaces food regularly throughout the day, filling any prolonged gaps between meals with a snack. (AP)

- Reintroduce foods you previously restricted. Start small with foods that feel less scary or with a small amount of a food you're anxious about. This could look like adding a piece of chocolate to lunch most days, or trying out a bagel for one breakfast. By intentionally adding these foods back into your diet, you can build trust with yourself that you won't feel out of control around these foods.

- Check in with yourself before eating. Ask yourself, how hungry am I? What sounds good right now? How long until I can eat again?

- And sometimes, more support is needed. This can be especially true if you're experiencing disordered eating habits or have an eating disorder. Consider working with a dietitian to help challenge nutrition misinformation and heal your relationship to food. (AP)

Pakistan vows sustained action to eradicate polio



NASA's new rocket Artemis II sits on Kennedy Space Center's Launch Pad 39-B Thursday, Jan. 22, in Cape Canaveral, Fla. (AP)

AI guides Mars rover

NASA delays first Artemis moonshot with astronauts

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Jan 31, (Agencies): NASA has delayed astronauts' upcoming trip to the moon because of near-freezing temperatures expected at the launch site.

The first Artemis moonshot with a crew is now targeted for no earlier than Feb. 8, two days later than planned.

NASA was all set to conduct a fueling test of the 322-foot (98-meter) moon rocket on Saturday, but called everything off late Thursday because of the expected cold.

The critical dress rehearsal is now set for Monday, weather permitting. The change leaves NASA with only three days in February to send four astronauts around the moon and back, before slipping into March.

"Any additional delays would result in a day for day change," NASA said in a statement Friday.

Heaters are keeping the Orion capsule warm atop the rocket, officials said, and rocket-purging systems are also being adapted to the cold.

Commander Reid Wiseman and his crew remain in quarantine in Houston and their arrival at Kennedy Space Center in Florida is uncertain.

NASA has only a handful of days any given month to launch its first lunar crew in more than half a century. Apollo 17 closed out that storied moon exploration program in 1972.

Complicating matters is the need to launch a fresh crew to the International Space Station as soon as possible, a mission accelerated because of the last crew's early return for medical reasons.

The moonshot will take priority if it can get off by Feb. 11, the last possible launch date for the month, mission managers said Friday.

If that happens, the next station crew will have to wait until the Artemis astronauts are back on Earth before launching later in the month.

Meanwhile, NASA's Perseverance Mars rover has completed its first drives on the Red Planet planned by artificial intelligence (AI), the agency said Friday.

The demonstration, conducted on Dec. 8 and 10 last year, and led by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), used generative AI to create waypoints for the Perseverance rover -- a complex decision-making task that has tra-

ditionally been performed manually by human rover planners.

During the demonstration, the team used a type of generative AI known as vision-language models to analyze existing data from JPL's surface mission dataset. According to NASA, the AI relied on the same imagery and terrain data used by human planners to generate waypoints -- fixed locations where the rover receives a new set of instructions -- enabling Perseverance to safely navigate challenging Martian terrain.

With AI-generated waypoints stored in its memory, Perseverance drove 210 meters on Dec. 8 and another 246 meters two days later.

"This demonstration shows how far our capabilities have advanced and broadens how we will explore other worlds," said NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman.

"Autonomous technologies like this can help missions to operate more efficiently, respond to challenging terrain, and increase science return as distance from Earth grows. It's a strong example of teams applying new technology carefully and responsibly in real operations," he said.

In another related development, through a systematic, multi-year monitoring with China's Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical radio Telescope (FAST), Chinese scientists have, for the first time, witnessed the year-to-year evolution of a fast radio burst (FRB), revealing that it originates in a young supernova remnant.

This discovery, made by a research team composed of scientists from Central China Normal University, Tsinghua University, Yunnan University and the National Astronomical Observatories of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, was recently published in the academic journal Science Bulletin.

Li Di, a chair professor at Tsinghua University and former chief scientist of FAST, said that FRBs, first discovered by humanity in 2007, are the most intense and extremely frequent mysterious bursts in the radio frequency band of the universe. Unraveling the origin and physical mechanisms of FRBs is a research frontier, holding opportunities for major breakthroughs in astronomy and physics.

GENEVA, Jan 31, (Xinhua): The World Health Organization (WHO) said on Friday that two laboratory-confirmed cases of Nipah virus (NiV) infection have been reported in India.

In its latest Disease Outbreak News, the WHO said that the National IHR Focal Point for India on Monday notified it of the two cases detected in West Bengal State.

The infection was confirmed at the National Institute of Virology in Pune on Jan. 13, the WHO said, noting that both cases involve health-care workers at a private hospital.

Indian authorities have identified and tested over 190 contacts, all of whom tested negative, and no further cases have been detected to date, according to the WHO.

This event represents the third NiV outbreak reported in West Bengal following previous outbreaks in 2001 and 2007. Enhanced surveillance and infection prevention and control measures are in place as investigations into the source of exposure continue.

NiV infection is a serious but rare zoonotic disease transmitted between animals and humans and, in some instances, through human-to-human contact.

The WHO assesses the risk posed by Nipah to be moderate at the sub-national level, and low at the national, regional and global levels.

Australia's health minister said on Friday that the government is closely monitoring the outbreak of the Nipah virus in Asia.

Mark Butler told Nine Network television that the Nipah virus has never been detected in Australia, but that authorities were taking the threat posed by an outbreak that began in India in December very seriously.

"The Indian authorities tell us they've got that outbreak under con-



Narayana Multispeciality Hospital where two Nipah cases had been detected since December is seen in Barasat, in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal, Wednesday, Jan. 28. (AP)

trol, but nonetheless, we're monitoring it very, very closely, because this is a very serious virus," he said.

Authorities in Indonesia on Thursday implemented stricter monitoring for passengers arriving from overseas at the I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport in Bali, which is the most popular overseas destination for Australian travelers.

Butler said on Friday that Australia has clear protocols in place for sick travelers arriving from overseas and that the government has not received any advice to change those protocols.

Indonesian authorities have stepped up passenger screening at Bali's I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport to prevent the possible entry of the Nipah virus, an airport official said on Thursday.

Gede Eka Sandi Asmadi, head of the Communication and Legal Division of PT Angkasa Pura Indonesia at the airport, said stricter monitoring has been implemented for passengers arriving from overseas amid

a rise in Nipah virus cases abroad.

He said the airport is closely coordinating with the Class I Denpasar Center for Health Quarantine to conduct comprehensive supervision in arrival areas, including body temperature checks using thermal scanners at international and domestic terminals.

Passengers showing symptoms will be referred by health quarantine officers to a designated hospital in Denpasar for further examination, Gede said, urging travelers to maintain their health and stay informed about the latest developments related to the virus.

Meanwhile, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday pledged continued efforts, with international support, to eradicate polio from the country.

Sharif made the remarks during a meeting with a high-level delegation of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation at the Prime Minister's Office, an official statement said. He said Pakistan would continue

Carter Center aims to develop diagnostic tests for animals

World creeps closer to eradicating human Guinea worm cases, with just 10 last year

ATLANTA, Jan 31, (AP): There were only 10 reported cases of Guinea worm infections confined to three countries in 2025, a historic low announced Friday by The Carter Center.

The new mark comes barely a year after the death of former US President Jimmy Carter, who often said he hoped to outlive the Guinea worm. When the former president's center launched an eradication program in the mid-1980s, the parasite still afflicted millions of people in developing countries.

"We think about President Carter's legacy" and his push to get to zero cases, said Adam Weiss, director of the center's Guinea worm eradication program, in an interview. "These might not be seen as the number one problems in the world, but they are the number one problems for people that suffer from these diseases. So we continue to charge ourselves with his mission of alleviating as much pain and suffering as we can."

In 2025, four human cases were reported in Chad, four in Ethiopia and two in South Sudan. Animal infections still number in the hundreds, declining in some countries but up slightly overall and making it harder to predict when Guinea worm might be eradicated.

The 10 human cases mark a 33% decline from 15 cases reported in 2024. Angola, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and Mali reported zero human cases for the second consecutive year.

Guinea worm would join smallpox as only the two human diseases to be eradicated.

The worm is contracted by consuming water that contains larvae. It then grows inside an infected person, reaching as much as a meter long and the diameter of spaghetti. The worm then exits the person's body through a blister, which causes intense pain.



In this March 9, 2007 file photo, a guinea worm is extracted by a health worker from a child's foot at a containment center in Savelugu, Ghana. (AP)

Infections can spread when those who suffer from the condition sometimes immerse themselves in water to ease symptoms - allowing the worm to deposit larvae that can be consumed by others. The same cycle can happen through land animal infections when they come to the water source. Humans also can be infected by consuming fish or amphibious creatures that have consumed larvae.

The Carter Center's eradication program has worked alongside government health ministries and other organizations for decades to educate the public, train volunteers and distribute water filters in affected areas.

There is no treatment for Guinea worm, though infected people can take pain medication.

Weiss said the eradication program's next step is developing diagnostic tests, especially for animals. Testing long before an infected person or animal becomes symptomatic would allow behavioral changes to

implementing a comprehensive anti-polio strategy in coordination with provincial governments to ensure nationwide access for vaccination teams, adding that relevant Public Sector Development Program projects would be sustained.

Despite significant progress, further urgent measures were still needed to eliminate the disease, he said.

The prime minister thanked the Gates Foundation and Muslim brotherly countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, for their support.

Health authorities have expressed concern over the growing prevalence of cholera in Malawi, with at least three deaths and more than 50 confirmed cases recorded since October 2025.

Minister of Health and Sanitation Madalitso Baloyi voiced concern on Wednesday during a sensitization meeting with the authorities of the commercial city of Blantyre, which is leading in the number of cases.

According to the minister, Blantyre has the highest prevalence of the cholera outbreak, with two deaths and 30 cases recorded in the city alone.

She also confirmed the recent detection of one case of poliovirus type 2 in Blantyre, noting that the samples were sent to South Africa for laboratory tests, where they turned out positive.

Director of Health and Social Services for Blantyre Gift Kawalazira attributed the outbreaks to poor sanitation, among other factors.

According to Kawalazira, the poliovirus was detected in a 7-year-old boy in Blantyre who had never been vaccinated since birth due to his parents' beliefs.

Malawian government officials are working with the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and other organizations to contain the outbreaks through vaccinations and public awareness campaigns on hygiene.

Climate change may cause over 500K malaria deaths in Africa

SYDNEY, Jan 31, (Xinhua): Climate change could cause more than 100 million additional malaria cases and 500,000 extra deaths across Africa by 2050, new research has revealed.

Modelling shows extreme weather disruptions could drive 79 percent of additional malaria cases and 93 percent of deaths across Africa by 2050, mainly from floods and cyclones damaging homes, bednets and health services, said a statement of The Kids Research Institute Australia on Thursday.

The study, published in Nature on Wednesday by the institute and Australia's Curtin University, analyzed 25 years of data on climate, malaria burden, control interventions, socioeconomic indicators, and extreme weather patterns across Africa.

Most previous studies focused on climate change's direct effects on mosquitoes and parasites, said study lead author, Associate Professor Tasmin Symons, a member of the Malaria Atlas Project, a research group based at the institute.

This research shows extreme weather poses the greatest threat to malaria control by repeatedly damaging housing, health services and interventions that suppress transmission, Symons said.

"While changes in transmission ecology are real, they are comparatively small. When those changes are combined with repeated disruption to malaria control, the impacts become substantial," she said.

Researchers urge embedding climate resilience into malaria policies and health planning to sustain progress toward eradication.

Jokic returns strong as Nuggets knock off Clippers

Suns sweep back-to-back, ending Cavaliers’ winning streak at 5

DENVER, Jan 31, (AP): Nikola Jokic had 31 points and 12 rebounds in his first game in a month, Tim Hardaway Jr. added 22 points and the Denver Nuggets knocked off the Los Angeles Clippers 122-109.

Jokic, the three-time NBA MVP, missed 16 games after injuring his left knee in the first half of a Dec. 29 loss at Miami. The Nuggets went 10-6 during that stretch, which also included extended absences from starters Cameron Johnson and Christian Braun.

Jokic’s 29th double-double of the season came despite being on a minutes restriction imposed by coach David Adelman. The 30-year-old Serbian was limited to 25 minutes, his second-fewest in a game this season.

James Harden had 25 points and nine assists for Los Angeles. The Clippers had won 16 of their previous 19, the best win percentage in that NBA during that period.

Jokic scored 11 points over a stretch of 3:47 in the fourth quarter that extended Denver’s lead from five to 16. The Nuggets improved to 7-3 this season in the second game of a back-to-back.

Suns 126, Cavaliers 113

In Phoenix, Dillon Brooks scored 27 points and the Phoenix Suns beat Cleveland to sweep a back-to-back and end the Cavaliers’ winning streak at a season-best five games.

On Thursday night against Detroit, the Suns gave out “Dillon the Villain” T-shirts before Brooks scored a career-high 40 points in a 114-96 victory. Phoenix has won three in a row with scoring leader Devin Booker sidelined by a sprained ankle.

Brooks was 9 of 14 from the field. He hit 2 of 4 3-pointers and 7 of 8 free throws. The Suns were 23 of 48 from 3-point range.

Jordan Goodwin added 17 points to help Phoenix improve to 30-19. Collin Gillespie had 16 points.

Phoenix led 52-47 at the half. Cleveland had 15 first-half turnovers.

Lakers 142, Wizards 111

In Washington, Luka Doncic had a triple-double by halftime and finished with 37 points, 13 assists and 11 rebounds in the Los Angeles Lakers’ rout of the Washington Wizards.

Doncic had 26 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds in the first two quarters. His 10th rebound came in the waning seconds of the second.



Denver Nuggets forward Spencer Jones, left, and Los Angeles Clippers center John Collins pursue a loose ball in the second half of an NBA basketball game in Denver. (AP)

The last time a player had a triple-double in the first half, according to Sportradar, was when Jalen Johnson of the Atlanta Hawks did it Dec. 5. Johnson had 11 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds in the half.

LeBron James scored 20 points for the Lakers, looking spry at age 41 when he threw down an alley-oop in the first half with only his left hand. And he was not finished dunking.

Fans were chanting for James’ son, Bronny, to come in the game before the midpoint of the third quarter. That finally happened with 5:29 left in the fourth, and even the younger James broke free for a one-handed dunk on a breakaway.

Deandre Ayton had 28 points and 13 rebounds. He was 12 of 14 from the field, and the Lakers shot 61% overall.

Pistons 131, Warriors 124

In San Francisco, Cade Cunningham had 29 points and 11 assists and the Detroit Pistons jumped to a big lead early before holding off the Golden State Warriors.

Stephen Curry scored 23 points for his fourth straight 20-point performance before exiting with right knee soreness. Draymond Green had 15 points, seven assists, seven rebounds and his 10th technical.

Gui Santos’ 3-pointer with 6:56 remaining pulled the Warriors within 117-112 and Buddy Hield’s layup at 6:19 made it a three-point game. Santos matched his season high with 16 points.

The Pistons’ 77 first-half points were the most allowed by Golden State in any half this season. But the Warriors rallied back in their typical

third-quarter fashion to cut a 20-point deficit to single digits - yet 18 turnovers proved costly leading to 31 points for the Pistons.

Knicks 127, Trail Blazers 97

In New York, Jalen Brunson scored 26 points and OG Anunoby added 24 points as the New York Knicks extended their winning streak to five games with victory over the Portland Trail Blazers.

Josh Hart had 20 points, six rebounds and five assists, and Karl-Anthony Towns finished with 14 points and 20 rebounds for New York. Hart moved into a tie with Atlanta’s Jalen Johnson for the NBA lead in double-doubles with 31.

New York (30-18) won by double digits for the fourth time in its past five games and improved to 19-6 at home this season.

Celtics 112, Kings 93

In Boston, Payton Pritchard scored 29 points, Baylor Scheierman had 16 and the Boston Celtics rolled to win over the Sacramento Kings.

Neemias Queta added 10 points and 15 rebounds for the Celtics, who rebounded from Wednesday’s home loss to Atlanta. Pritchard and Scheierman combined to shoot 9 of 13 from the 3-point line, while Derek White had nine assists.

Zach LaVine scored 17 points for Sacramento, which has lost eight in a row and played on the second night of a back-to-back Nique Clifford added 15 points.

Magic 130, Raptors 120

In Orlando, Desmond Bane scored 16 of his 32 points in the fourth quarter to help the Orlando Magic overcome a 13-point deficit and beat the Toronto

Raptors.

Paolo Banchero added 20 points, 10 rebounds and six assists for Orlando. Wendell Carter Jr. had 23 points and seven rebounds and Anthony Black had 25 points and six assists in the Magic’s second straight win after four straight losses. Brandon Ingram scored 35 points for the Raptors, who led by as many as 14 points late in the third quarter and were seeking their fifth straight road win. Scottie Barnes finished with 19 points, nine rebounds, six assists and four blocks.

Nets 109, Jazz 99

In Salt Lake City, Egor Demin set an NBA rookie record by making a 3-pointer in his 34th straight game and finished with 25 points and 10 rebounds to help the Brooklyn Nets snap a seven-game losing streak with victory over the Utah Jazz.

Demin, who was 6 of 12 from 3-point range, set the mark on the first basket for Brooklyn.

Cam Thomas added 21 points for the Nets, Day’ron Sharpe had 16 points and nine rebounds, and Danny Wolf added 14 points. Brooklyn outscored the Jazz 20-2 in second-chance points.

Keyonte George led Utah with 26 points and seven assists. Brice Sensabaugh had 18 points off the bench for the Jazz, who have lost five straight games and nine of their last 10. Kyle Filipowski had 14 points and 12 rebounds, while Ace Bailey added in 12 points.

Pelicans 114, Grizzlies 106

In New Orleans, Saddiq Bey and Derik Queen each had 22 points, Zion Williamson added 21 and the New Orleans Pelicans beat the Memphis Grizzlies.

Williamson had his fourth consecutive game with 20-plus points. Herb Jones added 16 points to help the Pelicans improve to 13-37.

Cam Spencer and Jaren Jackson, Jr. each had 16 points for Memphis. Cedric Coward added 13 and Jock Landale had 12. The Grizzlies are 18-28.

Grizzlies star guard Ja Morant was inactive for the fourth consecutive game because of a sprained left elbow. Morant, who last played Jan. 21 against Atlanta, has missed 25 games this season.

New Orleans outscored Memphis 35-15 in the third quarter to take a 93-76 lead.

The Pelicans made five 3-pointers in the third quarter, including three from Jose Alvarado. New Orleans was just as stout on the defensive end, holding the Grizzlies to its second-lowest scoring quarter of the season.

Gao leads the charge

China targets podium finishes in speedskating at Milan-Cortina

BEIJING, Jan 31, (Xinhua): With the Milan-Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics approaching, Team China will arrive with one of its largest-ever speedskating contingents and is aiming for the podium. However, replicating its historic gold-medal success from Beijing 2022 will require overcoming intense global competition and a new generation of dominant rivals.

China has secured 15 quota places, seven men and eight women, tying Canada for the second-largest squad behind traditional powerhouse the Netherlands. Having qualified for every event except the men’s 10,000 meters, the team equals China’s record participation at the 2006 Turin Games, underlining ambitions across sprint, middle-distance and team events.

Leading the charge is defending 500-meter Olympic champion Gao Tingyu. Four years ago in Beijing, Gao became China’s first male Olympic gold medalist in speedskating, breaking the Olympic record in the process. Now heading into his third Winter Games, his path to Milan has been far from smooth. Knee injuries hit him last season, forcing him to focus on rehab during the 2025 summer. He has since regrouped, taking a World Cup bronze in Salt Lake City this season.

However, the men’s 500-meter field has been reshaped since Beijing 2022. Gao now faces a surge of young talents, most notably American standout Jordan Stolz. For the experienced Gao, the key to defending his title will be balancing his explosive start with the late-race speed needed to hold off younger finishers.

In the middle distances, China’s main hope is Ning Zhongyan. The two-time Olympian finished third overall in the 1,500-meter World Cup standings this season, earning two silver and two bronze medals. Ning is also a vital component of the men’s team pursuit squad, which recently earned a World Cup bronze, boosting confidence for a potential breakthrough at Milan-Cortina.

On the women’s side, Han Mei has maintained steady form in the 1,000 meters and 1,500 meters, making her a strong contender. Meanwhile, the



Speed skater Gao Tingyu of the Chinese delegation for Milan-Cortina 2026 Olympic Winter Games is seen during the inaugural meeting of the Chinese delegation for Milan-Cortina 2026 Olympic Winter Games in Beijing, capital of China. (Xinhua)

women’s team pursuit is viewed as one of China’s best medal opportunities, although it will face fierce competition from established lineups representing the Netherlands, Japan and Canada.

Internationally, the obstacles are formidable. Since Beijing 2022, 21-year-old Stolz has emerged as the sport’s dominant all-rounder, leading the 500, 1,000 and 1,500 meters this season. Finding a way past him will be the central challenge for both Gao and Ning. The Dutch team, which has amassed 133 Olympic speedskating medals including 48 golds, returns with a lineup led by Femke Kok, Kjeld Nuis and Jennings de Boo. Kok and Nuis have both shown strong form this season, while Suzanne Schulting is set to compete in both speedskating and short track.

Canada, the defending Olympic champion in the women’s team pursuit, is aiming to retain its title, while Japan, Norway and Poland also bring deep, competitive squads.

Finalists focusing on recovery

Vet Djokovic and Alcaraz have shots at tennis history in Australian Open final

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 31, (AP): In a moment of exhaustion and elation, Novak Djokovic recognized Margaret Court in the crowd and thanked her for staying up so late to watch him get within a single victory of becoming the most decorated tennis player of all time.

The 83-year-old Court was among the VIPs at Rod Laver Arena for Djokovic’s epic five-set win over two-time defending Australian Open champion Jannik Sinner in a grueling semifinal that ended after 1:30 a.m. Saturday.

For now, they share the all-time record of 24 Grand Slam singles titles. That could change Sunday.

Djokovic’s energy-sapping win over Sinner set up a championship decider against top-ranked Carlos Alcaraz, the 22-year-old Spaniard bidding to become the youngest man ever to complete a career Grand Slam.

Alcaraz and Sinner have combined to block Djokovic’s push for a 25th major title, splitting the last eight majors evenly between them.

In his on-court interview to cap Day 13, Djokovic thanked Court for hanging around to witness him end a streak of five losses to Sinner, and also snap a run of four semifinal defeats at the Grand Slam tournaments.

“Some legends stayed up to 2 a.m.!” he said. “Thank-you so much for being here.”

Djokovic owns just about every record there is available to him, surpassing the marks set down by Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. He has one more than Serena Williams, who holds the women’s Open era record at 23.

He’s made no secret of the fact he’s only in Australia for the coveted 25th.

Some analysts debate the greatness of Court’s career tally because she won 13 of her 24 major singles titles before the professional Open era began in 1968. Not Djokovic. For him, the numbers speak volumes.

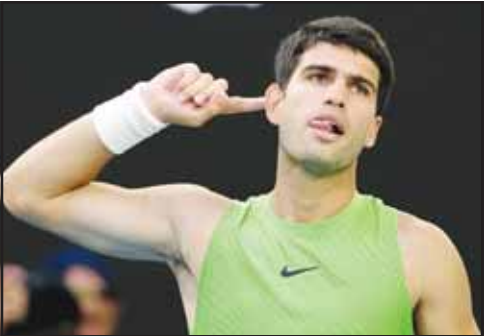
After beating one half of the “Sincaraz” rivalry, Djokovic gets a shot at another in the 11th final of his career at Melbourne Park. He has won all 10 previously.

The 38-year-old Djokovic said he was sore and tired and likely wouldn’t do much practice Saturday, prioritizing recovery.

Alcaraz also said he’ll be focussing on recov-



Novak Djokovic of Serbia celebrates after defeating Jannik Sinner of Italy in their semifinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)



Carlos Alcaraz of Spain reacts during his semifinal match against Alexander Zverev of Germany at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

ery after struggling with cramps and a sore right leg in a five-set, 5-hour and 27-minute win over Alexander Zverev. It was the longest semifinal ever at the Australian Open.

It wasn’t the longest match ever at Melbourne Park - not surprisingly, Djokovic holds that record with his 5:53 win over Rafael Nadal in the 2012 final.

Djokovic crossed paths with Alcaraz between the five-set semifinals and commended him on pushing through. Alcaraz was on an exercise bike

warming down and Djokovic was still preparing for his delayed start to the night.

When he was setting goals for this season, Djokovic said he’d asked himself: “Okay, what is it that I’m looking for from myself?”

“I was imagining really playing against Jannik and Carlos at the final stages of Grand Slams and battling it out,” he said. “Very fortunate to already get it in the first Slam of the year.”

Djokovic conceded he was lucky to reach the semifinals, after getting a walkover in the fourth round before Lorenzo Musetti retired during their quarterfinal after taking the first two sets.

Against Sinner, there were times when Djokovic looked down and almost out of gas, but his resilience was phenomenal. Sinner wasn’t able to convert eight breakpoint chances in the fifth set -- he was only 2 of 18 in the match - and Djokovic converted the first breakpoint chance he had in the deciding set.

Alcaraz also was wobbly in the third set, taking a medical timeout for what he thought was an injured adductor in his right leg. Turns out, it was more likely cramps. It will be his first final in Australia.

“I just got to do whatever it takes to be as good as I can for the final,” Alcaraz said.

Djokovic hasn’t won a major since the 2023 U.S. Open but, while others may have written off his chances, he never doubted he could rise to that level.

“There’s a lot of people that doubted me ... a lot of experts all of a sudden that wanted to retire me,” he said. “I want to thank them all because they gave me strength. They gave me motivation to prove them wrong.” Djokovic is aiming to become the oldest man in the Open era to win a major title. Alcaraz is aiming to be the youngest ever to win titles at all four Grand Slams.

“There’s always for me, also for Carlos - because of his age and everything he’s achieved - history is on the line,” Djokovic said.

Nadal, who will be at the final, was asked Saturday to pick a preferred champion.

“I feel I have to support Carlos,” Nadal said of his fellow Spaniard. But “If Novak wins, I will be happy for him. It is spectacular what he’s doing at this stage of his career.”

Dispute over medal stripped from Chiles goes back to Swiss court

GENEVA, Jan 31, (AP): American gymnast Jordan Chiles may reclaim the bronze medal on floor exercise from the 2024 Paris Olympics that was stripped from her following an appeal by Romania after all.

Switzerland’s supreme court said its judges sent the “highly exceptional circumstances” of the bronze medal awarded in the women’s floor exercise back to the Court of Arbitration for Sport to examine new evidence.

The outcome of an event that created a celebrated Olympic photo featuring Chiles, floor exercise silver medalist Simone Biles and gold medalist Rebeca Andrade of Brazil - all women of color - rests on just a handful of seconds: Can the U.S. team prove it made a timely appeal in the Olympic arena on behalf of Chiles?

The federal judges’ ruling - highly unusual in cases of this nature - suggested Chiles could regain the bronze medal she originally

got in Paris after challenging her judged score.

Chiles’ third-place finish was overturned within days on appeal by the Romanian team to the CAS’ Olympic court in Paris. The medal was awarded in Bucharest the next week to Ana Maria Barbosu.

The federal court wants CAS to examine a recording that could show the original U.S. challenge of the judged score was within a one-minute deadline on the field of play.

“In the highly exceptional circumstances of the case in question,” the Swiss Federal Tribunal said in a statement, “it considers that there is a likelihood for the audio-visual recording of the final on Aug. 5, 2024 to lead to a modification of the contested award in favor of the applicant (Chiles).”

The CAS said in a statement Thursday it “can now ensure a thorough judicial review of the new evidence that has since been made available.”

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‘Proud to support Faisal Al-Rajehi and Faisal Surour’

ALSAYER renews partnership with Kuwait Paralympic Committee to empower para-athletic champions

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est. Co. W.L.L. officially held a signing ceremony to announce the renewal of its strategic partnership with the Kuwait Paralympic Committee. The event underscores ALSAYER’s ongoing commitment to supporting two Kuwaiti para-athletes Mr. Faisal Al-Rajehi and Mr. Faisal Surour on their journey toward international sporting excellence.

The ceremony was attended by Mr. Faisal Bader Al Sayer, Chairman of ALSAYER Group, and Mr. Mansour Al-Sarheed, Chairman of the Kuwait Paralympic Committee, alongside senior management members from ALSAYER.

According to Mr. Faisal Bader Al Sayer:

“At ALSAYER, we believe that movement is a human right. Our continued association with the Kuwait Paralympic Committee is a testament to our belief in the power of determination. We are proud to support Faisal Al-Rajehi and Faisal Surour as they embody the Toyota’s valued of ‘Start Your Impossible’ as a role model, aiming for greatness and to inspire next generation of athletes”

Expressing his appreciation for the continued collaboration Mr. Mansour Al-Sarheed said:

“The support from ALSAYER and Toyota is vital for our athletes’ preparation for the global stage. This partnership empowers our champions to focus on their performance and represent Kuwait with pride.”

Championing the “Start Your Impossible” Spirit

This partnership is a key pillar of the Global Team Toy-

ota Athletes (GTTA) initiative, a worldwide movement launched by Toyota Motor Corporation. By aligning with the “Start Your Impossible” philosophy, ALSAYER aims to challenge the boundaries of human achievement.

The renewal of this agreement represents a shared vision to:

- Promote Inclusivity: Elevating the profile of para-sports within the region.
- Drive Excellence: Providing the necessary resources for athletes to compete at the highest international levels.
- National Pride: Encouraging athletes to aim for the podium at global competitions, bringing honor and recognition to the State of Kuwait.

Since the inception of this partnership in 2019, the association between ALSAYER and the Kuwait Paralympic Committee has yielded immense success, marking a remarkable chapter for para-sports in the country. ALSAYER acknowledges the pivotal role of the Committee in this journey; their tireless efforts in developing world-class infrastructure, specialized conditioning programs, and elite coaching have been fundamental to the athletes’ growth.

By providing a professional environment that fosters talent and resilience, the Committee has enabled Kuwaiti para-athletes to excel on the global stage. ALSAYER is proud to build upon this legacy of excellence, supporting the Committee’s mission to ensure that the nation’s champions have every resource necessary to achieve their full potential and bring home international honors.



Senior management members from ALSAYER pose with the athletes during the signing ceremony.

Bid to boost GCC student sports

Kuwait hosts historic Kuwaiti-Emirati School Football Challenge

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: The Kuwaiti-Emirati School Football Challenge kicked off Saturday at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium in Fahaheel, under the patronage of Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaai.

The tournament, which runs until Feb 3, features student teams from both countries and includes six competitive matches -- two per day.

The sporting atmosphere reflects the spirit of Gulf brotherhood and opens new horizons for school sports cooperation, while reinforcing the values of fair competition and collaboration between students from Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

In an exclusive statement to the newspaper on the sidelines of the press conference that the ministry organized on Saturday to announce the tournament, Dr. Hessa Jassim Arab -- acting Director of the Department of Technical Guidance for Physical Education at the ministry -- confirmed that the tournament is the first of its kind in the field of school sports in



Photo by Samer Shaqir

the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. She disclosed that it was organized within the framework of cooperation between the ministries of education in both countries and as part of a broad protocol covering the

educational, sports, cultural and media aspects.

She said “the tournament is the real launching pad for Gulf school sports cooperation. It is an implementation of the directives of the leadership of the

two brotherly countries, with the support of the Education Minister. Kuwait is hosting the first leg, while the second leg will be held in the UAE.”

She pointed out that football was chosen as the starting match for the

tournament between the two countries, because it is the most popular sport among students. She emphasized that the tournament serves as a platform for discovering student talent, fostering a spirit of fair competition, and exchanging experiences between students, teachers and educational staff in both countries. She also unveiled plans to organize other tournaments in padel sports, basketball and volleyball.

She added “the tournament aligns with Kuwait Vision 2035, particularly the pillar of educational sustainability and the development of student talent in various fields.” She asserted that the ministry is working hard to prepare and qualify students to become the core of future champions at the regional and international levels.

On the other hand, Dr. Thuraya Al-Salmi, head of the UAE delegation, Director of the Technical and Vocational Education Department, and acting Director of the Student Life Quality Department at the UAE Ministry of Education, expressed her deep appreciation for the warm welcome and excellent organization, emphasizing that the championship reflects the deep fraternal ties between the two brotherly nations.

She explained that the championship is not just a sporting competition, but a comprehensive educational message affirming that sports have become a national priority and an essential tool for building a healthy and disciplined generation and discovering talent at an early age.

She noted that the Kuwaiti-Emirati Challenge Championship is the first collaboration of its kind in the field of school sports at the Gulf level and forms a true foundation for launching broader Gulf school championships in the future, encompassing various team and individual sports, thus contributing to establishing sporting sustainability and enhancing educational integration among the GCC countries.

The conference concluded by emphasizing that this championship represents the beginning of a long path of school sports partnerships, a fundamental building block in creating champions from the classroom and promoting the values of belonging, teamwork, and positive competition between students from Kuwait and the UAE, in a model to be emulated at the level of the Gulf region.

Al-Roumi praises Egyptian horse racing success

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Alaa Hamad Al-Roumi, owner of Al-Raya Stud, has praised the enthusiasm and support of breeders of purebred Arabian horses with Egyptian bloodlines for their continued backing of horse racing at the Kuwait Equestrian and Hunting Club. Through a weekly cup dedicated to Egyptian horses, organized in collaboration with the club’s management, the initiative has sparked strong competition among owners competing for top honors.

The upcoming Egyptian horse race at the club’s 14th meeting, scheduled for next Monday, will be sponsored by Al-Nawasi Stud owner Alam Ali Al-Kandari.

So far this season, up to the 13th meeting, several horses have stood out in the Egyptian Arabian races:

Shahin Al-Mughira, ridden by jockey Faisal Al-Farmawi, has secured three victories, winning the cups of Al-Safinat Stud (9th meeting), Iris Stud (10th meeting), and Al-Danat Stud (12th meeting).

Sahab has claimed first place twice, taking the cups of Al-Raya Stud (1st meeting) and Al-Nawader Stud (11th meeting).



Alaa Hamad Al-Roumi

Shamikh Al-Oseimi also won twice, with victories in the cups of Al-Muriyat Stud (2nd meeting) and Al-Shaya Stud (6th meeting).

Bukhayta Al-Ghnaim took home two cups, sponsored by Ajmal Stud and Al-Diwan Stud.

The season has highlighted the growing prominence of Egyptian-blood Arabian horses, with competitive races and dedicated support from breeders and sponsors alike, keeping the sport vibrant and exciting.

Al-Qurain defeats Kazma to strengthen final four hopes

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Al-Qurain claimed a valuable 71–67 win over Kazma in their Round 13 league clash at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex Hall. In the same round, Al-Sulaibikhat cruised past Al-Sahel with a 117–82 victory.

The win lifted Al-Qurain to 21 points in third place, trailing league leaders Kuwait Club (24 points) and second-placed Al-Qadsia (22 points), while Kazma also remain on 22 points. Al-Sulaibikhat moved up to fifth with 19 points, as Al-Sahel stayed seventh on 14.

Al-Qurain’s victory significantly boosted their chances of sealing a place in the Final Four alongside the top teams. In contrast, Al-Sulaibikhat now face an uphill task, needing wins against the league’s leading sides while avoiding any dropped points to keep their qualification hopes alive.

The league is contested over



Al-Qurain player shoots over an opponent.

three stages, with the top four teams advancing to the Final Four, which will be decided through a best-of-three playoff format.

Al-Qurain capitalized on Kazma’s recent struggles, caused by injuries to several key players, securing a deserved victory that keeps them firmly in contention.

German soccer federation rules out WC boycott despite calls to oppose Trump

MUNICH, Jan 31, (AP): The German soccer federation has ruled out a boycott of the World Cup despite calls from within to send a message to U.S. President Donald Trump.

“We believe in the unifying power of sport and the global impact that a FIFA World Cup can have, the federation said in a statement issued late Friday. “Our goal is to strengthen this positive force - not to prevent it.”

The federation, known as the DFB, said its executive committee met and discussed the option of a boycott of the tournament in the United States, Canada and Mexico, a consideration first proposed last week by DFB vice president Oke Göttlich.

Göttlich, who is also the president of Bundesliga club St. Pauli, referred to Trump’s recent actions and statements and said it was time to “seriously consider” a boycott.

In what appears to be a public rebuke to Göttlich, however, the DFB said “debates on sports policy should be conducted internally and not in public.”

The DFB said a boycott “is not currently under consideration. The DFB is in contact with representatives from politics, security, business, and sports in preparation for the tournament” from June 11-July 19.

Trump has sowed discord in Europe with his takeover bid for Greenland and threats to impose tariffs on European countries that opposed it, while U.S. actions in Venezuela and at home in dealing with protests in American cities have also raised alarm. Former FIFA president Sepp Blatter last week advised fans to stay away from the tournament.

When president, however, Blatter opposed calls to boycott the 2018 World Cup in Russia over concerns about Ukraine.

“Football can not be boycotted in any country,” he said at the time.

Ahead of this summer’s tournament, fans have concerns about high ticket prices, while travel bans imposed by the Trump administration could also prohibit supporters from some competing nations from attending.

Blanc gives Crans-Montana event home winner with Vonn sitting out day after crash

CRANS-MONTANA, Switzerland, Jan 31, (AP): Moving her arms like a conductor, Swiss skier Malorie Blanc stood in the leader’s box and enjoyed the singing and waving of flags by her home crowd in the stands.

Blanc gave Crans-Montana something to cheer about, a month after the fatal fire in a bar, by winning the last women’s World Cup race before the Milan Cortina Olympics on Saturday, with Lindsey Vonn sitting out the super-G a day after hurting her left knee in a downhill crash.

The result gave the toned-down event in the Valais canton (state) a fitting winner with Blanc being from nearby Ayent, which is just a 20-minute drive away from Crans-Montana.

“I am so happy that I could deliver this show, it’s really a gift for the people and and their support,” said the 22-year-old Blanc, the junior world super-G champion in 2024 who was second in a downhill in Austria a year ago for her only previous World Cup podium.

Blanc edged out 2018 Olympic downhill champion Sofia Goggia by 0.18 seconds, with Breezy Johnson coming 0.36 behind in third for Vonn’s teammate’s first career super-G podium.

Hosting the last pre-Olympic races in the wake of the New Year’s Day tragedy that killed 40 people and injured 116, Crans-Montana stayed clear



Switzerland’s Malorie Blanc speeds down the course during an alpine ski, women’s World Cup Super G, in Crans-Montana, Switzerland. (AP)

of the usual festivities at ski venues, like public bib draws and concerts.

The finish area was stripped of its usual vibrant color and advertising, which were replaced by white and black signs of mourning that read “Our thoughts are with you” in multiple languages.

“I wasn’t sure if it would put me under pressure, but I tried to see it as positive pressure,” Blanc said about skiing at her home race under the circumstances.

“I tried to focus on my skiing, I heard the people at the start, that pushed me, and I am really happy that I have done it.”

Runner-up Goggia, wearing a black armband like the whole Italian team did, also acknowledged it was “not easy” for her to race in the Swiss resort.

“The thought of that drama has accompanied me throughout this month, knowing that I have to compete in this very location,” Goggia said.

This week, the Italian team visited the scene of the fire and laid a bouquet of flowers at the steps of the bar.

“As for my race, I have to say that I am satisfied,” Goggia said. “January has never been an easy month for me, and ending it with a podium is the best way to present myself at the Olympics.”

Satisfied was also how Johnson felt after adding her maiden super-G podium to eight top-three results in downhill. The American won the world downhill title last year but is yet to win a World Cup.

“I have been working on it for a really long time. I respect super-G, I think it’s the hardest event. I always wanted to be good at it,” Johnson said.

A late starter with bib 29, Johnson bumped Roberta Melesi off the podium after the heralded Italian initially led the race and hoped for her first career top-three result, having had just one top 10 in more than eight seasons on the World Cup circuit.

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Frankfurt's Mario Goetze, right, and Leverkusen's Equi Fernandez, left, challenge for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between Eintracht Frankfurt and Bayer 04 Leverkusen in Frankfurt, Germany. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait Club and Qadsia set for Super Cup final showdown



The newly introduced Super Cup.



In this file photo, Kuwait Club and Al-Qadsia players jump for the ball.

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Al-Qadsia and Kuwait Club will clash in the Super Cup final at 7:30 p.m. tonight at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, with both sides competing for the newly introduced trophy. The two rivals meet after Kuwait claimed the previous Super Cup title in each of the last four seasons. Kuwait Club remains the competition's most successful club with nine titles, followed by Al-Qadsia with six, while Al-Arabi has won the trophy three times. Kuwait Club is chasing a fifth straight Super Cup crown, buoyed by its strong form in recent years. Kuwait Club swept all domestic trophies last season, currently top the Zain Premier League with an eight-point lead and 12 rounds remaining, and have also secured a place in the Crown Prince Cup final. After defeating Al-Salmiya 2-0 in the semifinals, Kuwait Club will look to continue its recent dominance over Al-Qadsia, having beaten them 2-1 in the league

earlier this season. Kuwait Club's most recent Super Cup triumph also came at Al-Qadsia's expense, edging it 7-6 on penalties following a 1-1 draw. Al-Qadsia, meanwhile, is eager to reclaim the Super Cup title, which has eluded them since 2019, and to put an end to Kuwait Club's superiority in recent seasons. It reached the final after a thrilling comeback win over traditional rival Al-Arabi, overturning a 3-1 deficit to claim a dramatic 4-3 victory in the semifinals. Despite that morale-boosting result, Al-Qadsia has struggled for consistency this season. Al-Qadsia currently sits third in the league standings, 11 points behind Kuwait Club, and was eliminated from the Crown Prince Cup at the quarter-final stage by Al-Arabi. Injuries continue to trouble Al-Qadsia, with Abdulaziz Wadi and goalkeeper Ali Jarrah sidelined, while Rashid Al-Dosari remains doubtful after suffering an injury against Al-Arabi. There has also been speculation surrounding Algerian midfielder Victor Lekhal, who has reportedly received an offer from Saudi club Al-Riyadh, although Al-Qadsia is said to be seeking a player swap, especially with the local winter transfer window nearing its close.

Rybakina outlasts Sabalenka to win Australian Open for second major



Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan holds the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup aloft after defeating Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus to win the women's singles final at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

Elena hopes keep going strong this year

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 31, (AP): Elena Rybakina won the Australian Open title with a 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 victory over top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka on Saturday that avenged her loss in the championship decider here in 2023. Four years ago she won the first set but lost the final in three. This time, after breaking in the first game and taking the first set, she rallied after losing the second set and going down 3-0 in the third. She won five straight games to regain control and served it out, closing with an ace on her first championship point. It was a second major title for fifth-seeded Rybakina, who won Wimbledon in 2022 and entered that Australian final four years ago as the only major winner in the contest. While Sabalenka went on to win

another three majors, including back-to-back triumphs in Australia and the 2024 and '25 victories at the U.S. Open, Rybakina's results dipped and she didn't reach another major final until this tournament. A win over Sabalenka at the season-ending WTA Finals last November has changed her career trajectory. Going into the final, she'd had the most match wins on tour since Wimbledon and has now won 20 of her last 21 matches. Rybakina was born in Moscow but represents Kazakhstan, and the national flag was unfurled for photos on the court as she paraded the trophy around. "It's hard to find words now. Of course I want to congrats Aryna on her amazing results for a couple of years," the 26-year-old Rybakina said. "I just hope we're going to play many more finals together. It was a battle. Honestly." She also thanked her coaching team that includes Stefano Vukov, who spent time under suspension last year by the women's tour. Rybakina has

credited him with helping improve her game, and Vukov received a silver



Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus reacts after losing a point against Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan during the women's singles final at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

plate from the tournament organizers for being the champion's coach. "We had a lot of things going on. I'm really glad we achieved this result," Rybakina said of her support crew. "Hopefully we can keep going strong this year." For Sabalenka, it's back-to-back losses in the final in Australia after going down in an upset last year to Madison Keys. "Let's hope next year is a better (result) for me!" Sabalenka said. Rybakina went on the attack from the start and her serve was strong, with six aces and - apart from the two breaks at the end of the second set and the start of the third - she fended off six of the breakpoint chances she faced. While Sabalenka's grunts and roars intensified and her effusive "let's go" self-encouragement increased in regularity as the match wore on, Rybakina maintained a quiet, almost serene, composure. In the end, she let her serve and her returns do the talking.

Obituary

Al-Mutairi offers condolences

Fathi Kamil, member of Kuwait's golden generation, passes away

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Fathi Kamil, famously known as "The Dark Knight", the former star of Kuwait's national team and Al-Tadamon Club, passed away yesterday, leaving behind a lasting legacy in Kuwaiti soccer. Celebrated for his exceptional talent, technical mastery, and dazzling dribbling - so remarkable he was once likened to Brazilian stars - Kamil was equally respected for his sportsmanship, commitment, and generosity. A member of Kuwait's golden generation, Kamil helped etch the nation's name on Gulf, Arab, continental, and international stages. He was part of the squad that qualified for the 1982 FIFA World Cup, Kuwait's only appearance at a World Cup to date, cementing his place in football history. Born in 1955, Kamil played for Al-Tadamon, the national team, and the military team. Among his many achievements, he was the Amir Cup top scorer in 1973-1974, Asia's top scorer in 1976, and won the 1980 AFC Asian Cup with Kuwait. He also competed in the 1980 Summer Olympics and participated in several Gulf Cup tournaments, including 1974 and 1979. The staff of Al-Seyassah newspaper, deeply saddened by his passing, extends heartfelt condolences to his family, praying that Allah grants him mercy



Fathi Kamil

and blesses his loved ones with patience and solace. Meanwhile, Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, expressed his heartfelt condolences on the death of Kamil. He described Kamil as one of Kuwait's football legends, whose dedication and commitment both on and off the field left a lasting mark on the country's sports history. Al-Mutairi prayed for Allah's mercy on the late player and for patience and solace for his family, loved ones, and fans. Numerous sporting institutions and organizations in Kuwait also issued tributes to "The Dark Knight", reflecting the high regard in which he was held both nationally and internationally.

Kuwait wins best-organized int'l padel tournament award

MADRID, Jan 31: Kuwait has been honored with the Best Organization Award for hosting the World Padel Doubles Championship, held from November 3 to 9 last year, at the 2025 Padel España Awards ceremony. Tournament Director Mishaal Al-Ansari said the global recognition reflects "the strong support from Kuwait's wise leadership and the coordinated efforts of national institutions, which enabled the championship to be delivered at a world-class level, befitting Kuwait's reputation and status." Kuwait earned the top spot after competing against four major countries on the international padel calendar: France, Italy, Mexico, and Spain. Al-Ansari emphasized that the achievement "carries great organizational and symbolic value and reinforces Kuwait's position as a leading host of international sporting events." He extended his heartfelt thanks, on behalf of himself and the organizing team, to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad



The Kuwaiti Ambassador to Madrid and Director of the World Padel Doubles Championship, Ali Ashour, is shown receiving an award.

Ali Ashour takes charge of Al-Salmiya

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 31: Al-Salmiya has appointed Bahraini coach Ali Ashour to lead the team on a contract running until June 2027. He replaces national coach Mohammed Dahilis, whose contract was mutually terminated. Ashour is the third coach to manage Al-Salmiya this season, following Dahilis and Nasser Al-Shatti, who resigned after the first round of the Zain Premier League. Born in 1981, Ashour brings a wealth of coaching experience. He guided Al-Khalidiya to Bahrain's Premier League in 2015-2016, led Al-Najma to the Bahraini King's Cup in 2017-2018, and managed Al-Riffa to multiple trophies, including a treble of league, cup, and Super Cup in 2018-2019, league and cup titles in 2020-2021, and league and Super Cup titles in 2021-2022. He also helped Al-Khalidiya secure both the league and Super Cup in 2023-2024. In addition, Ashour previously



The new head coach of Al-Salmiya, Ali Ashour, is shown in a black suit.