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Kuwait reaffirms friendship at Oman's National Day Page 6

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Opinion

Listening etiquette, reflection on HH Prime Minister's displeasure

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

HIS Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah had the justification to express his displeasure during the Omani Embassy reception.

The individuals responsible for the disruption deserved this reprimand, as they disregarded basic event etiquette, particularly the fundamental courtesy of affording the speaker attentive silence.

His Highness acted precisely as the situation demanded when Omani Ambassador Ali bin Ahmed bin Salem Al-Shanfari -- the epitome of refined conduct and grace, halted his speech for the room to settle, yet the disruptive attendees continued in their commotion. Their action manifested the lack of respect for an event held in high regard by all Kuwaitis and Gulf citizens.

As the cornerstone of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Oman is home to people widely esteemed for their graciousness, tact, poise and warmth toward everyone. Renowned for their exceptional character, the Omani people exemplify dignity, poise, gentle speech and thoughtful language in all spheres of life—from their home environment to the workplace and the broader community. Their defining traits include humility, mutual respect, hospitality, open-mindedness, tolerance and commitment to harmonious coexistence.

Above all, they treasure authentic and transparent relationships. This innate warmth shapes their gracious demeanor toward everyone they meet in their homeland and around the world.

Embodying these shared values, the Embassy of the Sultanate selected an expansive venue for the occasion, assured of the enduring bond of friendship between the citizens of Kuwait and Oman.

The impeccable planning highlighted the nation's celebrated tradition of 'hostmanship', ensuring the gathering would proceed in an atmosphere of order and decorum befitting the true spirit of the National Day celebration.

Adhering to basic etiquette is expected even in casual social settings, where listening attentively to a speaker reflects civility and refinement. This courtesy becomes all the more vital when attending the national celebration of a sister state—a nation connected to Kuwait through deep-rooted and historical bond.

Bound by the conviction that brotherhood requires genuine commitment rather than empty gestures, the two countries have steadfastly supported each other, weathering severe trials and sharing hardships together. Demonstrating genuine loyalty and affection requires more than formal presence.

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'Scammers' dial up own downfall

41 arrested in Ardiya crackdown

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The Ministry of Interior announced the arrest of an individual linked to a transnational criminal gang that targeted victims in Gulf countries through fraudulent advertisements and calls made from local phone numbers to steal their money, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The arrest was carried out in coordination with the relevant security authorities in the United Arab Emirates, following the exchange of intelligence information.

The ministry explained that the Criminal Security Sector, represented by the Financial Crimes Department of the General Department of Criminal Investigation, tracked a shipment containing SIM cards intended for use in fraudulent activities and scams. Authorities monitored the shipment until the suspect was arrested immediately after receiving it.

The operation resulted in the seizure of two devices used to operate and manage multiple SIM cards, along with 70 SIM cards from local telecommunications companies and five SIM cards from Emirati telecommunications companies.

Investigations revealed that the gang operated from outside Kuwait and used devices capable of operating multiple SIM cards simultaneously. These devices allowed calls and text messages to appear as though they originated from local phone numbers, deceiving victims into believing they were communicating with trusted sources within their own countries.

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Kuwait asserts right to retaliate



PM Diwan photo

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet meeting on Monday.

Cabinet issues stern warning to Iran

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23, (KUNA): Kuwait's Cabinet strongly condemned the renewed Iranian attacks on the country, describing the use of drones as a flagrant violation of the country's sovereignty and a direct threat to its security and stability.

The Cabinet stressed that Kuwait reserves its full right to take all necessary measures to protect its sovereignty, territory and vital facilities, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter and international law.

During its weekly meeting, chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Cabinet reviewed a phone call from Palestinian Vice President Hussein Al-Sheikh to His

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Six-year-old discharged a day after laparoscopic fix

Health Ministry announces pediatric surgery success

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The Pediatric Surgery Department, represented by the Urology Unit at the New Maternity Hospital, has successfully performed laparoscopic surgery to repair ureteropelvic junction stenosis in a six-year-old Kuwaiti girl.

The Ministry of Health announced on Monday that the procedure was performed by Dr. Abdulnasser Al-Saeed, a consultant pediatric urologist, using a laparoscopic approach through the flank, allowing access to the narrowed area without entering the abdominal cavity.

The girl was discharged in good health the following day after receiving the necessary medical care.

The Ministry of Health affirmed that this achievement reflects the dedication and expertise of national medical professionals in providing specialized and safe healthcare. It also underscored the ministry's commitment to improving the quality of medical services.



Ministry of Health photo

The medical team that performed the operation.

e-services recognized

PACI gets its digital due

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Minister of Justice Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait honored the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) at the launching of 'Tawtheeq' (Documentation) platform for the issuance of powers of attorney online.

Several ministers attended the launching ceremony, including Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and acting Minister of Information and Culture Omar Al-Omar, and Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, along with senior officials and leaders from various governmental bodies.

Acting Director General of PACI Issa Al-Mahmoud received the honorary plaque on behalf of the authority.

This accolade affirms the significant contributions of PACI to the advancement of digital transformation and electronic integration among government entities, as well as its vital role in developing government digital initiatives and electronic services in the country.

Moreover, recognition was given to a team of talented national professionals at PACI— Systems Development Supervisor Amina Abdulrahim, Quality Control Supervisor Fajr Al-Yaseen, Omar Al-Asfoor and Yousef Al-Awadhi—for their dedication in developing the authentication and electronic signature services on Kuwait Mobile ID application.

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Minister of Foreign Affairs **Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah** met on Monday with UN Special Envoy for **Yemen Hans Grundberg**, who is visiting Kuwait on an official visit.

According to a Foreign Ministry statement, the meeting reviewed the latest developments in Yemen and UN efforts to advance a comprehensive political solution to the crisis.

Sheikh Jarrah reaffirmed Kuwait's support for UN efforts to preserve Yemen's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and fulfil the aspirations of its people for peace, security and prosperity. (KUNA)

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KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait expressed its condemnation and denunciation of the drone strikes targeting sites in **Khartoum**, **Sudan**, including one of the UN buildings, which resulted in civilian casualties and material damage, Monday.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirmed that Kuwait rejects any attacks on civilians, vital facilities, and international organization headquarters, emphasizing the need to respect international humanitarian law.

It renewed Kuwait's support for Sudan's unity, sovereignty, stability, and legitimate institutions, and extended condolences to the families of the victims, wishing a speedy recovery to the injured. (KUNA)



11 Zain and Kuwait Football Association renew strategic partnership for 2026–2030 seasons



8 KFH showcases next generation of banking services at 'Shaping What's Next' event



7 Fitch Ratings affirms Gulf Bank's Long-Term Issuer Default Rating at 'A' with Stable Outlook

Kuwait committee gears up for 2027 national festivities

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23, (KUNA): Kuwait's Permanent Committee for Celebrating National Holidays and Occasions held on Sunday its second meeting to discuss the operational and marketing plans of the teams operating under the committee, review implementation mechanisms, and explore ways to coordinate and integrate their efforts.

Chaired by Kuwait's Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and Acting Minister of Information and Culture, the meeting aims to enhance organizational readiness, strengthen joint institutional cooperation, and organize national celebrations that reflect Kuwait's identity and meet the aspirations of society, the Ministry of Information said in a statement.

The meeting came as part of national preparations for Kuwait's 2027 National Day celebrations and the country's commitment to organizing events befitting the significance of the occasion and its deeply rooted national values.



Ministry of Information photo

Kuwait's Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and Acting Minister of Information and Culture chairs the meeting.

In addition, the meeting reviewed proposals and initiatives submitted by private-sector institutions and explored ways to incorporate and benefit from them within an integrated

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Al-Othman Mosque blends heritage with sustainability

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Minister of Justice and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Minors Affairs (PAMA) Counselor Nasser Yousef Al-Sumait visited Al-Othman Mosque in Nuqra to review the progress of the renovation works, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Executive Director of Al-Othman Endowment Eng. Adnan Abdullah Al-Othman and several members of Al-Othman Family warmly welcomed the minister.

Chairman of the Trustees Committee and acting Director General of PAMA Alia Fahad Al-Saqer was also present.

The project builds on efforts launched in 2020 to restore the mosque's original architectural and heritage characters, while integrating modern technologies to improve energy efficiency and optimize resource consumption to balance preserving its historical identity and meeting environmental sustainability standards.

The project has had several milestones, most notably the Gulf Excellence Award for Energy Efficiency and Conservation of Electricity and Water in November 2025. It also obtained preliminary LEED Gold certification for green buildings and listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings maintained by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL).

Al-Sumait expressed his pride in visiting the mosque, whose construction began in 1958 and was officially inaugurated in 1961, describing it as a historical landmark in the State of Kuwait.

He praised Adnan Al-Othman for his efforts in completing the project and preserving this valuable heritage site, while highlighting the

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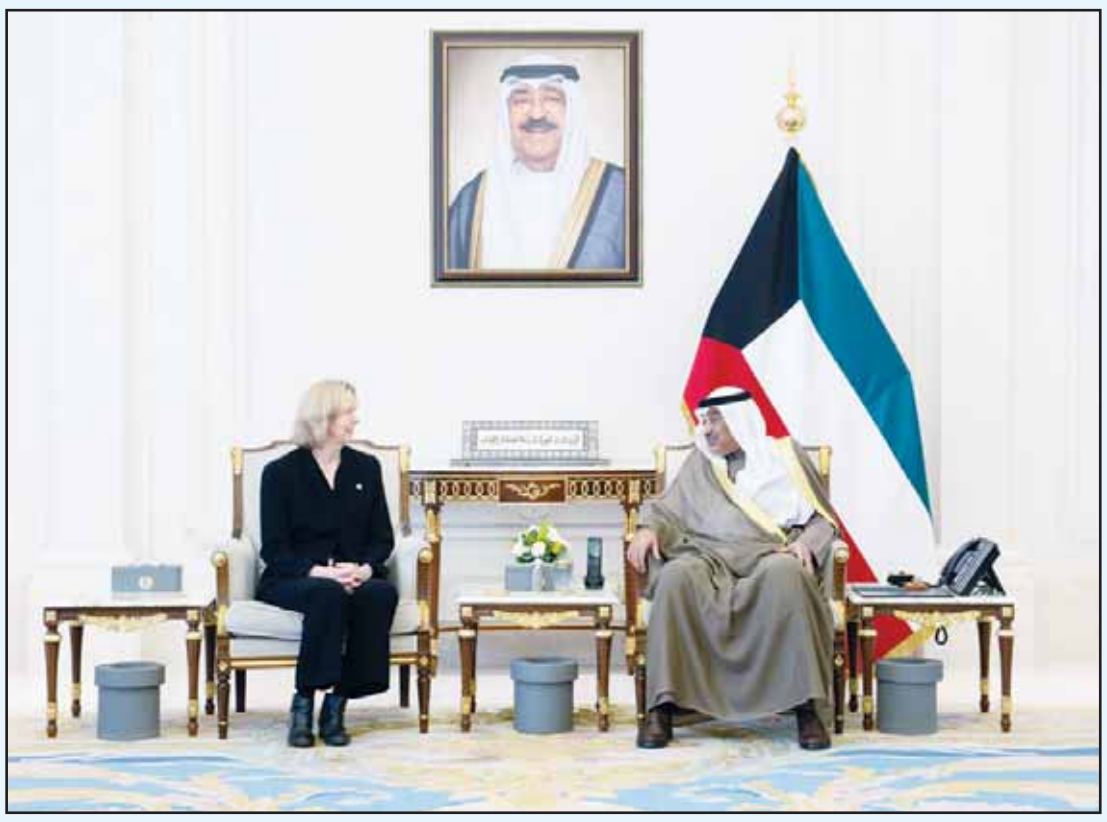
Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:56	Asr	14:30
Sunrise	06:19	Maghrib	16:51
Zohr	11:35	Isha	18:13



Crown Prince Diwan photo

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives BP Chief Executive Officer Meg O'Neill.

Kuwait Crown Prince meets BP Chief Executive

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Monday BP Chief Executive Officer Meg O'Neill at Bayan Palace.

The meeting reviewed areas of energy cooperation and ways to strengthen and develop them.

The meeting was attended by the Chief of the Crown Prince's Diwan, Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Vice Chairman and CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah, and senior officials. (KUNA)



PM Diwan photo

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives BP Chief Executive Officer Meg O'Neill.

PM, BP chief explore wider energy cooperation

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Monday BP Chief Executive Officer Meg O'Neill at Bayan Palace on her visit to Kuwait.

The meeting discussed ways to expand joint business opportunities and open new avenues of cooperation between Kuwait and BP, supporting the development of their partnership, training national cadres and exchanging expertise across various energy sectors.

The meeting was attended by Acting Chief of the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikh Khaled Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Vice Chairman and CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah. (KUNA)

Co-ops told to 'reserve' half of kiosks for SMEs

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Legal consultant and real estate expert Mansour Naji Al-Nazhan unveiled the details of the decision issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs on the regulation and investment in kiosks in the central markets of cooperative societies.

In a statement to the newspaper, Al-Nazhan disclosed that the decision prioritizes small business owners in this investment.

According to the decision, cooperative societies are required to allocate at least 50 percent of the total number of kiosks to small business owners as per Decision 75/T/2019 and its amendments.

Kiosks must be on the ground floor of the central market, subject to approval from the relevant authorities.

An organizational layout must be prepared in coordination with the ministry to ensure smooth foot traffic and safety. Automated registration numbers must be obtained.

Any changes to the location, floor area or business activity are prohibited unless approval is obtained from the ministry.

The permitted activities are fish sale, butchery, mills (grains/spices), 'fatayer' (savory pastries) and sweets/confectionery. The total area for these activities must not exceed 48 square meters and maximum of 12 square meters per kiosk.

Cooperative societies must install ventilation and odor-extraction systems for fish and butchery shops.

Service activities are allowed as well like key duplication, watch repair, traditional snacks like 'lupin' beans, 'turmus' and peanuts, mobile phones and accessories, and flowers or plants with a total area not exceeding 20 square meters and maximum of four square meters per kiosk.

RCSI confers global honor on Minister Reem Al-Fulaij

Kuwait's achievements shine through Dublin award

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23, (KUNA): RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences has honored Kuwait's Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Affairs Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij, with its 2026 Humanitarian and Community Award, in recognition of her professional career and contributions to public health, community service and sustainable development.

The award was presented during RCSI's annual Alumni Awards ceremony in Dublin, which recognized seven distinguished graduates from around the world for their outstanding achievements and positive contributions to individuals and communities.

The Humanitarian and Community Award is part of RCSI's annual Alumni Awards, which recognize exceptional contributions by graduates from its global network of nearly 40,000 alumni.

Al-Fulaij's recognition reflects a career spanning medicine, healthcare management, government service, food safety and nutrition, preventive health, institutional governance and sustainable development.



KUNA photo

RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences honors Kuwait's Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Affairs Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij.

Speaking to KUNA, Al-Fulaij expressed pride in the international recognition, dedicating it to Kuwait, its political leadership and the national professionals who contributed to her career.

She said the award was not merely a personal achievement, but also reflected Kuwait's investment in its people, confidence in national capabilities and empowerment of Kuwaiti women to assume leadership roles and contribute to development.

Al-Fulaij added that public health was closely linked to food security, environmental sustainability and quality of life, stressing that investment in these areas was an investment in people and future generations.

RCSI also unveiled a mural at its historic 123 St. Stephen's Green campus in Dublin, featuring portraits of the seven 2026 award recipients.

Entitled "Alumni - Leading the World to Better Health," the mural celebrates their contributions and presents them as role models for future generations of students and graduates.

Al-Fulaij earned a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery from Kuwait University in 1999 and a master's degree in Health Services and Hospital Management from RCSI in 2010. She held several senior government positions before being appointed Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Affairs in February 2026.

Founded in 1784 as the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, RCSI is a specialist university focusing on medicine and health sciences.

1,410 doctors compete for KIMS training slots

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi inspected the personal interview process for doctors applying to specialized training programs at the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization (KIMS), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Dr. Al-Awadhi reviewed the workflow and methods used to assess applicants as part of the ministry's ongoing efforts to prepare and qualify national medical personnel and enhance their professional competence.

Secretary-General of KIMS Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi revealed that more than 1,410 doctors had applied for the training programs.

Al-Mutairi said he expects the interviews for the various training programs, fellowships, and diploma courses to be completed this week.

He explained that KIMS offers a comprehensive training system comprising 34 specialty programs, 24 fellowship programs, and six diploma programs in medicine and dentistry. Interviews are conducted according to the requirements of each specialty, with every applicant assessed by a six-member committee to ensure fairness and impartiality.

The acceptance rate has reached 100 percent in recent years, alongside the development of local training programs and efforts to strengthen their international academic accreditation.

Several training programs have received accreditation from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Efforts are ongoing to meet the accreditation requirements for additional specialties and renew the KIMS' Canadian institutional accreditation, which was most recently renewed in 2025.

Other Voices

What lies behind the shops of Al-Mubarakiya Market?

By Ahmad alsarraf

THE Ministry of Finance has opened applications for citizens interested in operating shops at Al-Mubarakiya Market. However, eligibility is restricted to individuals who have a "historical connection" to the market.



Ahmad alsarraf

In other words, applicants must demonstrate some form of historical association with Al-Mubarakiya, regardless of their personal identity or background.

The Ministry of Finance has yet to clarify what this requirement actually means. Does it mean that the grandson of the owner of the "Ward wa Hayl" shop, who once sold sweets from a glass handcart in Al-Mubarakiya Market, would qualify? Or would the grandson of someone who worked as a porter in the vegetable market also be eligible?

Another unusual condition applies to applicants seeking to operate popular restaurants, cafes, nut shops, spice shops, and tailoring businesses. Applicants must be Kuwaiti citizens, and they must retain their citizenship from the beginning of the contracting process throughout the entire lease period.

Does this mean applicants must be certain that their Kuwaiti citizenship will never be revoked and is not subject to revocation?

The Ministry of Finance has also excluded applicants involved in pending legal disputes related to previous contracts. This condition is arbitrary and entirely unnecessary.

Such disputes may be routine contractual disagreements, particularly since the matter simply involves renting a shop that will most likely be operated and managed by someone else, with no direct connection to Kuwaiti nationality or cultural heritage.

After all, this is hardly the "deal of a lifetime" that would turn the holder of a historical legacy into Kuwait's Elon Musk.

The irony is that applicants must submit supporting documents to prove their claimed "cultural heritage." This would require the Ministry of Finance to establish a special committee to examine, verify, and assess these documents, assuming such evidence even exists.

Given that most of the ministry's employees are young, it is unlikely that many of them have the expertise to determine whether an applicant has a genuine "cultural heritage" connection to the market, particularly when the ministry has not even explained what this heritage means. This raises serious questions about the reasonableness of such a condition and the motives behind imposing it.

All these requirements seem pointless, especially since those who ultimately qualify and pass all the conditions and assessments will not necessarily be the ones who actually manage or operate the shops.

Another unusual requirement is the ministry's demand that applicants seeking qualification submit their original citizenship certificates. This makes entering a lottery for a juice shop at Al-Mubarakiya Market seem as significant as participating in an election. Until the Ministry of Finance issued its announcement, elections were the only process for which such proof of citizenship was required.

What will the ministry do if the majority of applicants fail to prove their connection to the market's cultural heritage?

The entire process is bizarre, raises suspicions of discrimination, and creates unnecessary confusion. All these complicated requirements seem unjustified unless there are other, undisclosed reasons concerning Al-Mubarakiya Market.

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EU membership remains Albania's top priority

Albania eyes new avenues for Kuwait ties

By John C. Fernandes
Online Media Manager – Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Albania remains committed to joining the European Union, which continues to be one of the foremost priorities of its foreign policy, Albanian Ambassador to Kuwait Ilir Hysa has said.

Speaking on the occasion of Albania European Week 2026, held alongside the country's national celebrations in November, HE. Ilir Hysa said Albania's European ambitions are rooted in its commitment to democracy, the rule of law, cooperation and peace.

He said the occasion provides an opportunity to introduce Kuwait's public to Albania's history, national identity and European heritage, while highlighting the country's development, future aspirations and efforts to strengthen its longstanding friendship and cooperation with Kuwait.



Albanian Ambassador to Kuwait Ilir Hysa

Albania celebrates Nov 28 as Independence Day and Flag Day, commemorating the declaration of independence in 1912 under the leadership of national figure Ismail Qemali in the city of Vlora. The country also marks Nov 29 as Liberation Day, commemorating its liberation from Nazi occupation in 1944.

The ambassador described the two occasions as important milestones in Albania's history and its people's journey towards freedom, independence and the establishment of a modern state. They also reflect the importance Albanians attach to sovereignty and liberty, he said.

Turning to bilateral relations, Ilir Hysa expressed his country's appreciation for its friendly ties and cooperation with Kuwait, stressing Albania's interest in expanding relations across several sectors, particularly the economy, investment, tourism, culture and education.

He said relations between the two countries offer considerable opportunities to strengthen people-to-people contacts and broaden areas of mutual cooperation.

Ilir Hysa also underlined the important role of the Kuwaiti media in introducing Albania to local audiences and highlighting its historical, cultural and tourism attractions.

Located in the Balkans, Albania is known for its scenic landscapes, beautiful coastline and rich cultural heritage. Its traditions of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence are also among the country's distinctive characteristics, making it a destination deserving greater recognition among Kuwaiti audiences, he said.

The ambassador stressed that Albania European Week offers an important platform to expand media coverage of Albania in Kuwait and strengthen direct engagement with local press and media institutions.

Such engagement, he said, would help introduce modern Albania, its path towards European integration and the opportunities available to further develop relations with Kuwait.

Ilir Hysa concluded by emphasizing the importance of continuing to build bridges of communication and understanding between the two peoples. He wished Kuwait and its people continued progress and prosperity, expressing hope that bilateral relations would continue to grow and reach new heights.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Gulf integration: From the ambition of agreements to reality of achievement

"FOR decades, the priorities of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have focused on economic diversification, attracting foreign investment, developing infrastructure, and reducing dependence on oil revenues," academic researcher and Assistant Dean at the College of Business Administration **Dr. Randa Diab-Bahman** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Although regional integration has long been a shared strategic goal, recent political and security developments have highlighted the need to make it a more urgent priority.

More importantly, these events have revealed a shift in leadership approaches, characterized by streamlined bureaucratic procedures, faster decision-making, and greater readiness to cooperate whenever circumstances demand it.



Dr. Diab Bahman

Sheikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Bahrain's Minister of Finance and National Economy, recently highlighted how regional partners have joined forces to mitigate the economic impact of conflicts.

A prime example of this was the quick approval of arrangements allowing airlines to use the airspace of other countries. Through immediate coordination, these carriers were able to maintain operations despite the disruptions.

Rather than allowing traditional administrative hurdles or national borders to stand in the way, these governments demonstrated that mutual trust and effective cooperation can produce practical solutions quickly.

Perhaps this is the most significant lesson from the crisis - challenging times reveal the true character of nations, particularly their ability to make timely, impactful decisions without being hindered by conventional bureaucracy or unnecessarily complex administrative procedures.

The true measure of an effective regional partnership lies not in the number of agreements signed or committees established, but in how quickly nations act, how effectively they make decisions, and how readily they support one another during critical moments.

In this context, Jasem Albudaiwi, the GCC Secretary-General, recently stressed the need to move beyond traditional forms of coordination towards deeper economic integration and more effective collective action.

He also highlighted the considerable economic weight of the six member states, whose combined GDP reached approximately $3 trillion last year, making the GCC the world's ninth-largest economy.

This collective economic strength creates opportunities that extend far beyond responding to crises.

Before the outbreak of conflict, the region's ambitions were primarily focused on enhancing competitiveness and achieving long-term prosperity.

Today, however, these priorities also include strengthening economic resilience, ensuring business continuity, and reinforcing the shared values and interests of the region's nations.

The current challenge is to maintain this momentum during periods of stability by removing unnecessary bureaucratic barriers and turning crisis-driven cooperation into sustainable, institutionalized mechanisms.

In this regard, certain leadership approaches deserve recognition, as they offer promising signs for the future. This is particularly evident in the contributions of prominent diplomatic figures whose efforts have been highlighted in reports covering various sectors and fields.

These leadership approaches are characterized by pragmatism and realism, moving beyond administrative rigidity.

They emphasize results-oriented cooperation, driven by the firm conviction that regional challenges require regional solutions.

This is an encouraging approach that is particularly important during times of uncertainty.

The true value of these effective leadership practices lies in their potential to become a permanent and fundamental feature of relations among the GCC states.

For many years, unnecessary bureaucracy has hindered progress across several GCC states, as highlighted by various studies and research conducted over time.

However, by turning the spirit of initiative, responsiveness, flexibility, and cooperation demonstrated during crises into an established approach to policy making and daily operations, GCC states could unlock significant new opportunities for integration and progress.

Perhaps this is the real opportunity emerging from the current conflict. Rather than simply seeking a return to the status quo, the focus should be on building a more interconnected, less bureaucratic, and more efficient and decisive GCC - one capable of addressing challenges through collective action, both within individual member states and across the Gulf region as a whole."

Also:

"The Ministry of Islamic Affairs prepares Friday sermons in a style that relies more on intimidation than persuasion, often missing opportunities to convey the tolerance of Islam through engaging stories in mosques," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"I have noticed that we rarely hear sermons emphasizing tolerance, love, and compassion towards others. Instead, much of the discourse seems closer to promoting hostility and resentment. I would therefore like to draw the attention of those responsible for preparing Friday sermons to the importance of addressing values such as honesty, integrity, noble character, and the tolerance of Islam.

When Pharaoh arrogantly declared, "I am your Lord, Most High," Almighty God could have punished him immediately. Yet He instructed Moses and Aaron to speak to him gently and with kind words.

The Holy Quran is filled with verses that encourage gentleness, kindness, and compassion, including, "Argue with them in the best manner," "God intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship," and "The servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth gently." Extremist ideology has brought countless tragedies, fueling hatred and hostility between different religious sects and the People of the Book, even though Islam permits Muslim men to marry women from among them.

Such extremist thinking has also given rise to criminal groups that commit acts of violence in the name of Islam.

In a study, Mustafa Akyol, a visiting professor at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, states, "The hardline approach in Iran has driven many Iranians to convert to Christianity following their disillusionment with the Islamic Republic." He indicated that conversion to Christianity is on the rise in Iran and that what has destroyed the dreams and hopes of three successive generations of Iranians is not Islam itself, but rather the policies of the Islamic state.

He further explains that this problem is not confined to Iran, pointing to manifestations of violence and intolerance across various Muslim-majority countries. He also criticizes the practice of preventing people from asking questions and engaging in open discussions, emphasizing that modern society is fundamentally different, with people increasingly willing to ask questions, express their views, and hold diverse opinions.

The global image of Islam has been seriously distorted, and Arabs and Muslims have increasingly become targets of ridicule and mockery in many countries and across the pages of international newspapers. The US government has closed the bank accounts of some Arab citizens, while the European Union has imposed restrictions on the entry of Arabs into Europe.

Campaigns of hatred against Arabs and Muslims have emerged in various parts of the world. China has imposed restrictions on Muslim religious practices, including fasting, while Muslims in Myanmar have faced persecution and oppression.

Much of the damage to Islam's image stems from the extremist actions of some Muslims, including individuals who use vehicles to attack innocent crowds. One such attack targeted a Christmas market in Berlin, while another involved the bombing of a Coptic church in Egypt, fueling sectarian tensions between Muslims and Christians.



Al-Dawas

Look at the situation facing Muslims around the world. Many feel that they are no longer treated with respect or dignity. When they board a plane, they may face suspicion as potential terrorists. When they enter a shop or restaurant, they may be viewed with unwarranted fear. Even when walking down the street, they can become targets of insults, discrimination, and attacks.

In all these cases, Arabs and Muslims have often been viewed as potential terrorists, further damaging the reputation of Arabs around the world.

If Muslims truly embraced the gentleness, kindness, moderation, and tolerance that Islam calls for, they could win the hearts of hundreds of millions of people worldwide and become global leaders in promoting humanitarian values.

Many years ago, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri and Sheikh Abdul Wahab Al-Fares traveled from Kuwait to Jerusalem, carrying candles to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to join their Christian brothers in their celebrations.

In the 1960s, when we were young, we used to watch Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri on television, delivering moderate, engaging sermons in the manner of a father offering advice to his children. His message was characterized by noble values and good moral principles.

In those days, we did not see publications that spread division among worshippers, hear sermons that inflamed sectarian tensions, or witness the looting of mosque donation funds. Nor did we hear of corruption within the Ministry of Islamic Affairs or sermons that focused more on politics than on religion."

– Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

Amir's patronage of Quran competition reflects commitment to preserve Holy Book: Awqaf min.





KUNA photos

Left: Awqaf launches final stage of 29th Kuwait Grand Quran Memorization and Recitation Competition. Right: Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammed Al-Wasmi tours the competition venue during the 29th edition of the Kuwait Grand Quran Memorization and Recitation Competition.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23, (KUNA): Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi affirmed that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's patronage of the 29th Kuwait Grand Quran Memorization and Recitation Competition reflects Kuwait's commitment to the Holy Quran, encouraging its memorizers and reinforcing the status of the Quran and its sciences in society.

Al-Wasmi made the remarks to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) while inspecting the final qualifying rounds of the competition, launched by the General Secretariat of Awqaf at the Grand Mosque.

Al-Wasmi, also and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the General Secretariat of Awqaf, underline the importance of supporting Quranic initiatives and activities that encourage people of all age groups to memorize and recite the Holy Quran correctly, while providing an encouraging environment to develop memorizers' abilities and showcase their proficiency in memorization and recitation.

Meanwhile, Acting Secretary-General of the Ministry Jenan Al-Zamel said the competition continues its journey under the patronage of His Highness the Amir that embodies the highest values of caring for the Holy Quran and its memorizers.

She said the competition has instilled in participants a deep appreciation for the teachings of the Quran, encouraging them to master its recitation and memorization.

Al-Zamel noted that the Quran serves as a school for building individuals, instilling values and promoting compassion, cooperation and a sense of responsibility within society.

Furthermore, head of the competition's permanent committee Fawaz Al-Kulaib affirmed the commitment to providing opportunities for participation across various age groups, from children to the elderly.

He said the committee is responsible for ensuring accuracy and fairness in the evaluation process and adhering to approved regulations in a manner that safeguards the confidence of contestants and their families.

Police dismantle diesel theft 'network'; 13 held

Fatal run-over accident on King Fahad Road

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and **Agencies**

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The Ministry of Interior announced on Sunday the arrest of 13 individuals suspected of stealing diesel from company trucks and reselling it at prices ranging from 80 to 150 fils per liter, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry explained that the Criminal Security Sector, represented by the Ports Investigation Department, arrested the suspects following investigations and the gathering of relevant information.

The operation also resulted in the seizure of 14 vehicles, including fuel and sewage tankers, semi-trailers, a tipper truck, and a water delivery truck.

The suspects confessed to the crimes, and the stolen trucks have been returned to their respective owners. Legal procedures are currently underway.

❑ ❑ ❑

Driver detained after pedestrian killed: A run over incident on King Fahad Road, opposite Hawally, resulted in the death of a 32-year-old Arab.

Authorities registered a case, detained the driver, and transferred the victim's body to forensics.

According to a security source, the Emergency Unit received a hit-and-run report through hotline number 112.

Police and medical personnel were dispatched to the scene immediately, where they confirmed that the victim succumbed to injuries sustained in the collision.

❑ ❑ ❑

Joint campaign uncovers 28 violations: The Farwaniya Inspection Department of the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) conducted a joint inspection campaign in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and several other relevant government agencies in the governorate, resulting in the issuance of 28 citations, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The violations included handling food unfit for human consumption, employing workers without valid health certificates, failing to comply with health and hygiene regulations, and breaches of licensing conditions and technical requirements.

❑ ❑ ❑

PAFN destroys 8.7 tonnes of food: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) conducted an inspection campaign in Hawally, resulting in the issuance of 25 violation reports and the destruction of 8,706 kilograms of non-compliant food products, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement posted on its X account, PAFN explained that the violations included displaying food products bearing multiple expiration dates, selling products without expiration dates, and tampering with original expiration dates.

Traffic exit near Zahra and 360 Mall to close

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The General Traffic Department announced the closure of an exit running parallel to Jassim Mohammed Al-Kharafi Road (Sixth Ring Road), opposite the Zahra area and 360 Mall, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The closure took effect on Monday, November 23, and will remain in place until December 21 to allow for expansion work on the exit.

MoCI employee wins court battle over reinstatement

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The Court of Appeals upheld the ruling issued by the Court of First Instance, overturning the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's decision to transfer an employee from her position as Head of the Appointments Department to the Records Department, along with all resulting consequences, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ruling ordered the employee's reinstatement to her previous supervisory position at the same grade.

Lawyer Ali Al-Ali, representing the employee, filed a lawsuit seeking to overturn Administrative Decision No. 1591/2024.

He explained that his client joined the ministry in 2007 and gradually advanced through the ranks until she was appointed Head of the Appointments Department. However, the ministry later issued a decision transferring her to another department with a lower supervisory level.

Lawyer Al-Ali argued that the contested decision was not in the best interest of the workplace but instead amounted to a disguised administrative penalty that negatively affected his client's professional standing.

He also referred to previous court rulings that had overturned the employee's performance evaluations for 2022 and 2023.

The court explained that administrative transfers must involve positions equivalent in grade, nature of work, and job level. Issuing a transfer order with the intent to harm or retaliate against an employee constitutes a disguised disciplinary measure rather than a transfer based on the needs of the workplace.

The court noted that the legally prescribed disciplinary procedures had not been followed, rendering the decision legally invalid.

It ordered the relevant administrative authority to pay the court costs and KD 100 in legal fees.









KUNA photos

Al-Asimah Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah honors the governorate's delegation of individuals with strong determination, in recognition of their outstanding participation and honorable representation of the State of Kuwait at the 5th Gulf Childhood Conference in Dubai.

Al-Asimah Governor honors participants at Gulf Childhood Conference in Dubai

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23, (KUNA): Al-Asimah Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah honored the governorate's delegation of people with disabilities on Monday, in recognition of their outstanding representation of Kuwait at the 5th Gulf Childhood Conference in Dubai.

The conference was held under title "Child and Food" as part of the Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammad Award for Childhood Creativity.

In a press statement, Al-Asimah Governorate said the ceremony came during a reception hosted by Sheikh Abdullah at his office, attended by Al-Asimah Governorate Council member Mashael Al-Kulaib.

He affirmed his appreciation of their honorable performance and reiterated the governorate's commitment to supporting people with determination, removing obstacles they face, and providing a stimulating environment to showcase their talents locally, regionally, and internationally.

The statement added that the initiative reflects the governorate's ongoing dedication to promoting empowerment, community inclusion, and encouraging people with determination to continue raising Kuwait's profile at global forums.

In addition to Al-Kulaib, the meeting was attended by Dr. Abeer Al-Safran, Dr. Wejdan Al-Daihani, Haya Al-Nuwaif, Rawan Al-Saeed, Osama Al-Yahya, Fahad Al-Mulla, Khaled Al-Mudhin, Abdulaziz Al-Mutawa, and Ahmad Al-Ayan.

Kuwait reaffirms commitment to preserving literary heritage

NCCAL honors legacy of writer Al-Zaid

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23, (KUNA): Secretary-General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Dr Mohammad Al-Jassar affirmed on Sunday the council's commitment to honoring prominent figures in literature, arts and intellectual thought.

In a speech delivered at the opening of an intellectual symposium on the late Kuwaiti writer Khaled Saud Al-Zaid organized by the NCCAL as part of the 49th Kuwait International Book Fair, Al-Jassar highlighted these figures' achievements for future generations, in line with the mission to support culture, preserve heritage and strengthen the presence of Kuwait's national cultural memory.

Al-Jassar said that the late Kuwaiti writer, poet and historian Al-Zaid was a prominent literary and intellectual figure who left a lasting mark on Kuwait's literary, cultural and historical landscape.

He added that Al-Zaid devoted a significant part of his life to documenting Kuwait's literary movement, driven by his belief that preserving cultural heritage is a national responsibility and that documenting literary history is an act of preserving the nation's memory and identity.

Al-Jassar noted that Al-Zaid's research efforts, alongside his distinguished poetic legacy, reflected the authenticity of his literary experience and the depth of his humanistic vision.

Meanwhile, Dalal Al-Zaid, the daughter of the late Kuwaiti writer, recalled the moral, humanitarian and national values her father instilled in his children.

She stressed that his legacy extended beyond the books he wrote and his documentation of Kuwait's literary movement to include his educational and humanitarian influence on his family and those around him.



KUNA photo

Secretary-General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Dr Mohammad Al-Jassar.

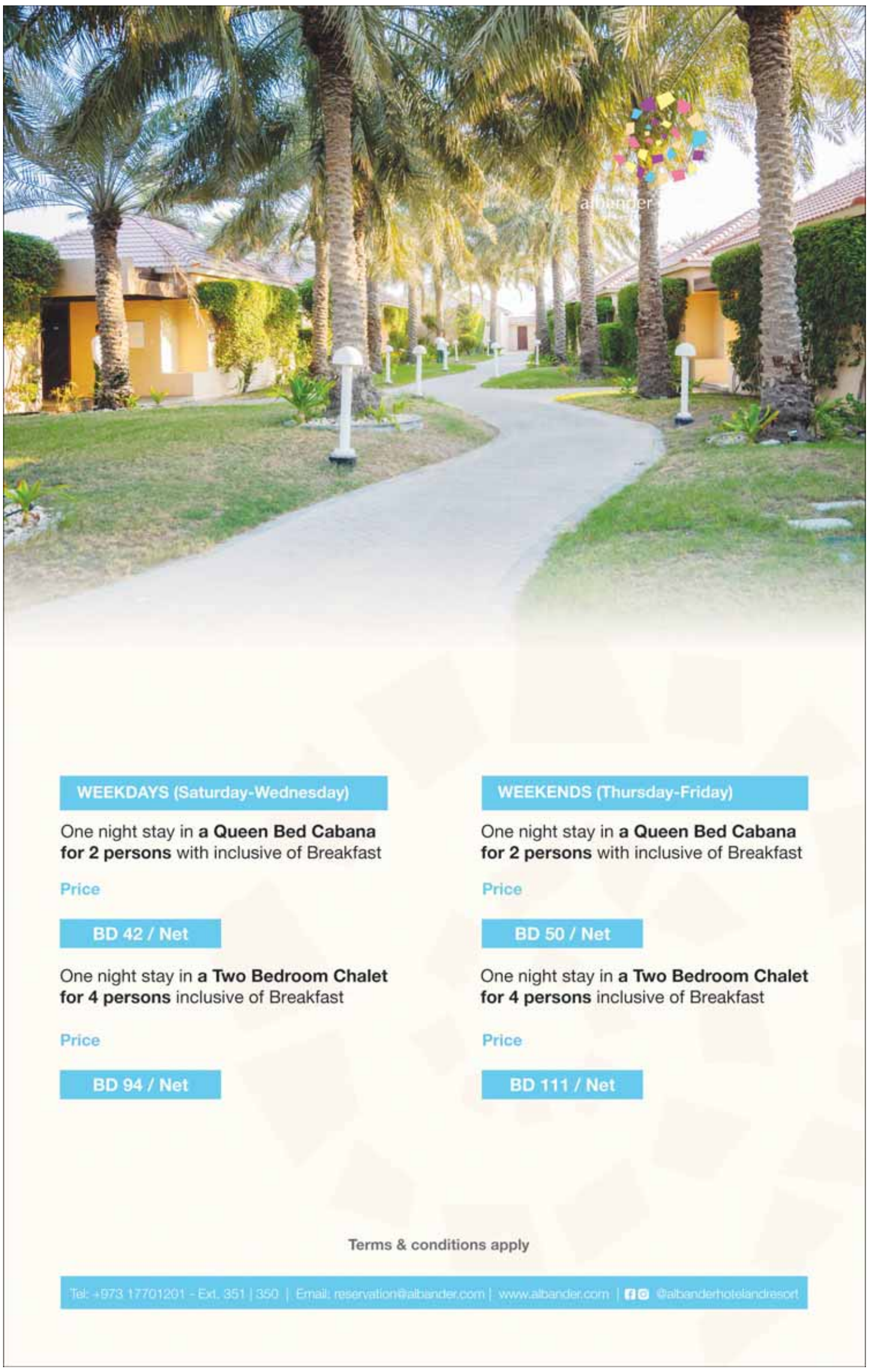
Dalal said that speaking about her father evoked a sense of awe, alongside a desire to recall his life and legacy, given the moral values, human principles and Quranic teachings he instilled in them from childhood, which he embodied through both words and actions.

She added that her father encouraged his children to be truthful with themselves and others and to hold the remembrance of God in high regard.

She noted that the father was also a source of love and compassion for them, treating them with kindness and teaching them that mistakes are opportunities for learning and understanding, and that life offers doors to mercy and forgiveness, away from confusion and the fear of making mistakes.

Furthermore, Khalifa Al-Wugayan, the featured personality of the 49th Kuwait International Book Fair, recalled the early poetic beginnings of Al-Zaid. He highlighted the role of the cultural environment at Shuwaikh Secondary School and the encouragement he received from his teachers in nurturing his talent and shaping his literary experience.

Al-Wugayan said that Al-Zaid showed exceptional poetic talent while studying at Shuwaikh Secondary School in the mid-1950s. His teachers encouraged him to develop his artistic abilities and motivated students to take part in poetry competitions and festivals, as well as write short stories.



Kuwait University launches 12th annual admissions exhibition

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23, (KUNA): Kuwait University on Monday launched its 12th annual University Admissions Exhibition, under the slogan "A Journey of Ambition 12," at Sabah Al-Salem University City, running three days until Wednesday.

Acting Dean of Admission and Registration Dr. Fadhel Aziz said the exhibition aims to guide high school students towards choosing university majors that match their interests, aspirations and academic goals.

Aziz said the exhibition covers scientific and literary disciplines, as well as technical, technological and engineering fields, including cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and nursing. Representatives from each college are available to explain their respective programs.

He noted that the exhibition brings together representatives from all university colleges, alongside government agencies concerned with the labour market, and representatives from the Civil Service Commission and the Public Authority for Manpower to provide students with information about employment and career opportunities.

He urged high school students and their parents to visit the exhibition and benefit from the opportunity, and encouraged them to consult with the participating government agencies about labour market needs and available career opportunities.



Launch of the annual admissions exhibition 'Journey of Ambition 12' designed to guide high school students toward the right university major.



KUNA photos

Kuwait University female staff at the 'Journey of Ambition 12' exhibition, held at Sabah Al-Salem University City.

Continued from Page 1

Al-Othman Mosque

longstanding and distinguished partnership between PAMA and the Al-Othman family.

He also prayed that Almighty God will generously reward the late Abdullah Al-Othman for his charitable contributions, bless his descendants, and place these good deeds in their balance of good works.

In addition, Al-Saqer expressed her appreciation to Al-Othman for his gracious invitation and commended the tremendous efforts exerted by those overseeing the project. She stressed that the mosque, which retained its original character, is a landmark and source of pride for Kuwait.

She also prayed that the late Abdullah Abdullatif Al-Othman will be granted God's abundant mercy.

Moreover, Al-Othman expressed his appreciation to the minister for his visit. He thanked the Board of Trustees of the late Abdullah Abdullatif Al-Othman's one-third endowment ('thulth'), as well as its chairperson, Al-Saqer, in her capacity as acting Director General of the authority, for their unwavering support and supervision of the project since its inception.

He extended his gratitude to the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, NCCAL, College of Architecture at Kuwait University, other organizations that contributed to the project, and members of the Al-Othman family.

He is hoping that the project will be the beginning of many similar initiatives in the future through the concerted efforts of government institutions, as well as the private and endowment sectors.

He said such initiatives could deliver high-quality projects that preserve Kuwait's heritage, while fulfilling sustainability requirements, in the interest of the country and as a source of national pride.







KUNA photos

Photos during a workshop titled "Together Against Bullying".

Kids taught healthy ways to handle aggression

Anti-bullying message resonates at Kuwait International Book Fair

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23, (KUNA): Sarah Al-Munayes, a psychologist at the Ministry of Education, emphasized the importance of raising children's awareness regarding the dangers of bullying and its psychological consequences, highlighting the need to develop children's skills in handling negative behaviors, to help build a safe environment rooted in respect, tolerance, and the acceptance of others.

This came during a workshop titled "Together Against Bullying," presented by Al-Munayes as part of the 49th Kuwait International Book Fair.

She explained the concept of bullying and its primary forms, including verbal, physical, social, and cyberbullying, adding that bullying is an intentional and repetitive aggressive behavior aimed at causing psychological or physical harm to others.

Al-Munayes also discussed factors that may drive some children to engage in such behavior, including family circumstances, domestic violence, and the influence of electronic games and social media.

Furthermore, she shared positive strategies for children to manage feelings of anger, such as deep breathing, open communication, expressing emotions, taking a break, and practicing positive thinking.

The workshop also addressed ways to confront bullying by fostering self-confidence, cultivating courage, seeking help from trusted individuals, and avoiding reactions to a bully's provocations.

The workshop included interactive activities and role-playing scenarios that addressed various instances of bullying and how to respond to them, while also highlighting the impact of positive words in boosting self-confidence and fostering values of love and tolerance among children.

Continued from Page 1

Listening etiquette,

Genuine respect is expressed through courteous dialogue and attentive listening. Attendees are expected to give their full attention to every word spoken by the host ambassador or the representative of the host nation.

When Ambassador Al-Shanfari repeatedly offered opportunities for the audience to listen to his speech, the disruptive participants continued their uproar, instead of observing respectful silence, showing utter disregard for basic etiquette.

This misconduct justly drew a firm reprimand from His Highness the Prime Minister who confronted the offenders: "Shame on you, nothing works with you but force."

Decorum must be observed in such a venue, not commotion. Respecting it is a sign of regard for the dignitaries who were present and honor for both nations.

Even if Ambassador Al-Shanfari repeatedly gave the audience a chance to hear his speech, the attendees continued their disruptive acts. Their failure to maintain silence or pay attention was a total disregard for the etiquette of listening.

Addressing those responsible for the disturbance, His Highness the Prime Minister delivered an unmistakable warning: "Shame on you, nothing works with you but force."

This occasion was neither a sports arena nor an avenue for disorder. Observing proper decorum means honoring the distinguished guests and demonstrates mutual respect for both Kuwait and Oman.

We commend His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah for dealing with the situation in a flawless manner.

To Omani Ambassador Ali bin Ahmed bin Salem Al-Shanfari and the Sultanate of Oman as a whole, we offer our highest esteem, warmest regard and sincere appreciation.

Although the courtesy of respectful silence was missing on this occasion, we remain confident that such decorum will be fully restored in the coming days.

Kuwait committee

public-private partnership framework.

This would pave the way for innovative initiatives that enrich the celebrations program, diversify its activities, enhance the private sector's role in supporting national occasions, and promote community participation.

The gathering was also attended by Ministry of Information Undersecretary and Vice Chairman of the Permanent Committee Dr. Nasser Muhaisen, and committee members and representatives of the relevant authorities.

'Scammers' dial

The ministry stated that the "Aman" Operations Room received 3,394 reports of fraud and scams using this method during the current year, involving a total of KD 2 million (approximately US$6.4 million).

The ministry also confirmed that efforts are underway to recover KD 170,000 in connection with 682 reports. In addition, bank accounts have been frozen and KD 1.83 million (approximately US$5.9 million) seized in connection with 2,712 reports referred to the Public Prosecution.

In other news, the Farwaniya Security Directorate conducted a large-scale security campaign in Ardiya under the supervision of its Director General, Brigadier General Faisal Musaed Al-Rabbah, and his assistant, Brigadier General Yousef Fahd Al-Sawla, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The campaign involved the participation of the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), Kuwait Municipality, the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, and the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN).

The joint operation resulted in the arrest of 10 individuals found in possession of narcotics, 11 individuals wanted under arrest warrants, six undocumented workers, five individuals wanted in connection with debt collection cases, four individuals with expired residency permits, two individuals wanted on criminal charges, one vendor wanted in connection with theft cases, and two individuals found violating residency and labor laws.

The campaign also resulted in the issuance of 76 citations requiring the rectification of violations, the administrative closure of 26 establishments, and 84 warnings to businesses found in violation. In addition, warning stickers were placed on 23 abandoned vehicles, 17 abandoned vehicles were removed, and 21 violations involving the unauthorized use of public spaces were recorded.

PAM issued 56 violations against workers and an additional citation requiring the removal of a violation.

The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy issued 53 warnings to establishments found in violation and filed a violation report.

Meanwhile, 45 food establishments were inspected, resulting in the destruction of 204 kilograms of spoiled food. Two violation reports were issued against a food establishment, and a written pledge was obtained to prevent the recurrence of the violation.

The campaign resulted in a total of 468 enforcement actions, with the necessary legal and administrative measures taken against all those found in violation.

Kuwait asserts

Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, who condemned the Iranian attacks and reaffirmed Palestine's solidarity with Kuwait.

The Cabinet also congratulated Sultan Haitham bin Tariq of Oman on his country's National Day, praising Oman's achievements and wishing its people continued progress and prosperity.

Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet on the fifth round of strategic dialogue between Kuwait and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), held in Geneva, which concluded with the signing of a framework agreement to establish a regional center of expertise in the search for missing persons.

He also reviewed his meetings with UN humanitarian officials and phone calls with Benin's foreign minister and the acting UNRWA commissioner-general, during which Kuwait reaffirmed its support for the agency and its humanitarian role in assisting Palestinian refugees.

Education Minister Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei briefed the Cabinet on his visit to Finland, which focused on strengthening educational cooperation and benefiting from Finnish expertise in digital services, educational data and assessment systems.

Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment and Acting Minister of Commerce and Industry Abdulaziz Al-Marzouq reviewed the outcomes of his visits to Washington and Geneva, where he discussed economic reforms, investment opportunities, private-sector cooperation and ways to attract foreign investment.

Finance Minister Yaqoub Al-Refaei informed the Cabinet that Standard and Poor's had affirmed Kuwait's sovereign credit rating at AA- with a stable outlook, citing the country's strong financial position, substantial sovereign assets and reserves, and diverse financing options.

He said the agency viewed the 2026 Government Sukuk Law as a positive step toward broadening financing tools and developing domestic capital markets.

The Cabinet approved several agenda items and referred others to the relevant ministerial committees for further study.

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His Highness the Prime Minister joins the Omani Ambassador in cutting a cake.



His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah, along with the ambassadors of Saudi Arabia (Prince Sultan bin Saad), Qatar (Ali Al-Mahmoud), Bahrain (Salah Al-Maliki), and Oman (Ali Al-Shanfari).

Kuwait reaffirms friendship on Oman's National Day



Photos by Rezq Tawfiq

First Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef offers his congratulations.



Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali congratulates.



First Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef and Bassam Al-Qassas

Kuwait and Oman bound by enduring ties, shared history

By Bassam Al-Qassas
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah praised the close and long standing relations between Kuwait and the Sultanate of Oman.

Speaking to the newspaper during the National Day celebration held at the Omani Embassy, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef described the relationship between Kuwait and Oman as deep-rooted and enduring. He affirmed that it is not a recent development, but a bond that has been strengthened over generations between the two nations and their leaders.

He asserted that these strong ties are reflected in the close relationship between His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad and Omani Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, adding that the Kuwaitis and Omanis are one community. He also indicated that the partnership between the two countries remained strong over the years, confirming the strong bond between their leaders.

> The people of the Sultanate of Oman are our kin and brothers, and they hold a special place in the hearts of the Kuwaiti people



Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah and Saud Al-Farhan



Deputy Editor-in-Chief Sulaiman Al-Jarallah and his son Abdulaziz offer their congratulations

Kuwaitis, Omanis are one people: First Deputy PM

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah affirmed the deep-rooted fraternal ties between the State of Kuwait and the Sultanate of Oman, indicating that "the Kuwaitis and Omanis are, in effect, one people."

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef made the statement during the Sultanate of Oman's National Day celebrations, with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali, several other ministers, ambassadors, public figures and members of the Omani community in attendance.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef stressed that relations between the two countries have "remained strong and solid for decades, as well as the close ties between their respective leaders. These strong bonds are reflected in the fraternal relationship between His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his brother, Sultan Haitham bin Tariq."

Meanwhile, Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali highlighted the longstanding historical and fraternal relations between the Kuwaiti and Omani peoples, recalling the joint efforts and shared experiences that brought the citizens of both countries together over the past decades.

"The people of the Sultanate of Oman are our kin and brothers, and they hold a special place in the hearts of the Kuwaiti people," he said, citing the mutual commitment of both countries to maintain communication and continue the exchange visits.

Sheikh Hamad expressed his wishes for continuous prosperity and well-being for the Sultanate of Oman and its brotherly people, praying to Almighty God to protect Sultan Haitham bin Tariq and preserve the blessings of security and stability throughout the Sultanate.

Omani Ambassador to Kuwait Ali Al-Shanfari confirmed the historical foundations of the modern Omani state, explaining that its establishment is associated with Imam Ahmed bin Said Al-Busaidi, who unified Oman and laid the foundations for national unity and the preservation of its sovereignty. "Since then, successive generations of the Al-Busaidi dynasty assumed the responsibility of leadership, carrying forward the country's journey of development and renewal. This journey continues today under the leadership of Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, drawing inspiration from Oman's heritage while looking ahead, guided by the 'Oman Vision 2040,' toward further development, renewal and the creation of a sustainable future characterized by growth and prosperity," he asserted.

Al-Shanfari praised the strong and distinguished historical relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Kuwait, indicating that these ties receive special attention and guidance at the highest level from Sultan Haitham bin Tariq and His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad.

"At a time the world is increasingly facing crises and challenges, the Sultanate of Oman believes that dialogue is the way to build trust and resolve differences, while settling disputes through peaceful means is essential to maintaining security and stability. The Sultanate continues to pursue its balanced approach, based on respect for the sovereignty and independence of states, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and adherence to the United Nations Charter and international law," he asserted.

He stressed the importance of "containing regional escalation, maintaining the security of states and the safety of civilians, protecting freedom of navigation in accordance with international law and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and taking into account the interests of all countries that depend on these vital maritime routes."

On the Palestinian issue, Al-Shanfari pointed out that "achieving a just and lasting peace in the region requires restoring the rights of the Palestinian people, ending their suffering, bringing the occupation of their land to an end, and supporting the establishment of their independent state along the June 4, 1967 borders, in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions and the two-state solution."

He also expressed his appreciation for the positions taken by countries that recognized the State of Palestine and supported the two-state solution.

Furthermore, in his capacity as Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Prince Sultan bin Saad, Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to the State of Kuwait, extended his warmest congratulations and best wishes to the leaders and brotherly people of the Sultanate of Oman on the occasion of its National Day.

He praised Oman's rich historical heritage, as well as the achievements, development and prosperity it has accomplished over the past decades. "On behalf of the citizens of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the members of its diplomatic mission in the brotherly State of Kuwait, I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to my brother, Omani Ambassador Ali Al-Shanfari, and the members of the Omani diplomatic mission on the glorious National Day of the brotherly Sultanate of Oman. On this occasion, we reflect on the Sultanate of Oman's long and distinguished history, which spans more than 200 years," he added.

He extended his sincere congratulations to "the Omani people and their leaders, represented by Sultan Haitham bin Tariq—may God protect him."

He also highlighted the achievements made during the reign of the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said, specifically his central role in establishing and building the modern Omani state and his significant contributions to the development, progress and prosperity of the country.

He implored Almighty God to preserve the blessings of security and safety in the brotherly Sultanate of Oman and other member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and to grant their peoples more progress, well-being and prosperity.

Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Kuwait, confirmed the depth of the fraternal relations between the UAE and the Sultanate of Oman.

He cited the shared characteristics between the two brotherly countries and their mutual commitment to expand cooperation and integration in various fields.

He also confirmed his anticipation for the launching of the railway project connecting the Omani city of Sohar with the Emirati city of Al Ain next year. He said the project is expected to strengthen connectivity between the two countries.

He asserted that the project is vital to the enhancement of integration and connectivity between the UAE and Oman, in line with broader objectives to develop transportation infrastructure and establish a Gulf-wide railway network.

He stated that this stage reflects the far-reaching vision of the leaders of both countries and their shared aspirations to expand cooperation and strengthen bilateral relations at all levels.

He stressed that Oman's National Day is not just a celebration for the Omani people, but also a special occasion for the leaders and people of the UAE, given the deep-rooted historical and fraternal bonds between the two countries.

Sheikha Hala Bader Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah expressed her happiness over attending the Sultanate of Oman's National Day celebrations. She said the strong fraternal relations between the two countries and their peoples are manifestations of mutual affection, respect and historical ties that characterize their relationship.

She added that Oman holds a special place in the hearts of the Kuwaiti people, and that relations between the two countries are deeply rooted and enduring.

She also expressed her eagerness to join the Omani brothers and sisters in celebrating their happy occasions and national milestones.

Business

Libya warns of major oil output losses

TRIPOLI, Nov. 23, (Xinhua): Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC) on Monday warned of a production loss of around 350,000 barrels per day (bpd) after the closure of a valve on the crude oil pipeline from the Sharara oil field by an unauthorized group.

In a statement, the firm said the closure of the pipeline operated by Akakus Oil Operations comes amid the continued shutdown of the Hamada pipeline for more than two weeks, which has already resulted in a loss of around 15,000 bpd.

Agency also affirms Bank's Viability Rating (VR) at 'bbb-'

Fitch Ratings affirms Gulf Bank's Long-Term Issuer Default Rating at 'A' with Stable Outlook

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Fitch Ratings has affirmed Gulf Bank's Long-Term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'A' with a Stable Outlook. Fitch has also affirmed the Bank's Viability Rating (VR) at 'bbb-'.

According to the recently published Fitch Ratings commentary, Fitch stated that: "Gulf Bank's IDRs reflect potential support from the Kuwaiti authorities, as reflected in its Government Support Rating (GSR) of 'a'. The Stable Outlook on Gulf Bank's Long-Term IDR reflects that on the Kuwaiti sovereign rating (AA-/Stable)." Fitch also added in their commentary: "Gulf Bank's Viability Rating reflects the Bank's good domestic franchise, cautious risk approach, sound loan quality and capitalization, and stable funding."

Fitch further noted: "Gulf Bank had been focusing on consolidating its good domestic franchise, with a market share of 6% of consolidated bank assets at the end of the third quarter of 2026, while stabilizing its financial profile." Fitch also highlighted the Bank's stable operating environment, favorable asset-quality metrics, sound capitalization, and stable funding and liquidity profile.



Ms. Dalal Al-Dousari, Deputy CFO at Gulf Bank

Commenting on Fitch's credit rating announcement, Ms. Dalal Al-Dousari, Deputy CFO at Gulf Bank, said: "We are pleased with Fitch's affirmation of our Long-Term Issuer Default Rating at 'A' with a Stable Outlook. This affirmation reflects Gulf Bank's strong domestic franchise, cautious risk approach, and the resilience of our asset quality and capitalization, which collectively serve as key rating strengths and support the Bank's overall credit profile."

Gulf Bank continues to be well recognized internationally for its creditworthiness and financial strength, with "A" ratings from all three major credit rating agencies. In addition to Fitch Ratings' affirmation of Gulf Bank's Long-Term IDR at 'A' with a Stable Outlook, the Bank holds a Long-Term Foreign Currency Rating of 'A+' with a 'Stable' Outlook from Capital Intelligence Ratings and a Long-Term Deposits Rating of 'A3' with a 'Stable' Outlook from Moody's Investors Service.

KPC advances oil production and water injection projects

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: An official report has outlined key developments and progress rates at several vital operational sites managed by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC).

The report explained that the "South and East Kuwait Operations" area is witnessing intensive efforts to upgrade production and water injection facilities. These projects include the construction and installation of Oil Separation Gathering Center 1 and Water Injection Station 1 in East Kuwait.

Work also includes the construction and installation of Oil Separation Gathering Center 3 and Water Injection Station 3, in addition to the implementation of Water Injection Station 4 in South Kuwait.

Meanwhile, work is progressing on the development of marine facilities at the North and South berths of Mina Al-Ahmadi Port as part of the well-known Fleet Project.

The pontoon project has reached 25.48 percent completion, while the dredging vessel project stands at 24.2 percent and the landing craft project at 20.7 percent.

In the North and West Kuwait Operations area, investments are focused on upgrading processing facilities and water injection networks to maximize the potential of producing oil fields.

These projects include the construction of crude oil separation facilities at the Sabriya and Bahra fields, within Gathering Centers 23 and 24, as well as water injection facilities at Gathering Center 31. They also include plans to establish new water injection networks in Sabriya, Bahra, Rawdatain, and North Kuwait.

Additional projects involve the construction of a separation facility at Gathering Center 25 and a water injection facility at Gathering Center 30.

In the exploration and gas sector, efforts are continuing to expand Kuwait's hydrocarbon reserves and meet growing demand for natural gas.

Work is underway to complete the drilling of six exploratory wells aimed at identifying and assessing hydrocarbon potential in Kuwait's offshore areas.

In the gas operations sector, construction is progressing on a new gas desalination plant at Gas Booster Station 171 in West Kuwait, with completion currently standing at 30 percent. The facility is expected to support the supply of clean gas to power plants and local industries.

According to informed sources, the projects currently being implemented by KPC are of significant operational importance. They will help maintain oil reservoir stability, improve crude oil recovery efficiency, and ensure appropriate pressure levels within the fields, thereby sustaining production flows.

Upgrading these facilities represents a vital logistical link supporting export and maritime handling operations. These improvements will help reduce waiting times and enhance port readiness to accommodate future expansion.

Substantial investments in water injection stations and separation facilities are essential to extending the operational life of oil fields and reducing production costs. These efforts will strengthen domestic energy security, support the country's financial position, and give Kuwait greater flexibility in responding to future fluctuations in global markets.



KPC headquarters

Tandon stresses selectivity and diversified returns

Markaz highlights global investment opportunities at Kuwait Institutional Investor Summit 2026 in KIA

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" participated in the "Kuwait Institutional Investor Summit 2026", held on 17 November at the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) headquarters. The summit, held under the theme "Long-Term Capital in a World Being Remade," brought together leading institutional investors and global investment professionals to examine market valuations, evolving risks, and long-term investment opportunities.

Representing Markaz, Mr. Kashish Tandon, CFA, Executive Vice President, Global Investment Advisory, joined a panel discussion titled "Priced In or Priced Out? A Cross-Asset Debate on Where Valuations, Risk, and Returns Align for Institutional Portfolios Today." The session explored how investors can identify attractive risk-adjusted returns across public and private markets amid changing economic conditions and heightened geopolitical uncertainty.

During the discussion, Mr. Tandon highlighted the broadening earnings outlook beyond major US technology companies, with opportunities emerging across industrials, healthcare, and financials, as well as selected international markets. He also addressed the renewed appeal of fixed income as a source of portfolio income, emphasizing the importance of credit quality and disciplined risk assessment as credit spreads remain tight.



Kashish Tandon, CFA, Executive Vice President of Global Investment Advisory at Markaz, participates in a panel discussion titled 'Priced In or Priced Out?', held at the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) headquarters.

Turning to private markets, Mr. Tandon underscored the need to assess investment performance through underlying cash flows, liquidity conditions, and realized returns. He identified traditional infrastructure, including energy transition, power, transportation, and essential services, as an attractive long-term investment opportunity, supported by predictable revenue streams and potential inflation hedge.

Commenting on the investment landscape, Mr. Tandon stated: "Recent volatility in technology stocks, particularly around the AI investment theme, is a timely reminder of the importance of portfolio diversification. While opportunities remain attractive across public and private markets, investors need to look beyond prevailing market trends and focus on building portfolios with different sources of growth, income and long-term returns."

He added: "Portfolio resilience is not simply about managing downside risk but about maintaining the flexibility to navigate changing market conditions and capture opportunities as they emerge."

Markaz's participation reflects its commitment to contributing to informed investment dialogue and sharing its global multi-asset expertise to support long-term investment decision-making.

Demographics and economics of aging: Implications for portfolios

By National Bank of Kuwait

Introduction

The global working-age population nearly doubled between 1980 and 2020, growing to 5.1bn from 2.6bn. However, since 2020, it has only increased by roughly 1% per annum, down from 1.7% per annum over the previous 40 years. This means that pension and tax systems are gaining new contributors more slowly. Life expectancy is increasing and large generations are retiring, meaning that by 2054 the population aged 65+ is projected to double to 1.7bn from around 830m according to the United Nations. With more of the cost of retirement likely to come from savings and investment returns, this article will look at how aging impacts consumption, healthcare, interest rates and the workforce, and how a portfolio can adjust.

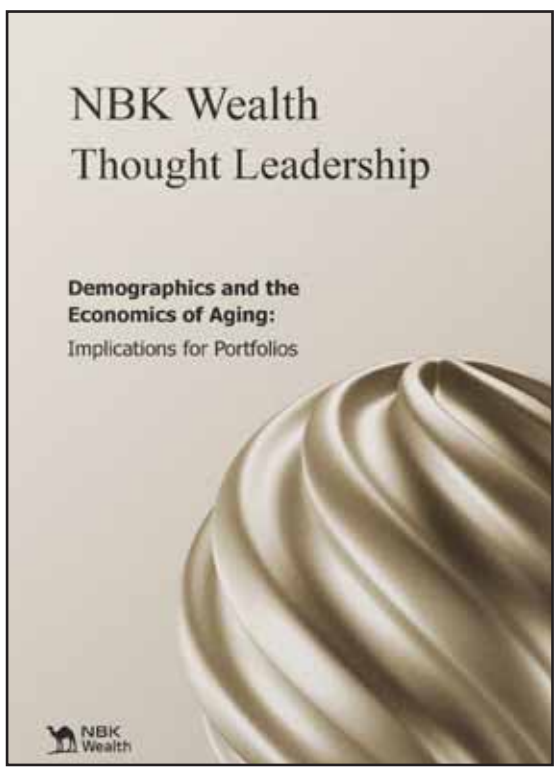
Demand – Consumption and Healthcare

By 2050, 25% of global consumption is expected to come from those aged 65+, which is double their share in 1997 according to McKinsey Global Institute. Japan, the oldest major economy in the world, is already past this level, with almost 50% of consumer spending coming from households headed by someone aged 60+ as early as 2014. Korea shows the problems that arise when savings fall short, as the OECD found that almost 40% of those over 65 live in relative poverty. In China, official figures show there are more people over 65 than under 15. The parents and grandparents who used to be the "six pockets" spending on one child may now need to rely on that child.

Spending habits change during retirement. There is a move away from goods to services like travel, leisure and financial advice in the early stages. Healthcare costs then increase dramatically. In the US, those aged 65+ make up around 17% of the population but account for around 37% of healthcare spending. This cost is shared between households and governments.

Savings, Interest Rates and Public Finances

On the household side, savings increase during the peak earning years of large generations such as the baby boomers. Once they retire, savings begin to fall. The build-up of savings has helped depress interest rates, as more money has been saved than businesses and governments want to borrow, meaning lenders have to accept lower returns. The IMF expects this to continue, as older populations hold more savings and slower growth reduces the demand for borrowing. However, economists Charles Goodhart and Manoj Pradhan argue that retirees will begin to use up their savings and fewer workers will push up wages, causing inflation and interest rates to rise.



Either way, households will be affected more directly, as 63% of assets in the seven largest pension markets are held in defined contribution schemes. This means savers have more control over their investments and when they withdraw, but they also carry more of the risk. On the public side, more money is being spent on pensions and healthcare. With fewer workers paying taxes and contributions for each retiree, this puts pressure on government budgets.

Fewer Workers, More Productivity

The number of working-age people per person aged 65+ is expected to fall globally to 3.9 by 2050 from 6.5 today. In advanced economies and China, it could fall to around 2.

With fewer workers in many economies, growth will depend more on productivity. Labor shortages are likely to increase wages, and companies will have a greater incentive to invest in automation. McKinsey estimates that generative AI and automation could increase productivity growth by 0.5-3.4pp per annum. However, this depends on how quickly companies invest in these technologies.

Portfolio Implications

There are three main implications. Firstly, demand from older consumers is set to increase, particularly for services and healthcare. This is a long-term theme, as the shift will take decades. Secondly, interest rates and inflation are harder to predict. The uncertainty matters more now that individuals have more responsibility for their retirement income. Thirdly, companies that succeed in increasing productivity with fewer workers will benefit.

Healthcare is likely to be the most obvious winner. Demand is expected to increase for medications and medical devices to treat age-related illnesses, as well as for care at home and in senior housing. As governments and insurers pay for much of this, companies with pricing power should be the best placed. Travel, leisure and personal services should also benefit from increased activity in early retirement.

Financial services should benefit from individuals taking more responsibility for their retirement. Asset managers, wealth managers and life insurers are likely to see increased demand for advice and income in retirement. Labor shortages should also benefit makers of automation equipment and AI software. Companies in labor-intensive industries like logistics and manufacturing can use these tools to do more with fewer staff. Not all sectors stand to benefit. Companies reliant on young families and first-time buyers will likely see a contraction in their market in the fastest-aging countries.

Key Takeaways

■ People aged 65+ are expected to make up 25% of global consumption by 2050. We are likely to see increased spending on services, especially healthcare.

■ While healthcare demand is structural, returns will be dependent on pricing power and valuations, which can vary.

■ Increased savings and a growing workforce have meant interest rates have been low. However, fewer people in the workforce may cause inflation and interest rates to rise. This makes both harder to predict than in previous decades.

■ In the biggest pension markets, 63% of assets are held in defined contribution schemes. This means we will see more of the cost of retirement being met by savings and investment returns. This will likely drive demand for advice and retirement income.

■ With fewer people in the workforce, productivity will be a key factor. Companies that can reduce costs through automation and AI, and those producing these tools, will be likely winners.

■ Selectivity and diversification across sectors and regions will be key. Policy and valuations can take away from the benefits of a near-certain trend.

Reforms cover trade & transport

Jordan eases foreign ownership restrictions

AMMAN, Nov. 23, (Xinhua): Jordan's cabinet approved amendments to investment regulations aimed at easing foreign ownership restrictions in retail, wholesale trade and transport sectors, as the kingdom seeks to attract international investors and boost economic competitiveness.

The amendments to the 2026 Investment Environment Regulation are intended to facilitate the entry of major international companies, diversify supply sources, and increase competition in the domestic market, according to a government statement.

Under the amendments, foreign ownership restrictions will be relaxed for large retail companies listed on international stock exchanges or generating annual revenues of more than 500 million Jordanian dinars (about 705 million U.S. dollars), as demonstrated by audited financial statements.

The changes also ease foreign ownership limits in wholesale trade involving industrial equipment, construction materials and engineering and construction machinery.

In the transport sector, the amendments cover road freight services, international passenger transport by road, and maritime passenger and cargo transport.

The government said the measures are expected to attract foreign capital and expertise, improve service quality, and strengthen Jordan's integration into regional and international trade networks.

Kuwait to re-tender 23 projects under new PPP consultancy deal

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23, (KUNA): The Public-Private Partnership Projects Authority (PPP) announced that it had signed a contract for consultancy services to prepare studies for the re-tendering of 23 projects established on state-owned real estate properties.

In a statement, the authority said that the contract was signed with a consortium led by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Advisory Services, in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance.

The consortium includes World Design Company and Alam & Associates Law Firm, it added.

The winning consultancy consortium will be responsible for preparing economic feasibility studies for the projects established on state-owned real estate properties, as well as carrying out the work related to the various stages of the tendering process, in accordance with Law No. 116 of 2014 and its executive regulations, the statement noted.

Initiative highlights bank's innovations and digital transformation

KFH showcases next generation of banking services at 'Shaping What's Next' event



KFH Group CEO Khaled Yousef AlShamlan, and the executive management team.



Khaled Yousef AlShamlan and the executive management team in the front row among the first attendees.



Khaled Yousef AlShamlan, KFH Group CEO speaking at the event.

- **AlShamlan:** KFH Adopts Technology to Keep Pace with Change and Deploys it to Shape the Future of Banking
- **El Meligy:** Developing Banking Solutions and Services to Enhance KFH's Leadership as One of the Most Innovative Banks Locally and Globally



Khaled Yousef AlShamlan and Yousef Al-Ruwaih pose with members of the Public Relations and Media Team at Kuwait Finance House's (KFH) 'Shaping What's Next' event, highlighting the Bank's strategic vision for the future of retail banking.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) organized the "Shaping What's Next" event to showcase the Bank's strategic vision for the future of retail banking. The event featured KFH's most prominent initiatives, digital services, and innovations, which reflect its approach toward leading banking transformation and enhancing the customer experience, driven by its pioneering position, financial strength, and innovative capabilities.

Speaking at the event, KFH Group CEO Khaled Yousef AlShamlan said that the Bank's achievements embody its strategic vision to lead the global evolution of banking services, reflecting its mission to setting the highest benchmarks in innovation and customer service excellence.

He noted that KFH has continued to deliver solid financial results, underscoring the resilience of its business model and its capacity for sustainable growth. During the first nine months of 2026, the Bank recorded growth across all key financial indicators. Net profit rose 6.2% to KD 523.4 million, the highest in the Kuwaiti banking sector, while total assets reached KD 43.8 billion at the end of the third quarter.

AlShamlan added that KFH's achievements have earned widespread global recognition. The Bank was named "World's Best Islamic Bank" by Global Finance and "Best Digital Bank in Kuwait" by both Euromoney and MEED, alongside numerous other prestigious international accolades. Furthermore, KFH ranked first in Kuwait on Forbes' list of the 100 Most Valuable Companies in the Middle East and North Africa by market capitalization, reaching approximately KD 15 billion.

He noted that the Bank achieved a historic milestone with the listing of its inaugural KD 200 million Sukuk on Boursa Kuwait. Meanwhile, Fitch Ratings upgraded the Bank's long-term credit rating to "A+" with a stable outlook, an endorsement reflecting its solid financial position, resilient performance, and leading standing in the banking sector.

AlShamlan emphasized that these achievements represent far more than figures or accolades; they are strategic milestones bringing KFH closer to its ambition of ranking among the world's 100 largest banks. He noted that the Bank continues to expand its footprint, diversify its growth drivers, and reinforce its leadership across retail banking, corporate banking, and wealth management. Furthermore, KFH is unlocking synergies across the Group through deeper integration and coordination across diverse markets and sectors, spanning more than 10 countries and 600 branches worldwide.

He said that the Bank continues to enhance operational efficiency while developing innovative banking solutions that deliver greater value to customers and shareholders and reinforce its capacity for sustainable, long-term growth. He added that digital transformation and artificial intelligence serve as core pillars of the Bank's strategy and key growth drivers for its next phase.

AlShamlan explained that KFH does not adopt technology merely to keep pace with change; rather, it deploys it to shape the future of banking, foster innovation, enhance efficiency, and deliver a more advanced, seamless experience for its customers.

AlShamlan commended the dedication of KFH's employees, emphasizing that every achievement and milestone the Bank celebrates today is the direct result of their hard work and commitment. He affirmed that they remain the cornerstone of KFH's success and the driving force behind its next phase of growth.

He extended his sincere appreciation to all staff, noting that these achievements are a source of pride and a catalyst to pursue greater ambitions, write new success stories, and reinforce KFH's global leadership.

Sameh El Meligy

Acting Group Chief Retail Banking Officer at KFH, Sameh El Meligy, said that the "Shaping What's Next" event reflects a well-defined strategic vision that places the customer at the core of its priorities. He added that the event confirms KFH's role in leading change and developing innovative banking solutions and services that reinforce its position as one of the most innovative financial institutions locally and globally.

El Meligy explained that KFH focuses on providing advanced, seamless, fast, and efficient digital services that add value for customers while enhancing their satisfaction and trust. This is reflected in the increasing use of the Bank's digital channels and e-services.

He pointed out that innovation at KFH is not limited to technology but rather relies on human talent capable of developing solutions and services that meet customers' needs and aspirations. He emphasized that a culture of innovation and teamwork represents one of the key drivers of success and sustainable leadership.



A glimpse of some of the attendees, among them the executive management team.



Sameh El Meligy, Acting Group Chief Retail Banking Officer at KFH addressing the audience.



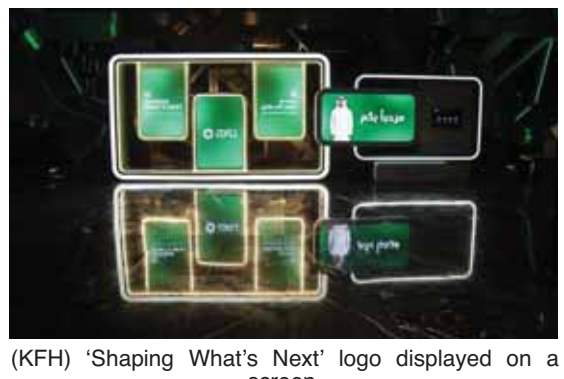
Meshal Alobaid, KFH Deputy General Manager Digital and Alternative Channels shedding light on the latest AI solutions during the event.



Nehal Al-Musallam, KFH Deputy General Manager of Products, during the presentation of the Group's services.



Tareq Al-Ajeel, KFH Deputy General Manager of Digital Transformation and Innovation, introducing the KFH FinEdge business accelerator program.



(KFH) 'Shaping What's Next' logo displayed on a screen.



'Shaping What's Next' event banner

Innovative banking services and solutions

The event unveiled a spectrum of new services and initiatives under five strategic pillars. These include artificial intelligence and digital transformation, enhancing customer experience, leveraging Group synergy, supporting business growth, and empowering employees.

Fahad and Reem

During the event, KFH Deputy General Manager Digital and Alternative Channels, Meshal Alobaid, shed light on the latest AI solutions at KFH, notably Fahad and Reem. These smart digital assistants represent an advanced step in the Bank's digital transformation journey and reflect its efforts to deploy the latest technologies to provide a faster, more efficient, and more interactive banking experience for customers.

He pointed out that "Fahad" is a smart solution that facilitates quick access to information and services and provides more efficient support. Meanwhile, "Reem" is an advanced model leveraging generative AI technologies to enhance the customer experience, boost engagement, and deliver more personalized digital services and solutions.

AI Voice Analytics

Alobaid highlighted "AI Voice Analytics", which uses artificial intelligence to analyze contact center calls and extract insights that help understand customer needs, while improving service quality and customer experience.

WhatsApp Banking

Alobaid said that WhatsApp Banking, which KFH launched for the first time in Kuwait, provides customers with continuous access to a wide range of financial and general banking services through WhatsApp.

The Digital Personal Finance experience has been developed to provide an integrated digital financing journey, starting from calculating installments and submitting applications electronically to receiving the financing amount.

Group Service Centers

Meanwhile, KFH Deputy General Manager of Products, Nehal Al-Musallam presented the Group's services, which leverage its regional and international capabilities to provide a more interconnected banking experience across its various markets. This includes opening new accounts for customers at the Group's subsidiaries in Egypt, Turkey, and Germany through the Group's Service Centers in Kuwait.

Baiti Challenges

Al-Musallam pointed out that KFH launched Baiti Challenges, which contributes to fostering financial literacy among children and establishing positive financial habits by linking daily achievements to financial rewards.

KFH Home Platform

In line with promoting customer experience, KFH showcased the digital KFH Home platform, which delivers an integrated experience supporting customers who build their homes, from the planning stage to execution decisions. The platform allows customers to explore options for construction materials, contractors, and project-related services, while assisting with preliminary construction cost estimates and budget planning. Furthermore, it facilitates the comparison of available options and helps customers select solutions aligned with their specific needs, thereby enhancing planning efficiency and increasing awareness before residential project execution begins.

KFH Rewards Program

KFH highlighted the latest developments in the KFH Rewards Program, which offers broader benefits and options for customers through an expanding network of partners.

Zaheb Payment Links

As part of its efforts to support business growth, KFH highlighted the Zaheb Payment Links service, which allows business owners to create electronic payment links and share them with customers to collect payments with ease and flexibility.

KFH FinEdge Program

KFH Deputy General Manager Digital Transformation and Innovation, Tareq Al-Ajeel, introduced the KFH FinEdge business accelerator program, which connects the Bank with startups and fintechs to accelerate innovation and co-create customer and business solutions. The program combines KFH's deep industry expertise and broad capabilities with comprehensive mentorship, training, consulting, and business development support.

KFH One

Regarding empowering employees, the Bank showcased the KFH One platform, which provides a unified knowledge environment enabling staff to easily access information, procedures, and work tools to boost efficiency and enhance service quality and the customer experience.

The initiatives and services presented during the event underscore KFH's continuous commitment to innovation, investment in modern technologies, and human capital development. They further reinforce the Bank's vision to lead the future of banking through smart solutions and advanced digital experiences that meet customer needs and align with future aspirations, while cementing the Bank's leading position locally and globally.

Global recognition

In recognition of its leadership in innovative banking services and solutions and excellence in enhancing customer experience, KFH has received several prestigious international awards in retail banking, most notably:

- Best Retail Bank in Kuwait from IFN
- Most Innovative Bank in Kuwait from IFN
- Best SME product in the Middle East (Zaheb) from EMEA Finance
- Best Digital Bank -Kuwait from MEED magazine
- Best Digital Bank in Kuwait from Euromoney
- Top Innovations in Finance 2026 – Middle East from Global Finance, for "Fahad"

Program aims to strengthen employees' CRM, communication, & customer-handling skills

ABK organizes training program on excellence in customer service



A glimpse from the training programme at ABK.



Sharing best practices and insights on delivering exceptional customer service throughout the programme.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently organized a specialized training program focused on customer service excellence, reaffirming its ongoing commitment to investing in human capital, developing employee capabilities, and delivering exceptional banking experiences that enhance customer satisfaction and strengthen its competitive position in Kuwait's banking sector.

The program was designed to equip employees with practical skills and tools in customer relationship management, effective communication, and professional handling of customer interactions and challenges. It also emphasized the importance of delivering efficient, personalized, and innovative banking solutions that exceed customer expectations and foster long-term loyalty.

Through interactive sessions and practical case studies, participants explored effective problem-solving techniques, best practices for responding to customer inquiries, and ways to leverage digital solutions to streamline transactions and enhance service efficiency. The program also highlighted the importance of anticipating customer needs and adopting a proactive, customer-centric approach across all touchpoints.

Commenting on the initiative, Afrah Alarbash, General Manager of Human Resources at ABK, emphasized that exceptional customer service begins with employees who are equipped with the right skills, knowledge, and mindset to deliver excellence in every interaction.

She stated, "Customer service excellence is a reflection of our employees' dedication, professionalism, and commitment to delivering the highest standards of service. At ABK, we recognize that investing in our people is fundamental to achieving sustainable success. This training program reflects our vision of developing a highly skilled and versatile workforce that combines professionalism with a deep understanding of customer needs, while empowering every employee to serve as a true ambassador of ABK's values."



Ms. Afrah Alarbash, GM of Human Resources at ABK

Alarbash highlighted that the program was designed to go beyond traditional customer service practices by focusing on building trust, anticipating customer expectations, and delivering flexible, tailored solutions that keep pace with the evolving banking landscape. She also underscored the importance of fostering a culture of continuous learning, noting that the Human Resources Department remains committed to introducing advanced training initiatives and creating a supportive work environment that encourages professional growth.

By incorporating industry best practices into its training and development programs, ABK aims to ensure that employees are well-prepared to address the diverse needs of customers with confidence, efficiency, and precision. This approach plays a vital role in strengthening customer relationships, enhancing service quality, and attracting new customers to the Bank.

Alarbash further emphasized that continuous employee development is essential to maintaining ABK's competitiveness, particularly as digital transformation continues to reshape customer expectations and the delivery of financial services. While advanced technologies and innovative banking products remain important drivers of growth, employees play a central role in translating these capabilities into seamless, sophisticated, and personalized banking experiences.

She concluded, "At ABK, we firmly believe that investing in our employees is an investment in the future of the Bank. By continuously enhancing our training and development framework and fostering a sustainable learning culture, we are empowering our teams to reach their full potential, reinforcing our competitive position, and ensuring that customer service excellence remains at the heart of everything we do."

Trump backs reinstatement

Nvidia reinstates Huang as CEO after shock boardroom reversal

NEW YORK, Nov 23, (AP): Nvidia's board reinstated Jensen Huang as president and CEO Monday in a surprise move, just days after rejecting his offer to return to the artificial intelligence chipmaker.

It was the latest twist in the fallout from Huang's admission of an affair with a woman suspected of being a Chinese spy.

"The Board believes Jensen is the right person to lead NVIDIA, and that his reinstatement is in the best interests of our stockholders, employees, partners and customers," board Chairman Harvey C. Jones said in a statement.

President Donald Trump said the federal government had "no reason to believe" Huang's return posed a national security risk.

Huang said in a statement that he was "honored" to return to the company and that he takes the responsibility "with the greatest humility and renewed commitment." He thanked Jones and interim CEO Colette Kress, who will return to her role as chief financial officer, as well as Nvidia's executive staff for their leadership during the brief period of disorder.

"I am also deeply thankful to our employees, shareholders, leaders across the industry and partners around the world for their extraordinary support," Huang's statement said. "Above all, I am grateful for the love and support of my family. I can't wait to get back to work."

Shares of Nvidia soared 33% to $165.57 at the opening bell Monday, moments after Huang's return was announced. That price was far below the all-time high of $239.24 that the stock reached just last month.



Jensen Huang, president and CEO of Nvidia, waits for a groundbreaking ceremony for an expansion of Coherent's manufacturing facility to begin on June 16, 2026, in Sherman, Texas. (AP)

Trump has a close personal relationship with Huang and called for his reinstatement as recently as Sunday night. The president said Attorney General Todd Blanche confirmed that the government "does not possess evidence that he has engaged in any unlawful conduct."

Trump called the reinstatement the "correct and proper decision," writing on social media Monday that the country "needs Jensen's leadership at NVIDIA in order to ensure the Success and Prosperity of not only the Company, but the American Economy." He also called for Nvidia to continue its internal investigation.

Trump seemed to have been given advance notice of the decision. In an interview with PBS News Hour's Liz Landers about 30 minutes before Nvidia announced Huang's reinstatement, Trump said, "He's back where he should be, and we see he did absolutely nothing wrong from that standpoint."

The company has had a whirlwind month after Huang admitted to extramarital affairs, including one with Chinese businesswoman Alice Huang, a suspected spy for the country. Nvidia stock was at the center of market volatility in the wake of the admission and its downstream effects in Washington.

Lawmakers and other elected officials have sought investigations into Jensen Huang's conduct, Nvidia's chip sales and the government's enforcement of export controls.

Attorney General Blanche told reporters at an unrelated news conference this month that the Justice Department had not reached any conclusion about whether Alice Huang was a Chinese spy.

"All that I think I will say is that of course DOJ is investigating or looking at it," Blanche said.

The Justice Department is conducting a criminal investigation involving potential export control violations into Megaspeed, the Singapore-based cloud computing firm where Alice Huang was an executive.

Jensen Huang's reinstatement comes after days of speculation about whether he would return.

Supporters set up an online petition calling for him to get his job back that drew many signatures from current and former Nvidia staff, investors and other Silicon Valley supporters, including Elon Musk.

Huang posted an online message last week saying he would be "honored" to return if the company asked him. But the board responded then that it did not intend to reinstate him.

It's not the first time a tech industry leader has been fired because of transparency concerns and then quickly rehired after an outpouring of support from staff and investors. Three years ago, OpenAI co-founder Sam Altman was ousted as CEO after a chaotic power struggle and then reinstated days later after employees revolted.

Discoveries include gold, copper

Russia reports 250 strategic mineral discoveries this year

MOSCOW, Nov. 23, (Xinhua): Russia has discovered 250 deposits of strategic mineral resources so far this year, including gold, copper, nickel, zinc and lead reserves, the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment said on Monday.

Of the newly discovered deposits, 239 are solid mineral deposits and 11 are hydrocarbon deposits, the ministry said in a statement posted on its website, adding that Russia's mineral resource base typically expands by 200 to 300 new deposits annually.

The largest discovery so far is the Morozova gold deposit in the Trans-Baikal Territory, which contains an estimated 37 tonnes of gold and 13.6 tonnes of silver.

Another major find is the Dalneye copper-nickel ore deposit in the Krasnoyarsk Territory, with estimated reserves of 169,600 tonnes of nickel, more than 8,000 tonnes of cobalt, 250,000 tonnes of copper, 242 tonnes of platinum-group metals, 9.5 tonnes of gold and nearly 67 tonnes of silver.

The ministry also highlighted the Rassokhinskoye lead-zinc deposit in the Krasnoyarsk Territory, which holds more than 145,000 tonnes of zinc, over 36,000 tonnes of lead, 5.3 tonnes of silver and 226 tonnes of cadmium.

In the Murmansk region, the Gora Yuzhnaya deposit, containing low-iron apatite ores, has been discovered, with reserves estimated at 1.1 million tonnes of apatite ores, 20.5 million tonnes of iron ore and nearly 12,000 tonnes of zirconium.

Among the largest hydrocarbon discoveries is the Nikolai Grigoryev gas condensate field in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Area, with estimated natural gas reserves of 50.2 billion cubic meters.

The Pugachyovskoye oil and gas condensate field in the Orenburg region, which has estimated natural gas reserves of 5.4 billion cubic meters, has also been added to Russia's state register of mineral reserves.

Russia's Novoshakhtinsk refinery halts operations

MOSCOW, Nov. 23, (Xinhua): The Novoshakhtinsk oil refinery in Russia's Rostov region has suspended operations following an overnight attack by Ukrainian drones and missiles, regional Governor Yury Slyusar said Monday.

The combined attack lasted more than six hours, said Slyusar, adding that emergency services were working at the site to contain the aftermath of the strikes.

In an earlier social media post, Slyusar said over 80 drones had been intercepted or suppressed over the Rostov region.

The refinery, which mainly produces fuel for export with an annual capacity of processing 5 million metric tons of oil, previously suspended operations in September following a Ukrainian drone attack.

High prices put new pressure on small businesses

Small US trucking firms scramble to survive mounting diesel costs

NEW YORK, Nov 23, (AP): When diesel prices topped $4 a gallon early in the U.S.-Iran war, Kevin Otto thought he could manage by telling his Minnesota trucking company's 16 drivers to slow down. He estimated that traveling at 65 miles per hour would allow Otto Transfer's fleet of flatbeds to squeeze two-tenths of a mile more from every gallon and save him $7,000 per truck.

Instead, prices kept climbing. After diesel surpassed $6 a gallon in September, Otto added a fuel surcharge to every job for the first time. He based the surcharge on the government's weekly Midwest diesel average, beginning at 5% and eventually raising it to 12.5%.

"To me, it's drastic, but it's the only way to survive," said Otto, who took over the 80-year-old company from his parents in 2002.

High diesel prices this year have put new pressure on the small businesses that make up most of the nation's motor carriers. The war drove up one of their largest and least avoidable daily expenses just as the highly fragmented U.S. trucking industry showed tentative signs of recovery from a yearslong slump marked by weak demand and depressed rates.

Small trucking companies usually have fewer financial buffers against surging fuel prices than their larger competitors. Big fleets typically have greater cash reserves, often buy diesel at bulk discounts and tend to negotiate long-term contracts with adjustable fuel surcharges. Many smaller operators negotiate rates one load at a time and must absorb higher pump prices while waiting three to four weeks for spot rates to catch up, freight data provider DAT Freight & Analytics said.

Even when a rate includes a separate line item for fuel, carriers may wait 30 to 90 days to be paid.

"Those lags in the rates catching up to fuel are even more challenging if you've got to put food on the table and you don't have a large company that's helping carry over that difference," Alex Leslie, senior research associate at the American Transportation Research Institute, said.

On-highway diesel reached a record national average of $6.53 in September, according to the Energy Information Administration. The price was $5.94 a gallon for the week of Nov. 16, about 56% more than before the war, EIA said. Gasoline averaged $3.81, about 30% higher.

Getting goods hauled around the U.S. and Canada costs substantially more than it did a year ago. Spot rates paid by freight brokers for individual loads were 44% to 48% higher in September, depending on the type of trailer, according to DAT. The company estimated that diesel costs accounted for at least two-fifths of the year-over-year increase.

The rest of the increase didn't necessarily translate into profit. Insurance, maintenance, equipment, tolls and other expenses were going up as the industry began to emerge from the lows of a "freight recession," the American Transportation Research Institute said.

The average cost of operating a truck reached a record $2.34 per mile in 2025, a 3.4% increase from the year before, while nonfuel costs rose 4.2%, the industry research organization reported in July.

Profit margins were also exceptionally thin last year. Truckload and refrigerated carriers reported average operating margins of less than 1%, while flatbed carriers averaged a 0.5% operating loss, according to ATRI.

The downturn started in early 2022, when a pandemic-era surge in freight demand faded and too many trucks were left chasing fewer loads. Industry data suggest that a shrinking supply of trucks, rather than a renewed boom in shipments, is contributing to this year's higher freight rates, obscuring how strained many trucking businesses are.

At October's average diesel price, a tractor-trailer that gets six miles per gallon would have used $521 worth of fuel traveling 500 miles a day, compared with $310 in February, DAT calculated. Yet monthly freight volumes were lower for all three major trailer types than a year earlier, the company said.

"Demand actually hasn't increased that much, and the market for the last few years has been quite depressed," Adam Parish, director of trucking procurement at supply chain management company Flexport, said. "And so there's been a lot of pricing pressure from customers."

Wes Oberman's company in Huntingdon, Tennessee, works with 14 drivers who own their tractor-trailers but operate under Oberman Logistics' federal motor-carrier authority as they haul steel and consumer goods across the South.

The owner-operators handle jobs at individually negotiated flat rates and buy diesel on the road with company discount cards. They are allocated 85% of each load's gross revenue, from which Oberman deducts their fuel purchases and fixed expenses.

As diesel consumed more of each load's revenue, he became pickier about the jobs he accepted. Sometimes that's meant waiting a day for a better-paying load or one requiring fewer "deadhead" miles, when the truck travels empty between jobs.

"We just got to keep trucking, as they say, save every penny we can and just weather the storm until this diesel crisis goes away," Oberman said.

President Donald Trump sought to ease the pressure in October by directing the Internal Revenue Service to suspend federal penalties and reporting requirements through Dec. 31 for using dyed diesel on highways. Federal excise-tax payments were deferred, but state taxes and restrictions can still apply.

The restricted diesel normally is reserved for tax-exempt off-road uses such as farming. The fuel is dyed red to make improper use easier for law enforcement to spot.

David McKinney, the owner of McKinney & Sons Transfer in Lexington, Alabama, called the dyed diesel plan "absurd." He doubted it would provide meaningful relief for small trucking companies. After selling two trucks in September to preserve cash, he worried that residual dye in the tanks of his company's remaining 15 trucks could expose him to fines after the temporary policy expires.

The IRS is considering a grace period.

McKinney, who has been in the trucking business for 30 years, has a fueling station at his shop so he pays less for diesel than he would if his drivers filled up at truck stops. Yet given the complicated calculus of trucking, his company is only breaking even, he said.

"Our bottom line is: For the past four months, we have survived. We have not profited any money," McKinney said. "Rates need to be higher, but the trucking business is so competitive, it keeps it down."

In Delano, Minnesota, Otto worries his new surcharge will cost him customers. He previously adjusted his freight rates only once a year, but his long-term clients have accepted the added charge.

Otto usually gives the drivers who haul utility poles around the country for his company a bonus at the end of the year, but since his costs have risen so much, he isn't sure if he is going to be able to do that this year.

EIA expects diesel prices to ease next year as more Middle East oil production outside Iran recovers. But the agency raised its 2027 forecast by 54 cents in November, to an average of $5.03 a gallon, citing continued constraints on global refined-fuel supplies. It warned that shipping disruptions could still produce short-term price swings.

"It's a five-alarm fire, absolutely," Otto said. "It is unsustainable, and I fear that it will only get worse."

'More than 7.8 million international visits in 2025'

Kuwait to Georgia: Visa-free access, direct flights and incredible experiences

By John C. Fernandes
Online Media Manager - Arab Times


Georgian Ambassador to Kuwait HE Noshrevan Lomtatidze addressing the attendees.


Elene Cheishvili, Marketing Project Coordinator - Georgian National Tourism Administration


Vinod Vishwanathan, Head of Sales at Jazeera Airways


Photos by Samer Shiqair

Attendees during the 'Georgian Tourism Roadshow – Kuwait 2026'.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Georgia is seeking to attract more Kuwaitis and expatriate residents by showcasing its tourism attractions, hospitality, investment and business opportunities, while strengthening travel and tourism partnerships with Kuwait.

Georgian Ambassador to Kuwait HE Noshrevan Lomtatidze highlighted the growing friendship and cooperation between the two countries during the "Georgian Tourism Roadshow – Kuwait 2026", held on Sunday, November 22, at JW Marriott Hotel.

He described Kuwait as a close friend of Georgia and welcomed the growing number of Kuwaitis and residents travelling to the country. He highlighted direct flights, a journey of approximately two hours, and visa-free entry arrangements for Kuwaiti nationals and residents of Kuwait as key factors encouraging travel.

The ambassador thanked the Georgian National Tourism Administration and participating tour operators for bringing Georgia's tourism offerings closer to the Kuwaiti market, expressing hope that the event would strengthen business partnerships.

Presenting Georgia's tourism potential, Elene Cheishvili, Marketing Project Coordinator - Georgian National Tourism Administration said the country welcomed more than 7.8 million international visits in 2025, with over 76% of visitors indicating plans to return.

She highlighted Georgia's connectivity through 82 airlines serving 125 destinations across 40 countries. Its attractions include ski resorts such as Gudauri, Bakuriani and Mestia, adventure tourism, eco-tourism and wellness destinations including Borjomi and Abastumani.

Cheishvili also showcased Georgia's cultural and gastronomic heritage, including its 8,000-year-old winemaking tradition, historic sites, traditional cuisine, music and dance. She said the country's vision was to develop sustainable, year-round tourism through improved infrastructure and diversified travel experiences.

Meanwhile, Vinod Vishwanathan, Head of Sales at Jazeera Airways, highlighted the airline's direct connectivity between Kuwait and Georgia. Jazeera currently operates four weekly flights to Tbilisi, increasing to daily services from mid-December 2026, in addition to weekly flights to Batumi.


A photo from the event.

PLC and FIRA Kuwait organize free legal clinic for expatriates

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: The third free legal clinic, jointly organized by the Pravasi Legal Cell (PLC) Kuwait Chapter and the Federation of Indian Registered Associations (FIRA Kuwait), aimed to provide guidance and legal assistance to expatriates facing various legal issues. A large number of expatriate Indians participated in the legal clinic.

The event, held at the Al Nahil Clinic auditorium in Abbasiya, was inaugurated by Operations Manager Mr. Zubair. Biju Stephen, President of the PLC Kuwait Chapter, presided over the function, while General Secretary Shyjith delivered the welcome address. Babu Francis, the Country Head of PLC Kuwait, explained the activities and legal aid initiatives of the Pravasi Legal Cell.

Kuwaiti lawyer Dr. Talal Thaki delivered the keynote address. He provided legal guidance on topics such as the legal system in Kuwait, the legal rights and responsibilities of expatriates, labor disputes, outstanding salary payments, employment contracts, residency documents, and civil legal matters.

The organizers stated that such free legal aid initiatives are helpful in addressing the difficulties faced by expatriates stemming from a lack of legal knowledge and language barriers and in enhancing legal awareness.

The organizers announced that they will continue to organize such legal aid initiatives to protect expatriates' legal rights and safety.

Mr. Asslam, Senior Marketing Manager of Shifa Al Jazeera Medicals; Charles P. George, General Secretary of FIRA Kuwait; and Shiny Frank, Women's Coordinator for PLC Global, offered their best wishes. Rajesh Gopi, Treasurer of the PLC Kuwait Chapter, delivered the vote of thanks.

VVTNS meets Tamil Nadu minister, TVK MLA Mustafa

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Administrators and office bearers of the Velinadu Vazh Tamizhargal Nala Sangam & Arakattalai (VVTNS-Kuwait) met with the Hon. A. M. Shahjahan, Tamil Nadu Minister for Minorities Welfare and Wakf Board, and V. M. Mustafa, MLA for the Madurai Central constituency from Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK). The leaders were visiting Kuwait for an event hosted by the Kuwait Tamil Drivers Association on Friday, November 20, 2026.

During the meeting, VVTNS-Kuwait highlighted the challenges faced by hundreds of thousands of Tamils who leave behind their families and comforts to seek employment abroad—not only to support their households, but also to bolster India's economy through vital foreign exchange remittances. The delegation also noted that as a former expatriate in Saudi Arabia himself, Minister Shahjahan deeply understands the struggles and ground realities faced by Non-Resident Tamils (NRTs).

The association submitted a formal memorandum outlining several key demands for the welfare of NRTs, requesting that the delegation bring these matters to the immediate attention of the Hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, C. Joseph Vijay. The core requests include:

■ Social Security & Financial Support: Implementing a dedicated pension scheme for NRTs, providing accessible bank loans for workers in unorganized sectors, and offering livelihood assistance to the families of NRTs who pass away due to natural causes abroad.


A photo from the event.

ALSAYER Group celebrates nat'l winners of 19th Toyota Dream Car Art Contest






Some photos from the event.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: ALSAYER Group celebrated the national winners of the 19th Toyota Dream Car Art Contest during an award ceremony held at its Head Office in the Kuwait Free Trade Zone. Jointly organized by Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est. Co. W.L.L. and the Corporate Excellence Department, the ceremony brought together ALSAYER management representatives, winners, parents, teachers, and members of the community.

The global contest attracted 260,000 entries from children aged 15 and under across 87 countries and regions. Through imaginative artwork, participants presented creative visions for the future of mobility, including concepts addressing environmental challenges, pollution, sustainability, and community well-being.

During the ceremony, ALSAYER Group honored Kuwait's national winners and recognized the important role of parents and educators in encouraging creativity and supporting young talent.

The event was attended by Eng. Nehad Al-Haj Ali, Group Manager of Corporate Excellence; Shibu Mohamed, CSR Manager; and Mohamed Yousif Elsaadawi, Toyota Showroom Sales Manager. Members of the judging panel included artist and educator Jawaher Al-Muhanna and Hanouf Al-Morjan.

19th Toyota Dream Car Art Contest – Kuwait National Winners

Category A: 8 years and under

■ Mahanikka Karthikeyan, 6 – Disaster and Emergency Management Car
■ Dakshith Patkar, 7 – Car for the Future World
■ Saathvic Sridhar, 6 – O3 Car

Category B: 8–11 years

■ Rithikka Jayaraj, 9 – Evo 26
■ Rohan Khatri, 10 – Life Saver Smart Car
■ Jiaa Bhavya Sandesara, 9 – Fern Finder

Category C: 12–15 years

■ Aarya Rajeev, 13 – Toyota Lunar Tide Maneuverer
■ Jelnar Kamal Hana, 14 – Heading of Hope
■ Dimple Khatri, 13 – Neuro Steady Car

Eng. Nehad Al-Haj Ali, Group Manager of Corporate Excellence, said:"Since 2004, the Toyota Dream Car Art Contest has inspired millions of children worldwide to imagine the future of mobility. ALSAYER Group is proud to support this meaningful initiative in Kuwait, empowering young talents to express their ideas while developing creativity, innovation, sustainability awareness, and problem-solving skills. These young participants represent a future generation capable of creating a positive and lasting impact."

Renewed ambition to take Kuwaiti football to greater heights

Zain and Kuwait Football Association renew strategic partnership for 2026–2030 seasons



Bader Al-Kharafi and Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef sign the partnership agreement.



Bader Al-Kharafi, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef, Nawaf Al-Gharabally, and officials from Zain and the KFA.

- Zain and KFA to take Kuwaiti football to new heights-following four exceptional seasons
- **Bader Al-Kharafi:** "Kuwaiti football's glorious history is a source of pride to us all, and H.H. the Amir's vision inspires us to shape its next era of greatness"
- **Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef:** "Zain's exceptional support has helped elevate Kuwaiti football, reflecting a successful partnership dedicated to advancing national sports"
- Expanded partnership covers seven football competitions, with annual prizepool exceeding KD 65,000

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Zain Kuwait, the country's leading TechCo, announced the renewal of its strategic partnership with the Kuwait Football Association (KFA), becoming the Official Sponsor of the Association's competitions for the next four seasons, from 2026 to 2030.

As Kuwait's leading supporter of sports, Zain is opening a new chapter in its longstanding efforts to support and develop the nation's most beloved sport, building on a remarkable legacy of achievements and successes throughout the past four seasons.

The partnership was announced during a joint press conference held at Zain's HQ in Shuwaikh, attended by Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi, Kuwait Football Association President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah,Zain Kuwait CEO Nawaf Al-Gharabally, along with sports figures, officials, and media representatives.

The renewal marks the culmination of four exceptional seasons (2022–2026) during which Zain, working closely with the KFA, helped elevate the quality and overall experience of Kuwaiti football. This contributed to raising the standard of local competitions, strengthening their visibility, and enhancing their commercial appeal.

Zain also helped raise the level of competitiveness among clubs, encouraged players and emerging talents to excel, and brought greater excitement and engagement to the local football scene, establishing Zain's competitions as major highlights of Kuwait's sporting calendar.

For Zain, this renewal represents far more than the continuation of a successful partnership. It reflects a renewed ambition to take Kuwaiti football to greater heights and build on the achievements of recent years through a long-term vision focused on strengthening competition, nurturing national talent, and enriching the fan experience, further enhancing Kuwait's sporting standing and meeting the aspirations of its passionate football community.

Commenting on the occasion, Bader Al-Kharafi said: "Kuwaiti football has a glorious history that fills us all with pride. But our ambition goes beyond celebrating past achievements. We aspire to create new moments of greatness worthy of Kuwait's rich sporting heritage and standing, inspired by the wise vision and directives of H.H. the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, in advancing Kuwaiti sports, restoring its former glory, and raising Kuwait's flag high at regional and international sporting events."

Al-Kharafi added: "Over four exceptional seasons, we have demonstrated alongside our partners at the Kuwait Football Association that meaningful investment in sports can make a tangible difference, elevate the quality of competition, and redefine what is possible."

He continued: "Today, we embark on a new chapter with greater ambition and stronger determination, because we believe the future of Kuwaiti football cannot be built in a single season. It takes consistency, sustained investment in talent, and opportunities for future generations to write their own success stories. This renewed partnership is a pledge to continue shaping a future we can all be proud of, and a sporting legacy that will inspire generations to come."

Speaking at the press conference, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah said: "We are delighted to renew our strategic partnership with Zain following four seasons of remarkable achievements and shared success. We extend our sincere appreciation to Zain for its exceptional and unprecedented support for Kuwaiti football, which has played an instrumental role in elevating the standard of the Zain Premier League and strengthening its competitive and popular appeal."

He added: "What truly distinguishes this partnership is Zain's unwavering commitment to supporting the KFA's activities and initiatives, and its continued readiness to contribute to every effort aimed at developing the game and expanding its competitions. This commitment has also been evident in Zain's longstanding support for our national team, including its initiatives to transport fans abroad to cheer on our players during international tournaments."

He concluded by saying: "Today, Zain continues this journey by supporting Kuwait's upcoming hosting of the Saudi Super Cup, and we invite football fans from Kuwait and across the GCC to enjoy this exciting competition. We look forward to building on our shared achievements in the years ahead, further advancing Kuwaiti football and fulfilling the aspirations of its passionate fans."

A bigger partnership with greater ambitions

The renewed partnership introduces a major expansion in the number of football competitions supported by Zain, bringing the total to seven: the Zain Premier League (Dawri Zain), the Zain First Division League, Zain Youth League (U19), Kuwait Super Cup, H.H. the Amir Cup, H.H. the Crown Prince Cup, and the Futsal League.

This expanded scope reflects the comprehensive nature of the partnership and its commitment to supporting Kuwaiti football at every level, from the country's most prestigious domestic competitions to the youth leagues developing the next generation of football stars.

The expansion represents a natural progression in a partnership that began with support for Kuwait's leading football competitions and has steadily grown to embrace new tournaments and initiatives, creating greater opportunities for players, clubs, and fans alike. It also reinforces the belief that advancing Kuwaiti football requires sustained investment across the entire sporting ecosystem, establishing strong foundations for long-term excellence, competitiveness, and growth.

Celebrating excellence and investing in future stars

As part of its longstanding commitment to recognizing sporting excellence and motivating athletes, Zain will continue its annual awards program, one of the most significant player incentive initiatives in the history of Kuwaiti football, with a total prize pool exceeding KWD 65,000 per season.The program reflects Zain's belief in the importance of rewarding outstanding performances, encouraging healthy competition, and raising the overall standard of local football.

The annual awards recognize outstanding performers across several major categories, including Player of the Season, Top Scorer of the Season for both Kuwaiti and local players, Goalkeeper of the Season, Coach of the Season, and Rising Star of the Season, alongside the weekly Player of the Round award, which celebrates individual excellence throughout the season.

Zain will also build on the expansion of its Excellence Awards introduced last season, which extended recognition to emerging talents across the U18, U16, U14, and U13 youth leagues, honoring the best players, top scorers, and goalkeepers in each age group.

The expanded awards also celebrate outstanding female players in the Women's Futsal League, recognize sports photographers through the Best Sports Photograph award, and pay special tribute to Kuwaiti football legends whose contributions have left a lasting mark on the nation's sporting history.

With the beginning of this new chapter, Zain will further expand its awards program to recognize outstanding young talents in the Zain Youth League (U19), reinforcing its growing focus on youth development and creating additional opportunities for promising players to gain recognition, sharpen their skills, and progress toward representing their clubs and national teams in the future.

A sporting legacy beyond local football

Zain's longstanding legacy of supporting Kuwaiti football extends well beyond domestic competitions, encompassing active involvement in some of the region's biggest football tournaments and major international sporting events.

As one of Kuwait's most prominent supporters of sports, Zain continues to play an important role in bringing major football occasions to the country, strengthening its position on the regional and international sporting maps while delivering exceptional experiences for passionate fans.

One of the most significant milestones in this journey was the 26th-Arabian Gulf Cup, Khaleeji Zain 26, hosted by Kuwait. Zain played a central role in delivering an exceptional edition of the prestigious tournament, which achieved remarkable success across sporting, organizational, media, and fan engagement fronts across the GCC region.

Zain's contribution extended far beyond its role as Title Partner of the tournament. The company developed the competition's visual identity, launched extensive media and marketing campaigns, and organized fan zones and interactive experiences across Kuwait, alongside numerous other initiatives that helped bring the tournament to life. These efforts demonstrated the ability of leading national institutions to contribute meaningfully to the success of major sporting events and present Kuwait at its very best.

This commitment has also been evident in Zain's unwavering support for the Kuwait National Football Teamthroughout its regional and continental campaigns.Through a series of initiatives supporting both players and fans, Zain has consistently brought Kuwait's football community closer to its national team, including organizing dedicated flights to transport supporters to important matches abroad.

Most recently, these initiatives included flights to Jeddah during the group stages of the 27th Arabian Gulf Cup, as well as flights to Doha for the Arab Cup qualifiers, reflecting the deep connection between Zain, Kuwaiti football, and its passionate supporters.

Zain has also played an active role in supporting Kuwait's hosting of major international and regional football events, most notably the French Super Cup, held at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium earlier this year.

Building on this momentum, Zain is preparing for its upcoming partnership in hosting the 13th edition of the Saudi Super Cup, which Kuwait will welcome for the first time this December, bringing together four of Saudi Arabia's leading football clubs.

Through these landmark events, Zain continues to contribute to attracting prestigious sporting competitions, enhancing the fan experience, and strengthening Kuwait's position as a leading regional and international sports destination.

Zain reaffirmed that renewing its strategic partnership with the Kuwait Football Association is a natural extension of its longstanding national responsibility and leadership in supporting sports and youth development, reflecting its purpose of "Better Lives. Lasting Connections."

The company firmly believes that sports are about far more than competing for trophies. They provide a platform for inspiring ambition, discovering talent, fostering national pride, and bringing generations together through a shared passion. Guided by this belief, Zain will continue working alongside its partners and Kuwait's football community to write new chapters of achievement and excellence.

Nuggets overcome Bulls in high-scoring game

Warriors hold off Celtics to snap five-game losing skid

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov 23, (AP): Brandin Podziemski had 18 points and seven rebounds and the Golden State Warriors snapped a five-game losing streak by holding off Boston for an 88-87 win Sunday night, sending the Celtics to their first four-game skid in five years.

Hugo González stole the ball from Draymond Green with 17 seconds left but Boston ran off crucial seconds failing to get a shot off before taking a timeout with 8.2 seconds to go.

Jayson Tatum missed a contested 16-foot jumper before the final buzzer sounded.

The game featured two wild replay reviews in the closing moments.

Golden State won a crucial challenge that gave the Warriors the ball back with 1:18 remaining leading 88-86, then Podziemski swished a baseline 3-pointer. Boston challenged and the points were taken away as Podziemski was given an offensive foul.

Tatum led the Celtics with 27 points, 10 rebounds and six assists, and Derrick White added 14 points and five assists. Tatum missed his second free throw with 56 seconds left that would have tied the game then later a 3 from the top with 30 seconds remaining.

Rookie Yaxel Lendeborg had 12 points and eight rebounds while Charles Bassey contributed 13 points and nine rebounds. Gui Santos scored 13 off the bench.

Nikola Jokic had 37 points, 18 rebounds and 11 assists for the 202nd triple double of his career, Jamal Murray scored eight of his season-high 45 points in overtime, and the Denver Nuggets held off the Chicago Bulls 151-145.

Jokic closed the gap on Russell Westbrook's NBA record of 209 career triple-doubles.

Murray was 13 for 22 from the floor, 6 for 11 from 3-point range and 13 for 14 from the free-throw line.

Buddy Hield scored 33 points for the short-handed Bulls and Josh Giddey bounced back from a fourth-quarter benching Friday with 23 points, 14 rebounds and a career-high 22 assists. He is the first Bulls player with more than 20 assists in a game since 1985 and the first with a 20-point/20-assist game since Dec. 6, 1969 when Clem Haskins had 23 points and 21 assists against Boston.

Hield stole the ball from Jokic with seven seconds to go and Giddey made an open layup to tie the score at 131 as the Bulls wiped out a seven-point deficit in the final 40 seconds. Jokic missed a 3-point attempt as time expired. Murray helped the Nuggets score the first eight points of overtime.

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India's Rishabh Pant bats during play on day four of the first cricket test between New Zealand and India in Wellington, New Zealand. New Zealand had an honorable draw against India on the last day of the first cricket test. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait swimmers continue medal rush in Bahrain

Medal haul rises to 54 at Arab Aquatics Championships

MANAMA, Nov 23, (KUNA): Kuwait's swimmers continued their impressive campaign at the 5th Arab Aquatics Championships in Manama, collecting 13 medals, including three gold, six silver and four bronze.

Speaking to KUNA, Humaid Al-Gharib said Saud Al-Shammroukh, Mohammad Zubaid and Mohammad Al-Otaibi secured the three gold medals in the 1,500m freestyle and 100m butterfly events.

The six silver medals came through Mohammad Ashkanani in the men's 1,500m freestyle (15-16 years category), Rashid Al-Tarmoom in the men's 50m breaststroke (Open category), Jassim Al-Mansour in the men's 100m butterfly (13-14 years category) and Hamoud Al-Hamoud in the same event in the 15-16 years category.

Kuwait also claimed silver in the men's 4×100m freestyle relay in both the Open and 15-16 years categories. The respective teams featured Abdulrazzaq Al-Duwaihi, Khaled Al-Otaibi, Saud Al-Shammroukh, Yaseen Al-Attiyah, Meshaari Al-Haqqan, Hassan Rajab, Abdullah Sultan and Hamoud Al-Hamoud.

Al-Gharib said the four bronze medals were won by Yasmeen Al-Subaih in the women's 1,500m freestyle (15-16 years category), Omar Al-Khalfan in the men's 1,500m freestyle (15-16 years category), and Kuwait's women's and men's teams in the 13-14 years 4×100m freestyle relays.

With Sunday's haul, Kuwait's overall medal tally reached 54, comprising 16 gold, 18 silver and 20 bronze. The championships, featuring several Arab teams, continue until November 23.



Kuwaiti female swimmers on the podium.

KUNA photo



Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Youth and Sports Bashar Abdullah meets European coaches.

Bashar holds meeting with European coaches

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Youth and Sports Bashar Abdullah met with European coaches appointed under a project aimed at developing young footballers in the under-12 age group.

The meeting, held at Jaber International Stadium, was attended by several officials and those overseeing the project, which is being implemented in cooperation with the Kuwait Football Association (KFA).

Bashar welcomed the coaches, who arrived in Kuwait in recent days to begin their assignments at local clubs. He underlined the need to remain committed to the project's objectives and follow a unified approach to identifying, developing and nurturing promising football talents from an early age.

He described the initiative as a strategic move to strengthen grassroots football through specialised European expertise and modern training methods, laying the groundwork for a new generation of players.

Bashar added that the initiative was designed as a sustainable, long-term project rather than a time-limited programme, to achieve lasting development in youth football.

Senegal, Morocco await verdict

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Nov 23, (AP): Ten months after the Africa Cup of Nations final was chaotically played on the field between Morocco and Senegal, the title will be awarded Tuesday by sports' highest court.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport set the target Monday to publish the verdict of its panel of three judges on Senegal's appeal to regain the title the team won on the field in Morocco in January and then lost in a legal case in March.

A strict reading of The Laws of The Game, soccer's ultimate rule book, should see Senegal win the case.

A broader interpretation of AFCON tournament rules would give the victory to Morocco.

Senegal won the final 1-0 after extra time with chaos on the field and violent clashes in the stands. The result was overturned two months later as a 3-0 default win for Morocco by an appeals panel appointed by the Confederation of African Football (CAF).

Senegal beat AFCON host nation Morocco after a 15-minute delay in play. Senegal's team walked off the field to protest Morocco being awarded a penalty kick in the last minute of regulation time.

Match referee Jean-Jacques Ndala of Congo eventually allowed the game to restart, Morocco's penalty by Brahim Diaz was saved and Senegal won with the only goal in extra time.

The laws of soccer state that referee decisions are final.

Shabab and Sahel play out 2-2 draw

Jahra opens Crown Prince Cup campaign with win

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 23: Jahra got its Crown Prince Cup campaign off to a winning start with a 1-0 victory over Yarmouk at Sabah Al-Salem Stadium, while Shabab and Sahel played out a 2-2 draw in another Group B encounter.

The match between Jahra and Yarmouk was closely contested, with both sides displaying caution and defensive discipline. Yarmouk looked more dangerous in the first half, creating several opportunities, while Jahra relied on defensive organisation and limiting their opponents' space. Neither side managed to break the deadlock before the interval.

Jahra took the lead seven minutes into the second half when professional Evans Mbofou converted a counterattack in the 52nd minute.

The task became tougher for Jahra after Ahmed Al-Ajmi was sent off in the 64th minute for a strong challenge on a Yarmouk player. However, Jahra defended their advantage until the final whistle to secure their first three points of the tournament.

Meanwhile, Shabab and Sahel shared the points after an entertaining 2-2 draw at Tadamon Stadium in Group B.



Jahra celebrates after scoring against Yarmouk.

Sahel made an impressive start, with Faisal Ajab scoring in the fifth and 20th minutes to put his side 2-0 ahead. Shabab reduced the deficit in the 41st minute through an own goal by Sahel's Lucas.

Shabab continued to push for an equaliser and were rewarded in the 90th minute when Matheus Tutu found the net to earn his team a valuable point.

Both teams collected a point each, while Burgan leads Group B with three points following their victory over Fahaheel, who remain without a point.

Zverev's big-match struggles against top rivals persist

Alcaraz joins elite club by adding ATP Finals trophy to career Grand Slam

TURIN, Italy, Nov 23, (AP): The questions over Alexander Zverev's inability to beat Carlos Alcaraz or Jannik Sinner during his breakout season will continue.

Alcaraz dominated at times as he defeated the top-ranked Zverev 6-2, 7-6 (7) in the championship match at the ATP Finals on Sunday to become the fourth man with a career Grand Slam and a trophy at the season-ending event for the year's top eight players.

The other players in that elite club are Andre Agassi, Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic.

"You're an absolute legend of our sport and you're only 23 years old," Zverev said during his runner-up speech. "If you retire tomorrow, it's OK, you can just relax."

Alcaraz has been dealing with an injured left hamstring and had a black elastic band over his upper thigh - plus a strip of tape around his right knee. Still, he's been unbeatable lately despite also missing 4 ½ months in the middle of the year due to a right wrist injury.

Alcaraz extended his winning streak to 14 matches after also claiming titles in Vienna and Paris. His latest title earned him a winner's check of almost $5.2 million.

"It's been an amazing week," Alcaraz said. "I've been through really difficult moments with myself, with my team. ... I'm playing great tennis. So lifting the trophy is something I've (been) chasing for a really long time."

Zverev claimed his first two Grand Slam titles this year and ascended to the top spot in the rankings for the first time this month.

But Alcaraz also beat Zverev in a five-setter in the Australian Open semifinals in their only other meeting this year. The Spaniard improved to 8-6 in their career meetings.

Sinner has beaten Zverev 10 straight times - including in this year's Wimbledon final - but he ended his season early due to a right knee injury.

Zverev hadn't dropped his serve all week but Alcaraz tested him from the start by earning three break points in the opening game of the match. Zverev saved all three of those - one of them with an ace after receiving a time violation warning - only for Alcaraz to break him in his next three service games.



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz lifts the trophy after winning his final match against Germany's Alexander Zverev at the ATP World Tour Finals, in Turin. (AP)

Alcaraz controlled by stretching Zverev far off the court from corner to corner and also broke early in the second set.

When Alcaraz produced a "tweener" (a shot between his legs) to recover a lob midway through the first set and Zverev missed the ensuing overhead, he threw his racket angrily toward the baseline. Then on the next point Zverev again took too long and was docked his first serve, prompting him to complain to the chair umpire.

Then in the second set when Alcaraz pulled off an acrobatic, leaping overhead as he was falling backward, he put his finger to his ear to encourage more cheering from the crowd.

The match appeared headed toward a quick finish before Zverev broke back to make it 4-4 in the second set.

Then in the tiebreaker, Zverev wasted three set points before Alcaraz converted his second match point with a backhand winner up the line.

Alcaraz then smiled as he dropped to the court on his back in celebration.

Alcaraz produced more than twice as many winners, 28-12, and had 25 unforced errors to Zverev's 31.

Before the singles final, Andrea Bocelli sang arias and the Italian anthem inside the Inalpi Arena.

French pair Theo Arribage and Albano Olivetti won the doubles trophy by beating Marcelo Arevalo and Mate Pavic 3-6, 7-6 (2), 10-6.

PSG and Madrid protect 100% starts

Pochettino back in Champions League with struggling United

LONDON, Nov 23, (AP): Mauricio Pochettino's journey in the Champions League has been defined by a couple of memorable hat tricks and even more missed opportunities.

Now, after a 4½-year absence, he is getting another shot in soccer's top club competition with Manchester United.

When Pochettino - fresh off a Premier League thrashing by Liverpool in his debut - leads United into its game at Sporting Lisbon on Wednesday, it will be his first Champions League match since his star-studded Paris Saint-Germain team containing that front line of Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappé and Neymar was dumped out by a last-16 hat trick from Karim Benzema, which kick-started Real Madrid's remarkable run to the title in 2022.

Pochettino got closer a season earlier, losing with PSG in the semifinals to Manchester City.

He was even closer in 2019, when the Argentine wept tears of joy as he somehow guided Tottenham to the final - remember, anyone, that sensational hat trick by Lucas Moura to down Ajax in the semis? - only to lose to Liverpool in the title match.

How far will he get with United?

Well, qualifying for the knockout stage is surely Pochettino's first aim after the team's turbulent start to the league phase that has included a 4-1 thrashing in Como and a comeback 3-2 win over Roma that wasn't enough to save Michael Carrick from being fired.

United is on six points from a possible 12 and in 17th place in the 36-team standings heading into the fifth round of games, when Pochettino will be in the spotlight perhaps more than superstar players like Mbappé and Erling Haaland.

Teams finishing in the top eight qualify directly to the last 16 and those placing No. 9-24 will compete in two-legged playoffs for the remaining eight spots in the knockouts. Anything below that and you're out.

Few could say for certain where United will end up, given the team still has to play Leipzig and Bayern Munich at home before finishing the league phase with a trip to Villarreal in late January. After all, this is a club that is in next-to-last place in the Premier League and reeling from a 4-0 loss at fierce rival Liverpool in Pochettino's first match in charge after leaving the U.S. men's team.

Given that United played with 10 men for more than 80 minutes at Anfield, the trip to Sporting might be a first real chance to judge Pochettino at his new team.

"We are in a situation," Pochettino acknowledged, "that is very complicated, very difficult."

Two teams have yet to drop a point so far - and perhaps unsurprisingly they are PSG and Madrid.

Indeed, with Arsenal and Barcelona also in the top five, and Man City and Liverpool elsewhere in the top eight, Europe's heavyweights are already flexing their muscles in the league stage.

PSG hosts Roma on Wednesday and the defending champion's squad strength is being tested with Désiré Doué joining fellow forward Khvicha Kvaratskhelia in sustaining an ACL injury that is set to keep them out until next season.

On Tuesday, Madrid is at home to PSV Eindhoven and third-place Arsenal hosts Borussia Dortmund.

Fifth-place Barcelona faces one of its longest ever away trips, more than 5,000 kilometers (3,100 miles) to play Sabah FK in Azerbaijan on Wednesday.

The surprise name in the top eight is fourth-place Como, whose home match against AEK Athens offers the Italian upstart a good chance to keep its exalted company high up in the standings and secure at least a playoff spot for Cesc Fabregas' team.

That's because it will soon get harder for Como: its eight-game league-phase schedule ends with matches against PSG and Barcelona, for which Italy striker Moise Kean might be missing because of a leg injury.

In its first Champions League campaign, Como has already outclassed United and routed Lens 9-1 - matching the biggest margin of victory in the competition.

Kevin De Bruyne is getting another return to longtime club Man City with Napoli. He'll hope his latest appearance at Etihad Stadium is longer than the last one.

The Belgian - one of City's greatest ever players - was substituted after just 26 minutes of Napoli's 2-0 loss at the Etihad in league play last season, sacrificed following the sending-off of teammate Giovanni Di Lorenzo.

At least that gave City fans the chance to give him another standing ovation. Expect another one on Tuesday.

Still without a point is Slovan Bratislava, the Slovak champion that has lost four straight games so far and 14 in a row in total in the competition's main phase.

It's the longest ever run of defeats in the Champions League era, which dates to 1992, but still two short of the European Cup record of 16 held by Jeunesse Esch of Luxembourg.

Can Slovan - coached by former Barcelona and Man City midfielder Yaya Touré - stop the rot at home to Real Betis on Tuesday?

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