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## P.A.C.I. REVEALS NEARLY 800,000 EXPATS HAVE 'UNSPECIFIED' EDUCATION LEVEL



Ministry of Defense photo  
Acting PM receives director general of the Italian Leonardo company.

### Kuwait's acting PM receives chief of Leonardo company

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21, (KUNA): The Acting Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah received, at Seif Palace on Thursday, Director General of the Italian Leonardo company and MDA company, Lorenzo Mariani, and his accompanying delegation.

The Ministry of Defense said in a statement that the two sides explored realms of joint cooperation and means of boosting the collaboration.

Director General of the Directorate General for Civil Aviation Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Sabah, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Air Vice Marshal Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and a number of senior officers took part in the meeting.

# Over-60 expats in Kuwait may get health fee break

97,622 aged 60 and above lack university degree

By Najeh Bilal  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: In light of the Court of Appeal's deci-

sion in March to uphold the ruling of the Court of First Instance to cancel Administrative Decision No. 27/2021 stipulating the rules, regulations and procedures in the issuance of work per-

mits, it is anticipated that the health insurance fees for expatriates aged 60 and above, who do not hold a university degree, will be eliminated.

The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) disclosed that as of mid-2024; a total of 97,622 expatriates fall under the abovementioned category.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the statistics released by PACI, indicating that the number of expatriate university degree holders reached 143,488 ; while 6,561 are postgraduate degree holders (Master's and PhD); 82,258 are illiterate; 175,672 have elementary certificates and those with intermediate level reached 632,017.

The same statistics revealed that 795,349 expatriates are classified as unspecified; while those with high school certificate totaled 248,697 and those with diploma reached 79,902.

In addition, the total number of expatriates in the country has reached 3,358,654.

## Mural honors 60 years of Kuwaiti-Turkish ties



Officials pose for a group photo during the unveiling of a mural at Souq Mubarakiya.

Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21, (KUNA): A mural commemorating 60 years of Kuwaiti-Turkish diplomatic ties was unveiled on Thursday in Souq Al-Mubarakiya (Mubarakiya market) with the presence of Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sonmez.

Speaking during the unveiling ceremony, Ambassador Sonmez commended the strong ties linking Türkiye and Kuwait, saying that the "Friendship Mural" reflected the long-standing relation and coordination between the two countries.

She indicated that the mural was another

addition to the relations that would hopefully continue to flourish in the future.

The ceremony, held in coordination with Kuwait Voluntary Work Center, also included an exhibition displaying Turkish products,

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## 1,647 face revocation of Kuwaiti nationality

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21, (Agencies): The Supreme Committee on Kuwaiti citizenship announced on Thursday the revocation of citizenship for 1,647 individuals, with the matter now referred to the Cabinet for final approval. This decision came during a meeting chaired by Acting Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

Recent statistics reveal that over 1,800 individuals whose citizenship was revoked had previously received the KD30,000 construction subsidy, typically granted to housing plot owners. Authorities are currently determining the number of those who received housing loans of up to KD70,000 from Kuwait Credit Bank (KCB).

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## Kuwait broad money supply, foreign reserves reflect diverging Oct trends

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: In a detailed report released by the Central Bank of Kuwait, several key financial indicators revealed a mixed performance in October 2024, marking incremental changes in the country's financial landscape.

The broad money supply (M2) saw a modest increase of 0.2 percent in October, rising to 40.5 billion dinars (approximately \$133.6 billion).

This slight increase was largely attributed to growth in the private sector deposits within local banks. Specifically, deposits in Kuwaiti dinars rose by 0.1 percent, reaching 37 billion dinars (about \$122 billion).

On the other hand, private sector deposits in foreign currencies saw a more substantial rise, increasing by 1.6 percent to reach 1.9 billion dinars (approximately \$6.3 billion).

The government deposits, including

those from both residents and non-residents, experienced a slight decline.

These deposits decreased by 0.9 percent, totaling 5.184 billion dinars by the end of October, compared to 5.232 billion dinars in September.

In addition, the overall value of total deposits in local banks (residents and non-residents) also decreased by 498 million dinars, amounting to 53.358 billion dinars at the end of October, down from 53.856 billion dinars in September.

In terms of credit facilities, which include loans for both residents and non-residents, there was a 1 percent increase in the balances of new credit facilities, bringing the total to 56.373 billion dinars by the end of October, compared to 55.827 billion dinars at the end of September. This growth highlights a continued demand for financing in the local economy.

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## MoCI suspends home licenses for real estate brokerage firms

Al-Seyassah Special Report

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Four months after introducing regulations to organize the issuance of home licenses, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) has temporarily suspended these permits for certain small-scale commercial activities, particularly in real estate brokerage.

The decision, as revealed by informed sources to Al-Seyassah, is aimed at reassessing the impact of such licenses on the real estate market.

### Kuwait unveils pavilion design for Expo Osaka

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21, (KUNA): The faculty of architecture at Kuwait University hosted on Thursday the visual exhibition "the design of Kuwait pavilion at Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan" in collaboration with the Ministry of Information.

The acting KU rector Dr. Usama Al-Saeed said in a statement during the exhibition, held at the conventions hall at Sabah Al-Salem University compound, that Expo Osaka due next year would be an opportunity to present creative talents.

Dr. Imad Al-Gattan, member of the Expo technical team, said in his address that the Kuwait pavilion at the forecast event would depict collective action and fruitful cooperation between the university and the ministry if information.

Kuwait's participation in Expo 2025 is in line with its national norms, as it has always played a leading role in human resources development, he said, noting that Kuwait was the first country in the Gulf that had adopted free teaching.

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2 Fall expected in prices of medicines

3 Jail & fine cancelled as court acquits royal in money-wash



8 NBK showcases commitment to sustainability at COP29 in Azerbaijan

8 Visa, NBK relaunch 'She's Next' program to empower women entrepreneurs in Kuwait

9 Green target network helps Zain reduce carbon emissions and mitigate climate change impacts



Dasman Diabetes Institute joins Gulf Bank 642 Marathon as Official Health Awareness Partner

## Kuwait pressed to speed up 39 key laws for 'Vision 2035' development

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: In a pressing appeal to accelerate Kuwait's developmental progress, the 2023-2024 Annual Plan Follow-Up Report has spotlighted a backlog of 39 legislative requirements that remain in preparation.

These laws are deemed vital to laying the groundwork for achieving Kuwait's ambitious "New Kuwait 2035" vision, a comprehensive plan to position the nation as a global financial and commercial hub.

The report, issued by the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, emphasizes that creating a supportive legislative environment is an "urgent necessity" to propel development initiatives.

While the legislative program initially identified 64 draft laws, only 25 have been enacted thus far, leaving significant gaps.

The breakdown of the pending laws is as follows -- 21 laws are under review in the National Assembly; 4 laws are being deliberated within the Council of Ministers; 2 laws remain at the drafting and review phase with the Fatwa and Legislation Department and 12 laws are still in preliminary stages with the relevant

authorities.

The report highlights the importance of expediting these legislations to support development programs across various sectors. These include initiatives aimed at fostering a private-sector-led economy and improving Kuwait's position in global indices, targeting a spot among the top 35 countries by 2035.

Some progress has been made in recent weeks. The Council of Ministers recently approved a draft decree on foreign residency and the Ministry of Interior announced the completion of a new traffic law draft, which has now been submitted for review.

Both measures are part of the legislative program aimed at enhancing governance and societal infrastructure. The legislative requirements are part of a broader governance framework designed to ensure the success of the development plan.

By monitoring progress through structured systems, Kuwait aims to achieve tangible results aligned with its strategic policies and objectives.

As the clock ticks toward 2035, Kuwait faces mounting pressure to overcome legislative bottlenecks. The completion of these laws is seen as a cornerstone for unlocking the nation's potential and ensuring a prosperous future for its people.

### NewsWatch

RIYADH: GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi on Thursday said that the launch of the Gulf Weeks activities in Kuwait on Friday would be a prelude to the GCC summit due on December 1.

The GCC secretary general, in a statement, addressed gratitude and greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his unlimited support for the GCC.

The weeks' activities will include an exhibition displaying photos about the GCC summits, a host of diverse Gulf events and accomplishments.

The activities will be held between November 22 and 29. (KUNA)

ANKARA: Türkiye's National Intelligence Organization (MIT) "neutralized" a senior member of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in an operation in northern Iraq, the semi-official Anadolu Agency reported Thursday, quoting anonymous Turkish security sources.

Serhat Tagar, codenamed Mervan Hizan, was "neutralized" in a pinpoint strike in northern Iraq's Gara region, the report said, without specifying the time frame of the operation.

Turkish authorities often use the term "neutralize" in their statements to imply the alleged terrorists have either surrendered, been killed, or been captured. (Xinhua)

Gaza death toll passes 44,000

## Netanyahu & Hamas officials named in ICC arrest warrants

THE HAGUE, Nov 21, (AP): The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants on Thursday for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his former defense minister and Hamas officials, accusing them of war crimes and crimes against humanity over the war in Gaza and the October 2023 attacks that triggered Israel's offensive in the Palestinian territory.

The decision turns Netanyahu and the others into internationally wanted

suspects and is likely to further isolate them and complicate efforts to negotiate a cease-fire to end the 13-month conflict. But its practical implications could be limited since Israel and its major ally, the United States, are not members of the court and several of the Hamas officials have been subsequently killed in the conflict.

Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders have condemned ICC Chief Prosecutor Karim Khan's request for warrants as disgraceful and antisemitic. U.S. President Joe Biden also blasted the prosecutor and expressed support for Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas. Hamas also slammed the request.

"The Chamber considered that there are reasonable grounds to believe that both individuals intentionally and knowingly deprived the civilian population in Gaza of objects indispensable to their survival, including food, water, and medicine and medical supplies, as well as fuel and electricity," the three-judge panel wrote in its unanimous decision to issue warrants for Netanyahu and his former defense minister, Yoav Gallant.

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Women line up in front of a bakery to get their share of bread in Deir al-Balah, Gaza Strip, Thursday Nov. 21, 2024. Some bakeries in the Gaza Strip have reopened Thursday morning after shuttering for several days due to a flour shortage and lack of food aid. (AP)

## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 04:54 Asr ..... 14:31  
 Sunrise .. 06:16 Maghrib .. 16:51  
 Zohr ..... 11:34 Isha ..... 18:11

## Local

## Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** Mild and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-35 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

**By Night:** Mild to rather cold and partly cloudy with light to

## Weather

moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-40 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	27	20
Kuwait Airport	28	22

Abdaly	29	19
Bubyan	27	21
Jahra	29	20
Failaka Island	29	22
Salmyyah	24	22
Ahmadi	26	18
Jal Aliyah	29	17
Nuwaisib	26	24



KUNA photos  
 Tunisian President Kais Saied receives Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Yahya.



Chairman of Kuwaiti Civil Aviation, Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, and Director General of Tunisian Civil Aviation, Nidal Suwailem shake hands after signing the agreement.

## Tunisia, Kuwait to boost ties in business and food security

TUNIS, Nov 21, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya held talks on Wednesday with Tunisia Minister of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries Abdelmonem Belati as part of his current official visit to the nation.

The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the two sides discussed means of boosting bilateral relations and cooperation in vital spheres namely business, development and food security.

Kuwait's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Chairman Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Sabah and Tunisian Civil Aviation Director General Nidal Suwailem on Monday signed an agreement to enhance air transport between the two countries, making

travel more convenient for passengers. The two nations formalized their collaboration by signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to enhance their airlines' operational capacity. This agreement includes a thorough update of technical arrangements to promote more efficient and coordinated operations between the airlines of both countries.

Tunisian President Kais Saied spoke highly of the exemplary relations between his country and the State of Kuwait.

During his meeting with visiting Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya on Wednesday, President Saied said that the fruitful cooperation between the two countries has been growing in various fields since the 1960s.

### 'Sustainable finance'

Kuwait trip to help assess investment chances: King

By Nussaibah bin Shaibah

LONDON, Nov 21, (KUNA): Kuwait's visit will be a great opportunity to assess the investment opportunities available and present the capabilities and expertise of the British capital, London, in sustainable finance, said the Lord Mayor of London, Alastair John Naisbitt King.



Alastair King

During an interview with KUNA Wednesday, the Lord Mayor affirmed that during his two-day visit to Kuwait starting next Tuesday, he would assess the completed investment projects and share with Kuwait the capabilities and expertise of the British capital, London, in sustainable finance.

He pointed out that the investment sectors available to British companies in Kuwait include four types of services: financial, legal, professional and marine, with expertise that he described as 'unparalleled in the world.'

"We can provide the services of British legal firms to prepare business operations in the GCC countries, in addition to the promising opportunities for them to benefit from asset management and banking services, as the efficiency of the level of services in these two sectors is ranked second in the world," he added.

He explained that the distinguished maritime services that the UK can provide are of international standards and include, for example, training and securing naval fleets, noting that the headquarters of the International Maritime Organization is located in London.

In response to a question about the need for fossil fuel products, Lord Alistair stressed that the British economy and others will need hydrocarbons for life and that investment in these sectors is needed to make them more efficient and reduce the amount of carbon they produce.

He stressed that the oil industry is very important, in addition to supporting an "incredible" number of highly skilled jobs and "will always be part of our economy", pointing out that there are major oil companies based in London.

On the other hand, the lord mayor highly valued the volume of Kuwaiti investments in the UK through the Public Investment Authority, represented by the Kuwait Investment Office in London, which was established 70 years ago.

### 'Prayer for rain' on Sat

Don't take people to Hajj illegally: Awqaf warning

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has issued a stern warning to Hajj campaigns, cautioning against circumventing regulations by registering unlicensed individuals as "administrators" in order to allow them access to the holy sites.



Al-Muzain

This practice is considered a clear violation of both local and Saudi regulations and could result in severe penalties, including a fine, withdrawal of the campaign's license and suspension from organizing future Hajj trips.

In a statement released today, Sattam Al-Muzain, Director of the Hajj and Umrah Affairs Department, emphasized that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has imposed a fine of 10,000 Saudi riyals for anyone performing Hajj without a permit.

He also referenced the Council of Senior Scholars in Saudi Arabia, which has declared that individuals who do not obtain a permit are ineligible to perform Hajj.

Al-Muzain reiterated the Ministry's commitment to adhering to the regulations set by Saudi authorities, particularly in response to reports of some Hajj campaigns attempting to bypass the rules by falsely registering unlicensed individuals as administrators.

He stressed that such actions are a violation of the established laws and will not be tolerated.

**Prayer for rain:** The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs issued a circular on Wednesday, announcing that the Istisqa (rain) prayer will be held on Saturday at 10:30 am in 107 mosques in all governorates of the country.

The circular, which was issued by the Assistant Undersecretary for the Mosques Sector at the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Bader Al-Otaibi, was addressed to the directors of the mosque departments in each governorate.

It emphasized the importance of imams and preachers to urge the congregation to attend the mosques for the prayer. The circular also called on them to deliver sermons encouraging worshippers to repent and turn to Almighty Allah.

**New Awqaf service launched:** The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has launched a new service called the "Hajj Campaigns Inquiry" through the unified government electronic services application, "Sahel," reports Al-Rai daily.

This service enables users to easily access information regarding Hajj campaigns for the 1446 AH season, streamlining the inquiry process for those looking to participate in the pilgrimage.

# KAC to bridge gap between Kuwaiti, non-Kuwaiti staff

'Fresh blood soon as promotions, reshuffle underway'

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff



KFF photo

Damage caused by the fire.

### Fire destroys shops near Abdali co-op

Firefighting teams successfully extinguished a fire that broke out in shops near the Abdali Cooperative Society on Thursday evening. Crews from the Abdali and Subiya fire stations

promptly responded, working efficiently to contain the blaze. Fortunately, no injuries were reported during the incident, reports Kuwait Fire Force in a press release.

### Kuwaitis, expats need prioritized

## Fall expected in prices of medicines

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: The Ministry of Health (MoH) has reaffirmed its commitment to implement the decisions of the Gulf Committee for Drug Pricing at the Gulf Health Council by striking a balance between supplying medications at affordable prices and assisting the local pharmaceutical sector.

In a press statement Thursday, the ministry stated that the Drug Pricing Committee periodically reduces the prices of medicines based on the studies

conducted by the Drug Pricing Department at the Drug Control Sector.

The ministry explained that the main reason behind the drug price reductions is the expiration of the patent for innovative drugs, which causes them to drop by 30 to 80 percent, depending on the country and drug type; while the availability of non-innovative generic drugs and therapeutic alternatives in the local market increases competition and lowers prices.

It stressed that the quest to reduce drug prices aims to meet the needs of citizens and expatriates for medicines at reason-

able prices, ease the financial burdens of patients, and reduce medical costs for visitors to ensure that they obtain the necessary medicines at reasonable prices.

It also disclosed that the process of setting drug prices takes into account a number of variables, such as expenditures on clinical trials, research and development, manufacturing, packaging, transportation, storage, and the use of technology in the industry. Therefore, it is feasible to create flexible pricing models, evaluate market data and enhance the supply chain, it added.

### Camping supplies selling cheap at 'Mishref' co-op

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: The Mishref Cooperative Society is rolling out special discounts and offers for shareholders as part of its commitment to delivering exceptional value during seasonal occasions, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Suleiman Al-Zankawi, head of the purchasing committee, emphasized the society's dedication to supporting its members, particularly during key events such as Ramadan, Eid, national holidays and the camping season.

To mark the start of the camping season and Kuwait's pleasant weather, the Mishref Cooperative Society has introduced exclusive discounts on high-quality camping supplies.

Moreover, shareholders with family cards will receive a 25-dinar purchase credit, usable at both the family supplies branch and the "Mubarak Al Abdullah Suburb Block 6" market.

The shopping period runs from November 20 to December 5, allowing families to enjoy ample time to take advantage of these offers.

Al-Zankawi highlighted that the board of directors and executive management worked diligently to source the best goods at competitive prices.

The purchase credit can be used multiple times, ensuring maximum convenience for shareholders. "We've allocated a wide range of products in an easily accessible setting, enabling shareholders to shop with ease and confidence," he added.

Reflecting on the society's commitment, Al-Zankawi noted the success of past initiatives, including October's festivals in the central market, pharmacy and beauty center.

The "Mishref Cooperative Society strives to maintain its leading position in cooperative work by offering continuous festivals and discounts throughout the year," he stated.

He concluded with optimism saying: "Today, we're providing unmatched offers on desert camping supplies. Mishref and its people are unique and we remain dedicated to exceeding their expectations with even more exciting initiatives to come."

### 'Help children grow into creative, decent adults'

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Anthal Al-Huwailah has emphasized that "the International Children's Day is a reminder on the importance of taking care the future generations and ensure that they will be the real builders of our cherished nation."

In a speech at the celebration of International Children's Day, Wednesday, the minister explained this year's theme, "Our Children... Reflection of Our Future," highlights the shared obligation to give children all the help and attention they need to grow up into independent, creative and law-abiding adults.

She affirmed that the Ministry of Social Affairs is keen on advocating children's rights and to provide everything that contributes to their sound development. "This includes supporting programs and activities related to childhood and nurseries, as well

as creating policies, which guarantee the provision of a safe and healthy environment that enhances children's growth and helps them realize their full potential. We think that spending money on children is an investment in the future of Kuwait. We look forward to realizing a comprehensive vision to ensure children have all the rights and opportunities necessary to have a decent and happy life, because every action we take to support and protect childhood is a vital element in creating a prosperous and advanced society."

Meanwhile, acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi warned that any nursery proven to have violated the law will face the legal consequences. He said this applies to private nurseries, charitable societies and cooperative societies.

### MoE starts using solar energy in its schools

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: As part of its efforts to achieve sustainable development and rationalize energy consumption, the Ministry of Education has started using solar energy in its schools.

Mudi Burjas Al-Sour Intermediate School for Girls has achieved technical and environmental advancements in this field to be a model for other schools in the country.

The Educational Facilities and Planning Sector at the ministry has completed the design and implementation of the Mudi Burjas Al-Sour Intermediate School for Girls project in Sabah Al-Nasser (Block Seven), affiliated with Farwaniya Educational District.

The project includes an integrated solar power station -- one of the most important sources of renewable energy used in the building. The station converts sunlight into electrical energy using photovoltaic panels, which contributes to reducing reliance on traditional energy sources and rationalizing electricity consumption.

The number of photovoltaic panels reached 474 and each panel has 660 watts power. The project includes electrical cables for continuously transmitting electrical energy from the panels to three inverter units with a capacity of 110 kilowatts each.

This is in addition to an automatic washing system designed to clean the solar panels regularly to ensure production efficiency. It operates by entering data that determine the appropriate days and times for cleaning; thereby, enhancing the overall performance of the system.

# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## Merchants, craftsmen played equal role in building Kuwait

"A STATEMENT by a Kuwaiti merchant recently circulated on social media, claimed that 'Kuwait was founded by merchant families'. In response, economist Dr. Jamal Abdul Rahim provided an explanatory counterpoint, stating that 'Kuwait was built by craftsmen and seafarers'." columnist Prof. Dr. Bahija Behbehani wrote for *Al-Qabas* daily.

"Merchants were present in Iraq, Mubarrarah and Bandar Abbas. Merchants do not come to poor areas. They came to Kuwait only when Britain allowed them to."



Dr. Behbehani

"Most of them were not in Kuwait before 1920. I am preparing a book titled *Homelands Under Captivity* to document this history."

"While both individuals make valid points, it is important to clarify that both perspectives are complementary. Kuwait was built with the combined efforts of merchants' wealth and the skills of craftsmen."

"Merchants relied on the expertise of craftsmen to facilitate their trade with other countries, using ships, built by local shipbuilders known as qallaleefs, to bring essential goods such as food, wood and other commodities."

"Shipbuilding, in particular, was a vital and renowned craft in Kuwait, playing a key role in the growth and prosperity of its economy."

"In addition to shipbuilding, carpentry was another significant craft, as carpenters used wood imported by merchants from India and Africa to produce essential items like doors, windows, yachts and pastel barriers."

"Blacksmithing, cage-making, quilting, weaving, beading and other crafts were also important sources of livelihood for Kuwaitis in the past."

"The merchants also contributed significantly to the spread of education. They were instrumental in the establishment of Al-Mubarakiya School on December 22, 1911, which is regarded as the first regular school in Kuwait and the Gulf region."

"The school, named after Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, was initially funded through donations from merchant citizens, as well as student registration fees."

"Before the discovery of oil, Kuwait's economy relied heavily on two main sources: fishing and pearl diving, both of which were supported by the merchants' trade networks and the use of ships and divers."

"By 1765, Kuwait boasted around 800 boats engaged in pearl diving, solidifying its position as a crucial commercial and economic hub in the Arabian Gulf."

"The merchants' market in Kuwait City was the central marketplace, where basic goods such as dates, spices, rice, wheat, legumes and various grains were sold. It was also a marketplace for wholesale goods that were distributed to other merchants."

"Thus, Kuwait's development was a collaborative effort between both merchants and craftsmen, each contributing to the nation's growth and prosperity in equal measure."

**Also:**

"As we celebrate the joy of Oman's National Day, we reflect on the enduring historical bonds that unite us with this sisterly Gulf nation. These ties predate the establishment of modern states in the region, rooted in shared heritage, traditions and a collective destiny," columnist **Tareq Boursli** wrote for *Al-Anba* daily.

"When we speak of Oman, we cannot help but admire its stunning geography, a divine masterpiece and the gracious hospitality of its people, characterized by warmth, dignity and balance."

"As Kuwaitis, we have experienced this first-hand, whether in social interactions or during visits to Oman. This nation, a steadfast friend of Kuwait for centuries, occupies a special place in the heart of the Arabian Gulf. Its modernity, combined with the grandeur of its cultural landmarks, stands as a testament to its rich heritage."

"Oman is renowned for its vibrant markets that seamlessly blend Eastern culture with the authenticity of Arab traditions. Its diverse society thrives under the legacy of the late Sultan Qaboos, may he rest in peace, who fostered unity and harmony. Today, this vision is upheld by Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, may God protect him, whose wisdom guides the nation."

"Since its historic renaissance, Oman has blossomed under the leadership of its visionary rulers. Over the centuries, it has achieved prosperity and independence. Sultan Haitham has ushered in a new era of renewal across all sectors, reinforcing Oman's distinguished foreign relations within the Gulf and globally."

"Kuwait has consistently invested in strengthening economic ties with Oman, evident in numerous agreements and joint projects. These relations date back to the post-Zanzibar Sultanate era (1856-1964)."

"Diplomatic ties were officially established in 1970 during Sultan Qaboos's reign, marking a proud chapter in the history of Kuwaiti-Omani relations."

"This bilateral partnership has flourished across various fields, supported by shared Gulf agreements. Kuwait and Oman align on many international and Arab issues, fostering deeper bonds through intermarriages, knowledge exchange and shared opportunities. The relationship has driven growth in political, economic, cultural and social domains."

"Economically, the collaboration has culminated in landmark projects such as the Duqm Refinery, the largest Gulf oil initiative, inaugurated by His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad and Sultan Haitham bin Tariq. This project symbolizes a brighter, more prosperous future for both nations and their upcoming generations."

"Under Sultan Haitham's leadership, Oman has shown resilience in the face

of challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the oil market. His comprehensive vision has propelled the nation's educational advancement and strengthened its Gulf unity for the collective good."

"May God protect Sultan Haitham and the Omani people and may the bonds of love, brotherhood and unity between our nations continue to thrive."

"On this occasion, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Oman's leadership, its people and the Omani Ambassador to Kuwait, praying for continued prosperity and success as the Sultanate marks 54 years of remarkable progress."

"The news published a few days ago in local newspapers, originating from a security source, may have gone unnoticed by many or perhaps caught the attention of only a few, but it is extremely serious and alarming. The report stated that seven individuals, who were banned from entering the country, were arrested during a surprise security campaign in Subiya and Mutlaa. While the source did not disclose their nationalities, the implications are serious. The mere fact that seven banned individuals were able to enter the country undetected is a clear indication of how vulnerable our security systems are."

**Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"We can be certain that they did not just 'fall from the sky'. Seven people represent a gang, not a small group that could slip through unnoticed or without thorough scrutiny. The real issue lies in the country's borders and entry points. This calls for a thorough investigation into how these individuals entered the country despite being banned. We need to understand how such a serious lapse in security occurred."

"This issue is not just concerning for those involved, but for the safety of the country as a whole. Undoubtedly, others may have entered the country under similar circumstances -- banned individuals slipping through unnoticed."

"We urge the concerned authorities to handle this matter with utmost seriousness, since the report came from a credible security source and it is not fabricated. If a Kuwaiti is detained at the airport until they provide a fingerprint or is prevented from renewing their car registration due to traffic violations, how did these seven individuals manage to cross the borders without detection? How did they gain entry, while others are scrutinized rigorously?"

"These questions remain unanswered: How did they enter the country? Who is responsible for allowing this to happen? We do not wish to jump to conclusions, but we hope the authorities will promptly announce the findings of their investigation into these seven individuals. It is essential for the public to know where the breakdown occurred -- whether the problem lies with the border protection authorities or elsewhere."

"It is deeply troubling to witness a situation where an expatriate, who is banned from leaving the country, is able to enter it with ease. This raises serious concerns about the safety and security of our nation. How can we feel secure in our own country when such lapses occur?"

"This issue is far bigger than just an individual worker or a simple case of entry. The real problem lies within the internal mechanisms of our security system. We do not want to delve further into the specifics, but it is clear that something within our system needs to be addressed. This is a matter of national security, and it is critical that it be treated with the seriousness it deserves... Good."

"Without a doubt, the wheel of change has started turning, and citizens can feel this shift. The era of discontent has passed. We are now entering a new era of optimism and reform. Although the process may take time, the crucial point is that it has started." Major General **Faisal Al-Jazzaf** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"Kuwait has many problems, but with determination; we are beginning to address them and toe the path of reform. The leadership has taken bold and decisive actions, setting us on the right path and there is no turning back."

"Yes, this journey will require effort and continuous monitoring, but it is necessary to turn the page on the past. A new Kuwait will rise, God willing, and the citizen plays a vital role in this transformation. We all share the responsibility to promote positive change, and one of the simplest yet most significant actions is maintaining the cleanliness of our country."

"Despite repeated calls for this change, there remains a group indifferent to national responsibility. If this behavior does not change, the law will step in to ensure accountability. Nations prosper when they eliminate the behaviors that tarnish civic duties. There can be no tolerance for such negligence."

"We fully support our officials in holding individuals accountable and eradicating corruption and bribery, which have deeply undermined institutional integrity. To combat this, I propose the establishment of a dedicated hotline for citizens to report any employee soliciting a bribe in exchange for completing official transactions. This will help deter such practices and promote transparency in our institutions."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes/Mahmoud Attiyeh

## IOM, MoI conduct anti-human trafficking course



Participants of the course with the officials.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 22: The International Organization for Migration (IOM) - UN Migration agency in Kuwait, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior (MoI), successfully conducted a comprehensive one-week training session titled 'The Role of Frontline Police Officers in Combating Human Trafficking', which targeted officers from several departments, including residence affairs, airport security, traffic department, legal affairs, public relation and security media, coast guards, port security, criminal investigation and the Saad Al-Abdullah academy for security sciences. This initiative is part of an ongoing series of trainings aimed at strengthening efforts to combat human trafficking and enhance the skills

of law enforcement officers.

Some of the key topics covered during the training were 'Indicators for the identification of human trafficking cases', the 'National Anti-Human Trafficking Act' the 'International criminal law on Trafficking in Persons' and the 'National referral mechanism. By aligning their efforts with national and international laws participants gained a comprehensive understanding of the broader socio-economic factors that drive human trafficking. This approach underscores the importance of addressing the issue holistically to effectively combat this global challenge."

"Human trafficking is a complex global challenge that requires collaboration and a deep

understanding of both legal frameworks and practical identification strategies," said Mazen AboulHosn, the IOM Kuwait Chief of Mission. "This training empowered police officers with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively combat this global phenomenon; the training is also aligned with the efforts of the State of Kuwait in the field of combating human trafficking including the work of the national committee on counter trafficking".

The collaboration between IOM Kuwait and the Ministry of Interior underscores the collective commitment to combatting human trafficking and protecting human rights and emphasize the long-standing partnership between the two institutions.

# Jail & fine cancelled as court acquits royal in money-wash

No penalty for lending money on huge interest

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

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: The Court of Cassation acquitted a sheikh of laundering KD14,000; leading to the cancellation of the five-year imprisonment sentence and KD10,000 fine imposed on him; while it refrained from pronouncing his punishment on the charge of lending money with exorbitant interest on bail of KD1,000 and ordered him to sign a pledge of good conduct for one year.**

The Public Prosecution had earlier charged the accused and another individual with money laundering KD14,400; knowing the money was obtained through the crime that is the subject of the charge in item one by lending money to the victims through a general trading and contracting company with an interest estimated at more than the loaned amount. They then deposited and transferred the money to the bank accounts indicated in the investigations, with the aim of concealing the illegal source.

The prosecution added they exploited the financial need of the victims and lent money with exorbitant interest, forcing the latter to pay the excessive interest.

**Truck fire blocks traffic:** Firefighters from Bairaqa Fire Brigade doused the fire that broke out in a heavy equipment loaded with a crane on the Seventh Ring Road.

The firefighting team rushed to the site of the fire incident and extinguished the fire within a short period, then they removed the truck from the road.

No injuries or casualties were reported.

**Safety regulations:** The Public Relations Department at Kuwait Municipality announced that the supervisory team at the Safety Department in the Ahmadi Governorate Municipality branch conducted an extensive field inspection to ensure that safety protocols are being implemented in investment and commercial properties.

The department reported that the team's inspections led to the issuance of 14 warnings for non-compliance with safety regulations, which were found to pose potential risks to public safety.

The Municipality urged property owners to promptly implement necessary safety measures and comply with local regulations, including the removal of construction debris by both contractors and property owners, to avoid legal consequences. The Safety Department's supervisory team emphasized that it will take strict legal action against any violations.



Personal document checking in progress.

## 15 illegals, criminals held in Fahaheel traffic swoop

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21, (KUNA): The Interior Ministry announced on Thursday that it arrested 15 individuals and issued 840 traffic citations during campaigns in Mahboula and Fahaheel areas.

The Interior Ministry's public relations and moral guidance department said in a press statement that the campaigns were meant to hold accountable those violating traffic laws and also focused on felons committing several illegal acts including residency and work permit violations in addition to possession of narcotics and alcohol.

The ministry affirmed it would continue to track down all wrongdoers no matter where in the country to safeguard the country's security and enforce the law.



KFF personnel during the drill.

KFF photo

## KFF practices advanced exercises

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: The Kuwait Fire Force launched an advanced in-service activation exercise plan this morning at the "Force" training site in the Arifjan area. This initiative aims to enhance preparedness

by developing comprehensive plans and strategies to address various incidents. The exercise involves the formation of an integrated work team and practical implementation of these strategies on the ground.



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# Al-Ajeel announces major overhaul of building material subsidy system

Ration card benefits halted for 4,000 over citizenship pull

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Khalifa Al-Ajeel, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, has announced Ministerial Resolution No. 222 of 2024, outlining new rules for the disbursement of subsidized building materials.**

The resolution aims to optimize the use of public funds and better benefit citizens by providing greater flexibility in choosing materials

according to their construction needs.

This update marks the first major overhaul of the construction subsidy system since 2012. Unlike the previous system, which had fixed support with capped prices, the new framework introduces flexible pricing for materials while maintaining fixed support levels.

This adjustment will encourage competition among local suppliers and expand the variety of available products, introducing eight new materials into the support program such as air-conditioning support has increased from 5,000 dinars to 6,000 dinars and ready-mix concrete support has risen from 8,500 dinars to 9,000 dinars.

Moreover, the aluminum windows have been added to the list of subsidized materials with a support limit of 1,000 dinars.

An optional beneficiary option of 1,000 dinars for four products (sanitary sets, waterproof insulation, wires, and sigma) has been introduced, allowing citizens more choice in their subsidies.

The decision will take effect in one month, and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has been authorized to approve adjustments based on market conditions or public interest.

Meanwhile, the Al-Rai reported that more than 1,800 individuals whose Kuwaiti citizenship were revoked had received the state's construction support of 30,000 dinars, intended for owners of residential plots.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is conducting an audit to identify which individuals have benefited from construction support and housing loans worth 70,000 dinars, provided by the Credit Bank.

The authorities are expected to take necessary measures, including halting or adjusting support payments for those whose citizenship was revoked before or after receiving aid.

In addition, the ministry has suspended the ration card benefits for about 4,000 beneficiaries, including their family members, due to the withdrawal of their nationalities.

This suspension is not limited to financial support but also includes traditional entitlements, such as food rations, affecting transactions across various state agencies and banks.



KUNA photo  
The Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen.

## Kuwait takes part in UN bazaar in Geneva

**GENEVA, Nov 21. (KUNA):** Kuwait Permanent Representative to the UN Office in Geneva Nasser Abdullah Al-Hayen said his country's participation in the annual UN Women's Guild Bazaar reflects keenness on backing the humanitarian efforts of the international organizations.

Kuwait's pavilion at the bazaar drew praise from all visitors, notably ambassadors and notable figures, he told KUNA on Tuesday.

"Kuwait's contribution to the event is a token part of the country's relief effort for disaster-hit people worldwide," Am-

bassador Al-Hayen said.

He cited as examples of Kuwait humanitarian action the assistance provided to the brotherly people of Palestine in Gaza Strip and the Lebanese people, notably women and children, who bear the brunt of the ongoing war.

The exhibits at Kuwait pavilion include national products, traditional garments, he said, adding that all the proceeds of sales at the bazaar, including food, handicrafts and lottery tickets will go to help underprivileged children around the world.

## Amiri Diwan advisor honors 'inventor' Khaled Al-Khalifi

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21:** Sheikh Faisal Al-Hamoud, advisor at the Amiri Diwan, warmly welcomed inventor and certified lecturer Khaled Al-Khalifi to commemorate his receipt of several patents from the US Patent and Trademark Office and the European Union Intellectual Property Office, reports Al-Anba daily.

Among these patents is his innovative Integrated Smart Education System, designed to facilitate the integration of people with disabilities alongside their healthy peers.

During the meeting, Sheikh Faisal congratulated Al-Khalifi, expressing pride in his achievements and wishing him continued success. He emphasized that such accomplishments play a key role in Kuwait's advancement in science, research and technology; driven by the efforts of Kuwaiti nationals who have made their mark in global progress across various fields. He commended Al-Khalifi's remarkable achievement and encouraged further success.

In response, Al-Khalifi expressed his gratitude for the warm reception from Sheikh Faisal; noting that it is no surprise given Sheikh Faisal's continuous support for the youths. He highlighted that this recognition reflects the guidance and care of Kuwait's leadership in inspiring and motivating young people.

Additionally, Sheikh Faisal Al-Hamoud hosted a meeting with the distinguished young individual Faisal Al-Sajari, where they discussed various youth ideas and aspirations. Sheikh Faisal extended his well wishes for Al-Sajari's future success and guidance.

Sheikh Faisal reiterated his belief in the immense potential of Kuwait's youth, describing them as the country's most valuable asset for achieving progress in all sectors.

He underscored the importance of nurturing and sup-



Al-Anba photo  
Sheikh Faisal Al-Hamoud honoring Khaled Al-Khalifi.

porting youth in all areas, ensuring that Kuwait continues its rise as a leading nation on the global stage.



The Ambassador of India to Kuwait HE Dr Adarsh Swaika called on HE Abdulrahman Baddah Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information & Culture and MoS Youth Affairs of Kuwait. During the meeting both sides discussed ways to further strengthen cooperation between India and Kuwait in the media, information and cultural domain.

## Other Voices

### Samples of miserable times

By Ahmed alsarraf

Over the past two decades, or even over the past fifty years, Kuwait has gone through a phase that is unparalleled in its strangeness by all measures.

Multiple parties played roles in actions and decisions that turned out to be disastrous for all of us. Many years of hard work lie ahead to undo the damage caused by that phase, with its flawed actions, decisions and the dozens of decrees granting citizenship to countless individuals who were never worthy of the honor of belonging to this country.

For many decades, Kuwait was a haven for wealth creation for those who claimed virtue, piety, righteousness and a desire for reform.

Instead, they spread corruption across the nation, degraded moral values, harmed the faith and amassed vast sums of money for themselves, often to fund strange and misguided objectives.

Through my professional banking work, I encountered some individuals who managed to deceive tens of thousands of naive people.

They claimed to possess unconventional healing methods that others were unaware of. They wore long beards, kept their clothes short, frequently uttered religious phrases like "Bismillah" and "Hawqala," and carried prayer beads, among other outward signs.

One such individual was born in Kuwait to a Kuwaiti mother and was later granted citizenship under the "noble deeds" clause, often with the support of his group.

He understood from the very start that a regular job wouldn't make him rich and that a salary alone wasn't enough.

So, he turned to the practice of exorcism and Quranic healing. Unfortunately, during one of his sessions, a mentally ill citizen died under his care while he attempted to force out a "genie" from the person's body. He was sentenced to prison but, thanks to the influence of his powerful allies, he was pardoned.

Following this, he decided to reinvent himself as a cleric, despite having no formal education or training in the field, which high-

lights a flaw in government administration.

He quickly became a well-known preacher and religious leader, working under the banner of charitable organizations, sharing a generous portion of the proceeds with those in charge of these institutions.

His fame grew after a controversial TV channel adopted him, crafting him into a "religious star." Subsequently, several so-called charitable organizations sought to exploit his fame to raise funds.

It's naive to believe that the millions he collected over the past three decades were used for their intended purpose. He wasn't foolish and easy, unmonitored money is an irresistible temptation, encouraging even the most dishonest individuals to take advantage of it.

During the Arab Spring, he became deeply involved in the political and social movements, contributing financially and militarily to fighters in Syria.

He aligned himself with the movement and insulted the Minister of the Interior at the time, growing increasingly brazen.

His citizenship was eventually revoked, but he sought refuge in a Gulf state and later in Turkey, where his investments in both Turkey and Bosnia allowed him to enjoy a luxurious life.

For the tenth time, luck intervened in his favor. With the help of his influential group, his citizenship was reinstated and he returned to his familiar game of collecting donations.

Finally, through various agencies and a small army of helpers, he offered to perform Umrah or Hajj on behalf of people unable to go, for a generous fee.

Despite being fully immersed in his "charitable" endeavors, he somehow manages to juggle a government job for which he receives a generous salary.

It's unclear how he manages to reconcile collecting donations through various associations with his roles as a therapist, preacher, imam, faculty member, director of dawah (Islamic outreach), trainer, family expert, journalist and supervisor of guidance centers across multiple countries.

This is just one example of the lowest point we've reached, but there are many others like him.

□ □ □

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## LOCAL



Many school students flocked to the 47th Kuwait International Book Fair.

KUNA photo

### Students flock to Kuwait book fair

Groups of students flocked to the Mishref fair ground to visit premises of the 47th chapter of Kuwait Book Fair.

In line with the ministry of education's keenness on promoting reading, schools have arranged trips to the fair ground, providing students the opportunity to examine information outside their educational curriculum.

The fair kicked off on Wednesday under sponsorship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. It will proceed until November 30.

Up to 243,000 books of various topics are on display -- including 14,630 new ones. Number of children books is estimated at 47,367 including 1,929 new ones. (KUNA)

### Number of participants varies

## MEW conducted 100 training courses for its staff in '23/'24

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Director of the Development and Training Department at the Ministry of Electricity and Water Eng. Abdullah Al-Khashem announced that the ministry successfully conducted 100 training courses during the 2023/2024 year, which included a mix of training, field, ministerial, and external courses.

In a press statement issued on Wednesday, Eng. Al-Khashem said the number of participants in these courses varied, with 948 individuals attending field courses, 1,163 participating in ministerial training courses, and 83 employees, comprising engineers and technicians, from the ministry taking part in external training courses. Also, local and field training programs were organized for university students and technical school trainees in the Ministry of Electricity and Water.

Al-Khashem explained that these courses are part of a comprehensive plan designed to enhance the efficiency of engineers in various technical specializations, with a focus on the latest technologies and advanced methods in the fields of electricity and water.

The ministry aims to equip its

workforce with the necessary skills to deal with complex technical challenges and ensure the continuous delivery of high-quality services to citizens.

The courses cover a wide range of topics, including maintenance, operations, and project management, as well as team management skills and the adoption of best international practices.

External training for engineers reflects the ministry's commitment to providing continuous educational opportunities and achieving knowledge exchange with specialized international training institutions and centers.

In a related context, Al-Khashem praised the dedication of the engineers who participated in these courses, stressing that the continuous development of its staff is a basic pillar for enhancing work quality and delivering innovative services that meet the needs of society.

He explained that the Civil Service Commission has instructed ministries to offer specialized courses in areas such as corporate governance, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence. At the same time, the Ministry of Electricity and Water is keen about offering specialized courses in renewable energy.



## Former Lebanese PM Siniora visits diwanis in Kuwait

Al-Seyassah Report

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Former Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, who arrived in Kuwait a few days ago, continues his visit to a number of diwanis in the country, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Siniora visited Abdul Rahman Al-Bahar's diwaniya, where he discussed with all those present the most difficult challenges that Lebanon is facing; including the economic and political crises, suffering of the Lebanese people, and their urgent need for humanitarian support. He also touched on regional developments and their impact on the Lebanese scene.

He presented his vision on strengthening Arab relations, and the need for the concerted efforts of Arab and international communities in alleviating the suffering of the Lebanese and support their country to overcome the crises.

The attendees exchanged ideas with Siniora about the role of the Arab and international communities in supporting Lebanon to triumph over the crises, while stressing the importance of continuing communication to enhance mutual understanding and find plausible solutions to the existing crises.



Photos by Rizk Taufiq

Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers during the visit of Fouad Siniora at Abdul Rahman Al-Bahar's diwaniya.

## 1,647 face

Continued from Page 1

Officials at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry are auditing the list of individuals affected by the citizenship withdrawal, focusing on identifying construction subsidy beneficiaries. A detailed report will be submitted to the relevant authorities, who will then decide on necessary measures. These may include halting subsidy disbursements for those whose citizenship was revoked before receiving support or partially suspending payments if installments have already been disbursed.

In a related development, approximately 4,000 beneficiaries, including their family members, have had their access to state subsidies suspended due to the citizenship withdrawal decisions. This suspension extends beyond financial assistance to include other entitlements such as food subsidies, affecting both personal and family benefits across various state agencies and banks.

The ongoing citizenship review process reflects Kuwait's efforts to address concerns related to nationality acquisition and state benefits, with significant implications for those affected by these decisions.

## Kuwait unveils

Continued from Page 1

Expo 2025, he added would be an opportunity to present Kuwait's adherence to the vision 2035 development strategy and shed light on its abilities to empower individuals to build a society based on innovation values and cooperation.

Dr. Adel Al-Mu'men, the acting rector of the Faculty of Architecture, said in a his statement that such exhibitions constitute a platform to display creative designs.

For his part, the general commissioner of the State of Kuwait to Expo Osaka, Salem Al-Watyan, said today's visual exhibition was held in implementation of instructions by the Minister of Information, Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi and the ministry's strategy.

He revealed that Kuwait's motto at Expo Osaka would be "the minaret of the future," with the subtitle, "empowering individuals," a message to back up human beings.

## Mural honors

Continued from Page 1

another featuring archival items near "Sheikh Mubarak" Kiosk in addition to other activities.

A number of Turkish and Kuwaiti officials, diplomats, and attendees were present at the mural unveiling ceremony.

## MoCI suspends

Continued from Page 1

the market while exploring stricter regulations to curb malpractice.

This step signals the government's intent to balance the benefits of small-scale entrepreneurship with the need for a transparent and professional real estate sector.

## Kuwait broad

Continued from Page 1

The total assets of local banks saw a 0.4 percent increase last October, amounting to 90 billion dinars (around \$297 billion). However, net foreign assets of local banks experienced a 2.6 percent decline, falling to 13.9 billion dinars (about \$45.8 billion), indicating a slight reduction in Kuwait's international asset holdings.

The value of time deposits at the Central Bank saw a significant decline, decreasing by 6.5 percent to 1 billion dinars (roughly \$3.3 billion), while cash credit facilities (loans) rose by 1 percent to 56.3 billion dinars (about \$185 billion).

The average interest rate on one-year treasury bonds remained stable at 4.3 percent, reflecting a stable debt market.

However, import financing dropped by 9.2 percent, amounting to 779.4 million dinars (around \$2.5 billion), signaling a decrease in the financing for the country's import activities.

In terms of currency performance, the US dollar appreciated slightly, with its exchange rate rising by 0.3 percent to 305 fils against the Kuwaiti dinar. Kuwait's foreign reserves showed a 1.41 percent year-on-year increase by the end of October 2024. The official reserve assets totaled 14.138 billion dinars (around \$46.6 billion), up from 13.941 billion dinars in October 2023.

However, compared to September 2024, when reserves stood at 14.467 billion dinars, there was a 2.28 percent

# Kuwait designates Boys Welfare Home as child protection center

'We aim to convey Kuwait's message on promoting children's rights'

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Iman Al-Enezi, acting Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, said the Boys Welfare Home building under the Social Care Homes Complex has been designated as a specialized center for child protection.**

In a press statement, Al-Enezi confirmed that efforts are being exerted to develop the structure over the next years in accordance with the highest professional and international standards in order to establish it as a model for offering a secure and all-encompassing environment for

child protection.

She clarified this action is part of the council's efforts to improve a secure and all-encompassing environment for children and to offer services that protect them, help them grow, and improve their abilities in accordance with the best approved international programs.

"We are keen on intensifying national efforts to protect children and provide them with a safe environment that guarantees their rights and supports their aspirations. We must take care of the children with all sincerity. Allocating a center for child protection is a reflection of our commitment to better serve this precious group," she added.

In a related development, Al-Enezi announced that the Secretariat General of the council, in cooperation with Kuwait Lawyers Association, will organize the celebration of International Children's

Day, under the slogan "Trusted," at the Avenues Mall on Thursday.

"Our celebration this year is not limited to awareness activities, as we aim to convey Kuwait's message on promoting children's rights and protecting them as a fundamental pillar on the path of community development. The event includes a variety of cultural and entertainment activities that are intended to raise awareness of children's rights and emphasize the significance of protecting children, in line with Kuwait's exceptional vision in this field," she revealed.

She also confirmed the commitment to continue intensifying efforts to protect children and provide the best services that guarantee their well-being, as well as their psychological and social security; stressing "the child is the trust that must be preserved and developed."

decline in the reserves over the month. Despite the monthly decrease, the annual increase in reserves was largely supported by the foreign currency and deposits abroad, which rose by 1.76 percent, reaching KWD 12.526 billion by the end of October.

Conversely, the Special Drawing Rights (SDR) component of the reserves saw a 0.55 percent decrease, totaling 1.315 billion dinars.

The reserve position at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) also declined by 7.52 percent from October 2023 by 212.7 million dinars by the end of last October; showing a 2.52 percent decline on a monthly basis.

The data from the Central Bank of Kuwait highlights a period of gradual growth mixed with some reductions across key financial sectors.

While the money supply and private sector deposits experienced small gains, the decrease in government deposits and foreign assets indicates some challenges in sustaining the growth momentum.

The decline in time deposits and import financing suggests potential caution in both domestic and international economic activities.

Meanwhile, the moderate rise in foreign reserves supports Kuwait's ability

to manage external shocks, though the monthly decline in reserves suggests caution in the country's broader financial management strategy.

As the year progresses, Kuwait's economy will likely continue to navigate these mixed signals, balancing the need for domestic investment with broader global economic challenges.

## Netanyahu &

Continued from Page 1

The court also issued a warrant for the arrest of Mohammed Deif, one of the leaders of Hamas. The ICC chief prosecutor had also sought warrants for two other senior Hamas figures, Yahya Sinwar and Ismail Haniyeh, but they were both killed in the conflict.

Meanwhile, the death toll in the Gaza Strip from the 13-month-old war between Israel and Hamas has surpassed 44,000, local health officials said Thursday.

The Gaza Health Ministry does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count, but it has said that more than half of the fatalities are women and children. The Israeli mili-

tary says it has killed over 17,000 militants, without providing evidence.

The Health Ministry said 44,056 people have been killed and 104,268 wounded since the start of the war. It has said the real toll is higher because thousands of bodies are buried under rubble or in areas that medics cannot access.

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting another 250. Around 100 hostages are still inside Gaza, at least a third of whom are believed to be dead. Most of the rest were released during a cease-fire last year.

The Israeli offensive has caused heavy destruction across wide areas of the coastal territory, leading many to wonder when or how it will ever be rebuilt. Around 90% of the population of 2.3 million people have been displaced, often multiple times, and hundreds of thousands are living in squalid tent camps with little food, water or basic services.

Israel says it tries to avoid harming civilians and blames their deaths on Hamas because the militants operate in residential areas, where they have built tunnels, rocket launchers and other military infrastructure.

Palestinian officials and rights groups accuse Israeli forces of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and the United Nations' top court is considering allegations of genocide brought by South Africa. The Israeli government adamantly denies the allegations, accusing critics of being biased against it.

In recent weeks, the amount of humanitarian aid entering Gaza has plummeted, prompting the United States to threaten to reduce its military support for Israel before backing down, citing limited progress. Experts have warned that isolated, war-ravaged northern Gaza could already be experiencing famine.

The United States, Egypt and Qatar spent months trying to broker a cease-fire agreement in which Hamas would release the remaining hostages in exchange for an end to the war. Those talks ground to a halt over the summer, with Israel and Hamas each accusing the other of making unacceptable demands.

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has vowed to end the wars in the Middle East without saying how. His previous administration gave unprecedented support to Israel and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-line policies toward the Palestinians.

## Red flags surface

# Lawmakers concerned about background checks of Trump's Cabinet picks



US President-elect Donald Trump speaks with Elon Musk as Sen Bill Hagerty, R-Tenn, (left), and Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, listen before attending a viewing of the launch of the sixth test flight of the SpaceX Starship rocket on Nov 19 in Boca Chica, Texas. (AP)

WASHINGTON, Nov 21, (AP) — As senators prepare to consider President-elect Donald Trump's picks for his Cabinet, they may be doing so without a well-established staple of the confirmation process: an FBI background check.

The Trump transition team has so far not signed the requisite agreements with the White House or the Justice Department to allow the FBI to screen his personnel choices, both for the process of obtaining security clearances and meeting the Senate's usual standards for nominations.

That means the Senate could be asked to vote on Trump's picks without the usual rigorous background checking meant to uncover personal problems, criminal histories or other red flags that would raise questions about a nominee's suitability for the job. There already are questions about problematic issues related to a number of the people Trump wants in his administration.

"There are very real liabilities on the security side if you don't get this right," said Dan Meyer, a Washington lawyer at the Tully Rinckey law firm who specializes in background checks, security clearances and federal employment law.

At issue is a memorandum of understanding under which a president - or in this case, an incoming one - submits requests for name and background checks and the FBI commits to flagging to the White House any adverse information uncovered during the process.

But that document has not yet been signed, with the Trump transition team relying instead on internal campaign aides, allied groups and law firms on the outside to support the personnel effort. Trump for years has regarded FBI leadership with suspicion, in part because of the Russian election interference investigation that shadowed his first term and more recently because of FBI investigations into his hoarding of classified documents and his efforts to undo the results of the 2020 election that led to his indictment last year.

A Justice Department spokesperson said Wednesday that discussions were ongoing with the Trump transition team about signing the memo.

In a statement last week, the department said it was "committed to ensuring an orderly and effective transition" to the next administration.

"We are prepared to deliver briefings to the transition team on our operations and responsibilities, and we stand ready to process requests for security clearances for those who will need access to national security information," the statement said.

For those appointees whose jobs involve a security clearance, a background check would be required. But once Trump takes office on Jan. 20, 2025, he could simply order that people be given a security clearance, as he was reported to have done for son-in-law Jared Kushner during his first term.

# Biden has become notably quiet after 2024 election and Democrats' loss

WASHINGTON, Nov 21, (AP) — US President Joe Biden has been notably quiet since the Democrats' gut-wrenching defeat at the polls.

After warning voters for years that a Donald Trump win would be calamitous for American democracy, Biden has gone largely silent on his concerns about what lays ahead for America and he has yet to substantively reflect on why Democrats were decisively defeated up and down the ballot.

His only public discussion of the outcome of the election came in a roughly six-minute speech in the Rose Garden two days after the election, when he urged people to "see each other not as adversaries but as fellow Americans" and to "bring down the temperature." Since then, there's been hardly a public peep - including over the course of Biden's six-day visit to South America that concluded on Tuesday evening. His only public comments during the trip came during brief remarks before meetings with government officials and a climate-related speech during a visit to the Amazon.

At a delicate moment in the US - and for the world - Biden's silence may be leaving a vacuum. But his public reticence has also underscored a new reality: America and the rest of the world is already moving on.

"His race is over. His day is done," said David Axelrod, who served as a senior adviser in the Obama-Biden White House. "It's up to a new generation of leaders to chart the path forward, as I'm sure they will."

Edward Frantz, a historian at the University of Indianapolis, said Biden's relative silence in the aftermath of

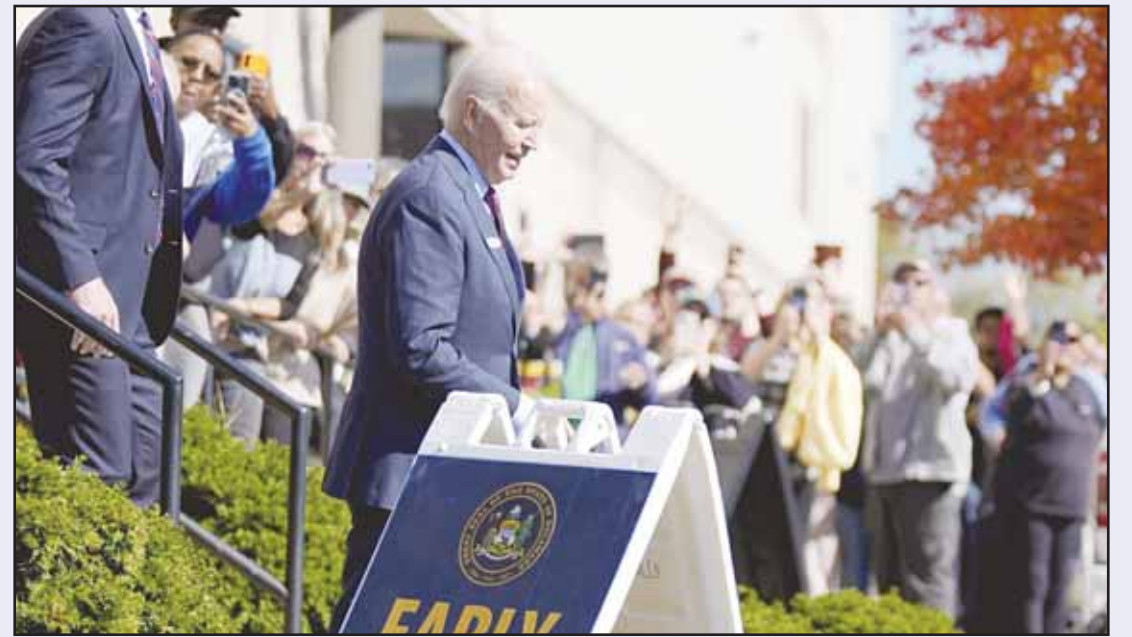
the Republican win is in some ways understandable. Still, he argued, there's good reason for Biden to be more active in trying to shape the narrative during his final months in office.

"The last time a president left office so irrelevant or rejected by the populace was Jimmy Carter," said Frantz, referring to the last one-term Democrat in the White House. "History has allowed for the great rehabilitation of Carter, in part, because of all he did in his post-presidency. At 82, I'm not sure Biden has the luxury of time. The longer he waits, the longer he can't find something to say, he risks ceding shaping his legacy at least in how he's seen in the near term."

Biden's allies say the president - like Democrats writ large - is privately processing the election defeat, stressing that it's barely been two weeks since Trump's win. Biden hasn't been vocally introspective about his role in the loss, and still has a lot to unpack, they said.

Biden, in his speech after the election, said: "Campaigns are contests of competing visions. The country chooses one or the other. We accept the choice the country made. I've said many times you can't love your country only when you win."

Biden's aides say the president's insistence on following electoral traditions - ensuring an orderly transition and inviting Trump to the White House - is especially important because Trump flouted them four years ago, when he actively tried to overturn the results of the election he lost and helped incite a mob that rioted at the U.S. Capitol.



US President Joe Biden departs a polling station after casting his early-voting ballot for the 2024 elections on Oct 28 in New Castle, Del. (AP)

# Russia launches intercontinental missile in an attack for first time in war: Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine, Nov 21, (AP) — Ukraine says Russia launched an intercontinental ballistic missile overnight targeting Dnipro city in the central-east of the country, which, if confirmed, would be the first time Moscow has used such a missile in the war.

In a statement Thursday on the Telegram messaging app, Ukraine's air force did not specify the exact type of missile, but said it was launched from Russia's Astrakhan region, which borders the Caspian Sea.

It said an intercontinental ballistic missile was fired at Dnipro city along with eight other missiles, and that the Ukrainian military shot down six of them.

Two people were wounded as a result of the attack, and an industrial facility and a rehabilitation center for people with disabilities were damaged, according to local officials.

While the range of an ICBM would seem excessive for use against Ukraine, such missiles are designed to carry nuclear warheads, and the use of one would serve as a chilling reminder of Russia's nuclear capability and a powerful message of potential escalation.

The attack comes two days after Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a revised nuclear doctrine that formally lowers the threshold for the country's use of nuclear weapons. Ukraine on Tuesday fired several American-supplied longer-range missiles and reportedly fired U.K.-made Storm Shadows on Wednesday into Russia.

The Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement



In this photo provided by Ukraine's 24th Mechanised Brigade press service, servicemen of the 24th Mechanised Brigade fire 120mm mortar towards Russian positions near Chasiv Yar town, in Donetsk region, Ukraine on Nov 19. (AP)

Thursday that its air defense systems shot down two British-made Storm Shadow missiles, six HIMARS rockets, and 67 drones. The announcement came in the ministry's daily roundup regarding the military actions in Ukraine.

The statement didn't say when or where exactly it happened or what the missiles were targeting. This is not Moscow's first public announcement of the shooting down of Storm Shadow missiles, as Russia earlier reported downing some over the annexed Crimean Peninsula.

The developments come as the war has taken on a growing international dimension with the arrival of North Korean troops to help Russia on the battlefield - a development that U.S. officials said prompted U.S. President Joe Biden's policy shift on allowing Ukraine to fire longer-range US missiles into Russia. The Kremlin responded with threats to escalate further.

Putin has previously warned the U.S. and other NATO allies that allowing Ukraine to use Western-supplied longer-range weapons to hit Russian territory would mean that Russia and NATO are at war.

And the new doctrine allows for a potential nuclear response by Moscow even to a conventional attack on Russia by any nation that is supported by a nuclear power.

While the doctrine envisions a possible nuclear response by Russia to a conventional strike, it is formulated broadly to avoid a firm commitment to use nuclear weapons and keep Putin's options open.

## Europe

**Serbia arrests 11:** Eleven people have been arrested in Serbia in connection with a roof collapse earlier this month at a train station in the northern city of Novi Sad that killed 15 people and severely injured two others, prosecutors said Thursday.

The suspects, who have not been identified, face charges of committing criminal acts against public security, causing public danger and irregular construction work, the Higher Prosecutor's Office in Novi Sad said in a statement. They face up to 12 years in prison.

Serbian media reported that Goran Vesic, who resigned as construction minister after the collapse, was among those detained. Vesic said on X he came in voluntarily. (AP)

**Czech to buy tanks:** The Czech Defense Ministry said on Wednesday it plans to buy 14 Leopard 2A4 tanks from Germany in a \$167 million deal that's part of a major modernization of the country's military amid Russia's war against Ukraine.

The ministry said it hopes the deal, worth almost 4 billion Czech crowns or koruna, would be signed with Germany's Rheinmetall Landysteme GmbH by the end of the year, with the tanks to be delivered by the end of 2026.

Germany has already donated 28 Leopard 2A4 tanks to the Czechs in exchange for the weapons they gave to Ukraine. (AP)

## 'Working-class hero'

### Former UK deputy prime minister Prescott dies

LONDON, Nov 21, (AP) — British politician John Prescott, a pugacious and personable former merchant seaman who rose to the post of deputy prime minister in Tony Blair's Labour government, has died at age 86.

Prescott's family announced his death on Thursday. They said the politician, who had been suffering from Alzheimer's disease, died in a care home on Wednesday "surrounded by the love of his family and the jazz music of Marian Montgomery."

The family said Prescott had "spent his life trying to improve the lives of others, fighting for social justice and protecting the environment."

For a decade, Prescott brought grit, humor and working-class authenticity to the government of the young, polished Blair, who became prime minister in 1997.

"He was one of the most talented people I ever encountered in politics,

one of the most committed and loyal, and definitely the most unusual," Blair said.

An amateur boxer in his youth, Prescott had a defining moment when he punched a man who threw an egg at him during the 2001 general election.

Prescott helped ease the sometimes tense relationship between Blair and his Treasury chief, Gordon Brown, and acted as a bridge between the party's traditionalists and Blair's modernizing faction. Brown said he was key to keeping the party together after Blair's controversial decision to join the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Brown, who succeeded Blair as prime minister, described Prescott as a true working-class hero.

"He wanted the good things in life for everyone and not just himself," Brown said. "And he showed that Britain can be a country where if you work hard you can fill your potential."



Former Deputy leader of the Britain's Labour Party, John Prescott, holds up his Labour Party membership card as he gives a speech at a campaign rally for Andy Burnham, the Labour party leadership hopeful, at the St Pancras Parish Church in London, Aug 24, 2015. (AP)

## Volcano on Iceland's Reykjanes Peninsula erupts for seventh time in a year



A new volcanic eruption that started on the Reykjanes Peninsula in Iceland on Nov 20. (AP)

GRINDAVIK, Iceland, Nov 21, (AP) — A volcano on the Reykjanes Peninsula in southwestern Iceland has erupted for the seventh time since December.

The eruption started with little warning at 11:14 p.m. Wednesday and created a fissure around 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) long. The activity is estimated to be considerably smaller than the previous eruption in August, Iceland's meteorological office that monitors seismic activity said.

"In the big picture, this is a bit smaller than the last eruption, and the eruption that occurred in May," Magnús Tumi Guðmundsson, a professor of geophysics who flew over the scene with the Civil Protection agency to monitor the event, told the national RUV broadcaster.

While the eruption poses no threat to air travel, authorities warned of gas emissions across parts of the peninsula, including the nearby town of Grindavik.

Around 50 houses were evacuated after the Civil Protection agency issued the alert, along with guests at the famous Blue Lagoon resort, according to RUV.

The repeated volcanic eruptions close to Grindavik, which is about 50 kilometers (30 miles) southwest of the capital, Reykjavik, and has a population of 3,800 people, have damaged infrastructure and property and forced many residents to relocate to guarantee their safety. "Grindavik is not in danger as it looks and it is unlikely that this crack will get any longer, although nothing can be ruled out," Magnús Tumi said.

Iceland, which sits above a volcanic hot spot in the North Atlantic, averages one eruption every four to five years. The most disruptive in recent times was the 2010 eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano, which spewed clouds of ash into the atmosphere and disrupted trans-Atlantic air travel for months.

## America

**Begich beats Peltola:** Republican Nick Begich has won Alaska's US House race, defeating Democratic Rep. Mary Peltola to claim the seat once held by his grandfather.

Begich was among the opponents Peltola defeated during her special and regular election wins in 2022, following the death of Republican Rep. Don Young. Young had held the seat for 49 years. Peltola, who is Yup'ik, was the first Alaska Native in Congress.

Republicans, seeking to maintain control of the House, eagerly sought to win back the seat. (AP)

**'Dismiss conviction':** A day after New York prosecutors said they will fight efforts to dismiss Donald Trump's hush money conviction, the president-elect's lawyers urged a judge to ignore them and dispose of the case before he takes office in January.

Echoing their arguments since Trump's win, his lawyers said in a letter Wednesday to Judge Juan M. Merchan that continuing with the case will interfere with Trump's preparations for returning to the White House and impede his ability to run the country.

The lawyers, Todd Blanche and Emil Bove, said they will file paperwork formalizing their dismissal request and asked Merchan for a deadline of Dec. 20, after Special Counsel Jack Smith's team is expected to disclose the next steps it intends to take in two federal cases against Trump. (AP)

## Ties between countries strengthen

### Brazil welcomes China's Xi for state visit

RIO DE JANEIRO, Nov 21, (AP): Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva on Wednesday welcomed China's President Xi Jinping for a state visit at the Alvorada Palace in Brasilia, the latest sign of deepening ties between the two countries that analysts say may accelerate as Donald Trump returns to the White House in 2025.

China overtook the US as Brazil's biggest export market in 2009. Since then, the links between the two nations have strengthened in trade and investment - and on Wednesday the two leaders signed 37 agreements in areas ranging from trade and tourism to agriculture, industry, science and technology, health, energy, culture and education.

That reflects a broader trend, experts said. Last week, Xi inaugurated a \$1.3 billion megaproject in Peru, perhaps the clearest sign of Latin America's reorientation.

"Latin America has always been forgotten by the United States and the European Union. Who fills that void? China," said Flavia Loss, an international relations professor at Foundation School of Sociology and Politics in Sao Paulo.

"Donald Trump's election is already accelerating this proximity. We're clearly seeing it happening now, live," she added.

The state visit by the Chinese leader comes more than a year after Lula visited China seeking to strengthen ties and mend relations with its biggest trade partner after a rocky period under his predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro.

Bolsonaro's lawmaker son Eduardo blamed the COVID-19 pandemic on the Chinese Communist Party and referred to the giant Chinese technology company Huawei as "Chinese espionage," prompting sharp rebukes. During eight months in 2022, China did not have an ambassador in Brazil.

Lula has taken an opposite stance. Repairing relations with China is also part of his strategy to replace Brazil on the international scene after a period of isolation under Bolsonaro who showed little interest in global affairs.

In remarks to journalists on Wednesday, Lula said that what China and Brazil do together "reverberates around the world" highlighting the collaboration of both countries within the United Nations and BRICS group of developing nations.

Xi referred to China and Brazil as "reliable friends with a shared destiny and positive forces to promote peace."

From January to October 2024, trade between the countries amounted to \$136.3 billion, according to a Nov 13 statement from Brazil's presidential palace.



Chinese President Xi Jinping holds talks with his Brazilian counterpart Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in Brasilia, Brazil Nov 20. (Xinhua)

## India's Modi offers aid to Caribbean nations while meeting leaders in Guyana

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, Nov 21, (Agencies): Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Wednesday he would share technology for combating seaweed infestation with Caribbean nations, as he visited Guyana in the first such visit by an Indian leader in more than 50 years.

Guyana, a South American nation with many citizens of Indian origin, serves as headquarters for the 15-member Caribbean trade bloc known as Caricom, and Modi met with regional leaders Wednesday as part of the India-Caricom summit. They last met in 2019.

Modi arrived with promises to help the region in areas including health, energy and agriculture. He also announced more than 1,000 scholarships over the next five years for trade bloc nations, mobile hospitals for rural areas and drug-testing laboratories as well as river and sea ferries for marine transport.

But Caribbean leaders reserved their loudest applause when Modi announced that India had made tremendous progress in converting large quantities of sargassum into fertilizer and other economic uses as he urged the region to take advantage of his offer.

"We are willing to share this with all the countries," he said, calling the seaweed invasion on beaches in the tourism-dependent region "a very big problem."

Modi also was thinking of home. Noting Guyana's growing importance as an oil-producing nation after vast quantities of oil and gas were discovered off its coast in 2015, he said: "Guyana will play an important role in India's energy security."

He added that his government also is willing to fully equip at least one government building in each of the trade bloc nations with a solar power system.

Speaking after meeting with Guyanese President Irfaan Ali, the country's first Muslim leader, Modi promised to help Guyana and the region improve agriculture production, saying food security is important to island nations.

Trade between India and Guyana

has strengthened in recent years, with India providing Guyana lines of credit for military passenger planes and funding to buy a fast river ferry that services far-flung jungle areas close to neighboring Venezuela.

Modi also noted that indentured laborers from India were brought to Guyana during the British colonial era and now make a significant contribution to the country. Nearly 40% of the population is East Indian.

Modi's visit marks the first time an Indian prime minister has come to Guyana since Indira Gandhi in 1968.

Meanwhile, Nigeria and India on Sunday agreed to build a robust strategic partnership, pledging to strengthen ties in key areas including economic development, defense, healthcare and food security.

During their meeting in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, Nigerian President Bola Tinubu and Modi who was on a two-day state visit to the West African country, agreed to tighter collaboration in counterterrorism, maritime security, and intelligence sharing.



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, center, co-chairs the second annual CARICOM-India Summit, in Georgetown, Guyana on Nov 20. (AP)

## Southeast Asian defense chiefs discuss regional security with US, China, other partner nations

VIENTIANE, Laos, Nov 21, (AP): Southeast Asian defense chiefs met Thursday with China, the United States and other partner nations in Laos for security talks, which come as Beijing's increasingly assertive stance in its claim to most of the South China Sea is leading to more confrontations.

The closed-door talks put US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun in the same room a day after Dong refused a request to meet with Austin one-on-one on the sidelines of the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meetings.

The U.S. and China have been working to improve frayed military-to-military communications and Austin said he regretted Dong's decision, calling it "a setback for the whole region."

The ASEAN meetings come as member nations are looking warily toward the change in American administrations at a time of increasing maritime disputes with China. The U.S. has firmly pushed a "free and open Indo-Pacific" policy under outgoing President Joe Biden and it is not yet clear how the incoming administration

of President-elect Donald Trump will address the South China Sea situation.

In addition to the United States and China, other nations attending the ASEAN meeting from outside Southeast Asia include Japan, South Korea, India, Russia, Australia and New Zealand.

The meetings with the ASEAN dialogue partners were also expected to address tensions in the Korean Peninsula, the Russia-Ukraine war, and wars in the Middle East.

Before heading to Laos, Austin concluded meetings in Australia with officials there and with Japan's defense minister. They pledged to support ASEAN and expressed their "serious concern about destabilizing actions in the East and South China Seas, including dangerous conduct by the People's Republic of China against Philippines and other coastal state vessels."

Along with the Philippines, ASEAN members Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei have competing claims with China in the South China Sea, which Beijing claims almost entirely as its own territory.

Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos are the

other ASEAN members.

As China has grown more assertive in pushing its territorial claims in recent years, it and ASEAN have been negotiating a code of conduct to govern behavior in the sea, but progress has been slow.

Officials have agreed to try to complete the code by 2026, but talks have been hampered by thorny issues, including disagreements over whether the pact should be binding.

Chinese and Philippine vessels have clashed repeatedly this year, and Vietnam in October charged that Chinese forces assaulted its fishermen in disputed areas in the South China Sea. China has also sent patrol vessels to areas that Indonesia and Malaysia claim as their exclusive economic zones.

Another thorny regional issue is the civil war and humanitarian crisis in ASEAN member Myanmar. The group's credibility has been severely tested by the war in Myanmar, where the army ousted an elected government in 2021, and fighting has continued with pro-democracy guerrillas and ethnic rebels.



Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun, (left), with his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh arrive to attend the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) defense ministers' meeting in Vientiane, Laos on Nov 21. (AP)



Migrants walk through Tapachula, Chiapas state, Mexico on Nov 20 hoping to reach the US border. (AP)

### 1,500 migrants form new caravan in Mexico

About 1,500 migrants formed a new caravan Wednesday in southern Mexico, hoping to walk or catch rides to the U.S. border. The migrants are mainly from Central and South America. Some say they are hoping to reach the United States before Donald Trump's inauguration in January, saying they think it might be more difficult after that. They started out walking from the city of Tapachula, near the border with Guatemala, where thousands of migrants are stranded because they do not have permission to cross further into Mexico.

Migrant caravans began forming in 2018, and they became a final, desperate hope for poorer migrants who do not have the money to pay smugglers.

If migrants try to cross Mexico

alone or in small groups, they are often either detained by authorities and sent back to southern Mexico, or worse, deported back to their home countries.

In that sense, there is safety in numbers: it is hard or impossible for immigration agents to detain groups of hundreds of migrants. (AP)

So police and immigration agents often try to pick off smaller groups, and wait for the main body of the caravan to tire itself out. Usually the caravans stop or fall apart within 150 miles (250 kilometers).

There is no safety in numbers, however, against threats, extortion or abduction by drug cartels in Mexico, which have become heavily involved in migrant trafficking. (AP)

## Nicaragua's Ortega proposes reform to make him and his wife 'copresidents'

MEXICO CITY, Nov 21, (AP): Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega on Wednesday proposed a constitutional reform that would officially make him and his wife, current Vice President Rosario Murillo, "copresidents" of the Central American nation.

While the initiative has to pass through the country's legislature, Ortega and Murillo's Sandinista party control the congress and all government institutions, so it is likely to be approved.

The proposal also looks to expand the presidential term to six years from five. Ortega put forward another bill Wednesday that would make it illegal for anyone to enforce sanctions from the United States or other foreign bodies "within Nicaraguan territory."

The Organization of American States general secretary's office condemned the proposed constitutional reforms Wednesday.

"The 'reform' document is illegitimate in form and content, it merely constitutes an aberrant form of institutionalization of the matrimonial dictatorship in the Central American country and is a definitive attack on the democratic rule of law," it said in a statement.

The proposals come amid an ongoing crackdown by the Ortega

government since mass social protests in 2018 that the government violently repressed.

Nicaragua's government has imprisoned adversaries, religious leaders, journalists and more, then exiled them, stripping hundreds of their Nicaraguan citizenship and possessions. Since 2018, it has shuttered more than 5,000 organizations, largely religious, and forced thousands to flee the

country.

Dissident groups including the Nicaraguan University Alliance quickly railed against the measures, calling them an extension of that clampdown.

"They are institutionalizing nepotism and repression, destroying the rule of law. Democracy faces its greatest threat," the organization wrote on the social media platform X on Wednesday.



In this Sept 5, 2018 file photo, Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, lead a rally in Managua, Nicaragua. (AP)

## Africa

**Mali leader fires PM:** Mali's junta leader fired Prime Minister Choguel Maïga and the government on Wednesday, days after Maïga criticized the military regime.

The move was announced in a presidential decree issued by Gen. Assimi Goïta, Mali's leader, and read on state television channel ORTM. Mali has been ruled by military leaders since a junta seized power in 2020 and staged another coup the following year.

In June 2022, the junta promised a return to civilian rule by March 2024, but later postponed elections. No date has been set yet for the presidential election. A new prime minister has not been announced yet. (AP)

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**'Keep regional troops':** Southern African leaders resolved Wednesday to extend for another year the presence of regional troops deployed to fight rebels in conflict-torn eastern Congo, and also pledged to work toward peace in Mozambique, where disputed elections stoked unrest.

The leaders were meeting in Zimbabwe's capital, Harare, for an extraordinary summit under the umbrella of the Southern African Development Community, or SADC, a bloc of 16 countries that includes the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Regional powerhouse South Africa committed close to 3,000 troops for the SADC mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which were deployed last December. (AP)

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts				
EGYPT	-	EGX 30	+43.81	30,631.80	SAUDI	-	TASI	-27.40	11,840.52
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	+1,827.03	97,390.13	DUBAI	-	DFMGI	-31.09	4,729.58
					JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225	-326.17	38,026.17
					PHILIPPINES	-	PSEI	-112.62	6,863.01

# Business

Supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy

## NBK showcases commitment to sustainability at COP29 in Azerbaijan

BAKU, Nov 21: Reaffirming its dedication to fostering a sustainable, low-carbon economy and supporting Kuwait's overarching sustainability vision alongside global climate change mitigation initiatives, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) participated in the 29th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29), held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from November 11 to 22, 2024.

The conference brought together an esteemed gathering of global leaders, policymakers, private sector executives, academics, and civil society representatives. Discussions focused on critical challenges, particularly climate finance, emphasizing the urgent need to mobilize substantial financial resources. Participants stressed the importance of raising trillions of dollars annually to fund climate adaptation efforts and enable countries, particularly developing nations, to combat the impacts of climate change.

The discussions emphasized that advancing climate finance hinges on innovative financing mechanisms and substantial contributions from the private sector, through channels such as sustainable lending, green bonds, and green project financing. This aligns with NBK Group's ESG strategy, which is built on four key pillars, with a core focus on facilitating the transition to a sustainable economy and fostering sustainable finance across the region.

NBK's achievements in this space include issuing the first green bond by a Kuwaiti financial institution in the first half of 2024, valued at \$500 million. The bank has also pioneered sustainable financing solutions, introducing green mortgage loans, sustainability-linked loans, consumer loans for electric vehicles, sustainable credit, and eco-friendly housing loans, among other offerings across its branches.

### Finance Day Participation

As part of COP29's "Finance Day" on November 14, NBK participated in the session titled "Financing the low-carbon energy transition in Asia and the Pacific". Organized by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEPFI), and UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the session brought together public and private sector leaders to explore ways to close the climate investment gap and accelerate low-carbon energy adoption. The world faces an annual climate investment gap of \$2.7 trillion by 2030. In the Middle East, \$168 billion is needed annually by 2030 in climate mitigation measures to shift to a low-carbon economy.

Among the discussion, "Just Transition" emerged as a central theme for equitable and sustainable investments. As economies transition to a greener and lower carbon future, it is vital to ensure no one is left behind, emphasizing the importance of supporting developing nations, protecting jobs, and reducing social inequalities. As financial intermediaries, banks have a major role facilitating an equitable climate transition. Kuwait has made significant progress by contributing over \$23 billion to assist developing countries in mitigating



National Bank of Kuwait team at COP29.

the impacts of climate change by investing in green energy and environmental protection projects.

### Clean Energy and Green Hydrogen

A key focus at COP29 was the urgent need to accelerate the adoption of clean energy technologies and scale up investments in this sector, particularly within emerging markets.

NBK attended the Hydrogen Transition Summit organized by the Climate Action Organization, where discussions highlighted the role of low-emission hydrogen technologies in clean energy transitions.

The summit discussions emphasized the critical need for robust infrastructure development, solid off-take agreements, enhanced international collaboration, and addressing regulatory barriers to unlock green hydrogen's potential. Experts pointed out that green hydrogen offers substantial opportunities to dramatically reduce carbon emissions across the GCC and MENA regions.

Green hydrogen has become a key point of discussion in Kuwait's broader energy transition strategy. The country is developing a master plan to build out 25GW of green hydrogen production capacity by 2050, which under-

- NBK's participation in this significant global event underscores its commitment to collaborative efforts aimed at mitigating the impacts of climate change
- NBK strongly supports Kuwait's reaffirmed pledge to achieve low-carbon development and climate resilience made on the sidelines of COP29
- Aligning with global ESG standards serves as a cornerstone of the Bank's business strategy, operational framework, and corporate culture
- The Bank contributed to discussions by joining a panel on financing the transition to low-carbon energy and participating in the "Hydrogen Transition Summit"

scores its commitment to invest in clean energy.

Summit participants highlighted the critical role of public-private partnerships in closing the sustainable financing gap. Studies indicate a \$380 billion investment gap in the hydrogen sector, highlighting the critical importance of sustainable financing to bridge this shortfall. By leveraging private capital, NBK firmly believes that these collaborations can fuel large-scale renewable energy projects, such as solar and wind farms, while also supporting the economic viability of green hydrogen technologies, especially in the GCC and MENA regions.

### NBK's Unwavering Commitment

NBK's participation in this pivotal global event underscores its commitment to promoting unified action across both the public and private sectors to effectively combat climate change and advance global sustainability efforts.

NBK has made significant strides in embedding Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards into its operations and core business activities, emphasizing that these principles are integral to the bank's business strategy and corporate culture, including targeting a \$10 billion sustainable asset portfolio by 2030 and a 25% reduction in operational emissions by 2025.

As part of its commitment to integrating ESG standards into its investment activities, NBK has reached notable milestones, including joining the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), the world's largest initiative for responsible business practices, and the Partnership for Financial Carbon Accounting (PCAF). Through these initiatives, NBK has become the first bank in Kuwait and one of only 13 banks in the MENA region to align with leading global financial institutions in measuring and assessing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions linked to their lending and investment portfolios.

## Real estate deals reach \$191.8 mln in mid-Nov

Private sector leads with \$129.7m

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: According to the latest statistics from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Justice, the total value of real estate contracts registered during the period from November 10 to 14, 2024, amounted was 58.09 million dinars (approximately \$191.8 million).**

The Ministry's Real Estate Registration and Documentation Department reported that 112 contracts were transacted across the six governorates of Kuwait.

The distribution of contracts during this period was as follows:

- 86 private real estate contracts, with a total value of 39.50 million dinars (around \$129.7 million).
- 23 investment property contracts, amounting to 15.79 million dinars (about \$51.9 million).

Additionally, specific sectors saw some notable transactions:

- Two properties in the coastal sector, valued at 1.5 million million (around \$4.9 million).
- One property in the craft sector, registered at 1.3 million dinars (about \$4.3 million).

However, no activity was recorded in sectors such as commercial, warehouse, exhibition, industrial, or banking properties during this period.

For comparison, from November 3 to 7, 2024, the total value of real estate contracts registered amounted to 83.15 million dinars (approximately \$273.6 million), indicating a significant uptick in transaction values.

Looking at a broader timeframe, a report by Finance House highlighted that real estate transactions in Q3 2024 reached their highest level since mid-2022, with a total value of 940.9 million dinars (around \$3.1 billion).

This marked a 3.8 percent increase compared to the second quarter of 2024 and a 31.3 percent rise on an annual basis.

General index drops 0.46%

## Boursa Kuwait ends Thursday with deficits across all indices

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21, (KUNA):** Boursa Kuwait ended Thursday's trading session with a decline across all its major indices. The General Index fell by 33.64 points (0.46%) to close at 7,319.32 points.

Market activity remained substantial, with 314.7 million shares traded through 19,759 transactions, totaling KD 67.4 million (approximately USD 205.5 million).

The Main Market Index experienced a more pronounced drop of 42.49 points (0.63%) to reach 6,703.40 points. This segment saw 216.4 million shares traded

through 12,174 transactions, valued at KD 35.2 million (USD 107.3 million).

The Premier Market Index also declined by 32.93 points (0.42%) to close at 7,835.97 points. Trading in this market involved 98.2 million shares across 7,585 transactions, worth KD 32.17 million (USD 98.11 million).

The Main 50 Index recorded a modest decrease of 15.10 points (0.23%), settling at 6,538.16 points. This index saw 124.19 million shares traded through 7,482 transactions, valued at KWD 22.8 million (approximately USD 69.5 million).

### Toyota leads despite drop

## Kuwaiti car market faces 5.2% dip in Q3 2024 sales

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21:** The Kuwaiti car market has witnessed a decline in sales during the third quarter of 2024, with new car registrations totaling 96,886 units by the end of September, a decrease of 5.2 percent compared to the same period in 2023. September alone saw 10,468 new cars sold, a drop of 14.4 percent year-on-year, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to a Fox Tomov report, Toyota remains the market leader, selling 25,533 units and holding a 27.4 percent market share, despite a 17.1 percent decline in sales compared to the previous year.

Nissan follows in second place with 7,673 units sold and a 8 percent market

share, a 3.3 percent decrease from last year. In third place, Ford registered 6,913 vehicles, marking a 14.2 percent increase in sales.

When it comes to specific models, the Toyota Land Cruiser continues to be the best-seller despite a 30 percent year-on-year drop in sales, while the Ford Territory has seen a 19.6 percent growth.

The downturn in the market is partly attributed to the contraction of Kuwait's economy, which is expected to shrink by 1.4 percent in 2024, after a 2.2 percent decline in 2023.

The oil sector is particularly affected, with a 4.3 percent decrease in 2024 due to OPEC+ production cuts.

## 'She's Next' offers grants up to \$25,000 for women-led businesses

## Visa, NBK relaunch 'She's Next' program to empower women entrepreneurs in Kuwait

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21:** Visa, a world leader in digital payments, has announced the return of its global advocacy program 'She's Next' in partnership with National Bank of Kuwait (NBK). This initiative is part of Visa's and NBK's ongoing efforts to support women small business owners with funding, training, and mentorship. Following the success of last year's edition, the program aims to spotlight women striving to finance, manage, and overcome challenges to expand their small businesses in Kuwait.

From November 12 until December 19, 2024, women entrepreneurs from all industries in Kuwait can apply to 'She's Next', by completing and submitting the form available on [www.Visa.com](http://www.Visa.com). The winners will be chosen through a jury that will evaluate participants' work based on certain criteria including: Compelling Story of Entrepreneurship, Strength of Business Metrics, Compelling Digital Presence and Compelling problem solving within the business among other criteria.

The winner will receive a tailored training programs in addition to a grant of USD 25,000, whereas the runner-up will receive a grant of USD 15,000, and another prize will be based on people's voting and the winner will receive USD 10,000. All participants will gain access to webinar training, She's Next Club resources like the Practical Skills Business Program, and a network of entrepreneurs. This year, 'She's Next' introduces a new mentorship segment in Kuwait, led by ambassador, mentor, and content creator Dalal AlDoub.

The 5 finalists will be announced on January 20, 2025, whereas the Final event and announcing winners will be on February 19, 2025.

Furthermore, NBK revealed that entrepreneurs who apply for one of NBK Commercial Cards from November 12 to December 19, 2024, will enter a draw with a chance to win USD 10,000. The draw will be conducted on the 4th of February and the winner will be announced at the final event.

In 2023, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and Visa GCC's collaborative 'She Trades' and 'She's Next' initiatives trained 340 women from six countries, supporting over 12,000 women employees. With 96% of participants reporting improved skills and 97% increased self-confidence, the partnership is set to expand. The extended collaboration aims to enhance women entrepreneurs' business and digital skills, improve their export competitiveness, market access, and financial inclusion.

Shashank Singh, Visa's Country Manager for Kuwait and Qa-



Ghadeer Al-Awadhi, NBK Assistant General Manager-Consumer Banking Group



Shashank Singh, Visa VP and GM for Qatar and Kuwait

- Following the remarkable success of the first edition of the 'She's Next' global initiative in Kuwait last year, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has announced renewing partnership with Visa to launch the 2nd edition of the initiative.
- Women business owners in Kuwait are invited to apply for a pool of grants worth US\$50,000, a tailored training program, and access to She's Next Club for networking and mentoring opportunities. Additionally, one entrepreneur who applies for the NBK Visa Commercial Card will have a chance to win US\$10,000 through a draw.
- Key program dates: Applications open until December 19, 2024; 5 finalists announced on January 20, 2025; and final event and winner announcement on February 19, 2025.

tar, said, "We are excited bring back the 'She's Next' global advocacy program for women-owned businesses to Kuwait, in partnership with National Bank of Kuwait. Women face unique challenges during the course of operating their businesses such as access to funding, gender bias and securing their transactions in addition to initiating digital transformation using new technologies including AI."

Commenting on launching the 2nd edition of the program, Ghadeer Al-Awadhi, Assistant General Manager-Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait said, "We, at NBK, are delighted to renew this partnership with Visa to launch this initiative, following the great feedback and success of the 1st edition last year, which included 112 applicants."

"In addition to the tailored training programs and grants provided to the winners in this year's edition of the 'She's Next' initiative, participants will be given an additional advantage, as they will be able to enter a draw on a cash prize worth USD 10,000, if they apply for one of NBK Commercial Cards during the period between November 12 and December 19, 2024," Ghadeer Al-Awadhi, noted.

"NBK always strives to support and launch initiatives that aim to empower woman and help them lead their businesses, considering

this an integral part of its culture, strategies, and commitment to delivering its social responsibilities," Ghadeer Al-Awadhi emphasized.

She's Next is part of Visa's efforts to support digitalization of women-owned businesses and features the first edition of Visa's Women SMB Digitalization Index in Kuwait. The Index scores businesses based on 5 indicators: online presence, digital payments acceptance, payment security awareness, customer engagement, and customer retention. For Kuwait, the index reveals that women-owned businesses scored highest in digital payments, online presence, and security awareness.

Shashank Singh continued: "According to our Women SMB Digitalization study, women-owned businesses in Kuwait are looking for ways to expand their business, with over a third (33%) of women entrepreneurs citing finding the right talent and enhanced optimization of logistics (31%) as significant challenges to business growth, this is why Visa is proud to empower more women-owned businesses in the country with much-needed funding, mentorship and resources that will successfully support growth plans and allow them to thrive."

**Key findings of the Women SMB Digitalization Index study include:**

### Raising capital

- The Survey finds that women-owned businesses rely on venture capital (45%) and personal finances (38%) to set up their businesses.
- Most women depend on reinvestment of profits (37%) or venture capital (37%) to inject additional funds into their business. Over a third (32%) of women respondents would deploy additional funds into creating new sustaining the business through periods of reduced operation or emergencies by covering essential payments, and investment into new technologies.

### Using technology

- Women entrepreneurs in Kuwait understand the impact of AI in business, using the technology in data analysis and decision-making (55%), sales and marketing (53%), payment and billing (52%), and customer service (50%).
- Over half of survey respondents believe they had a better payment experience using AI, with faster payment processing through increased automation (63%) and streamlined customer authentication and verification (50%) in daily operations.
- Women-owned businesses in Kuwait actively use business social media accounts (61%) or their eCommerce, business and consumer accounts (41%) to sell products and services online.
- Women entrepreneurs in Kuwait prioritize strengthening foundational (43%) and advanced security (33%) in securing their digital transactions.

### Future aspirations

- Nearly half of respondents (48%) aspire to enhance the range of products or services offered to expand the business.
- Four in ten surveyed women-owned businesses (41%) want to enhance new markets or industries and boost the company's social or environmental impact.
- Many women entrepreneurs would like to learn more about making their businesses inclusive (27%), cybersecurity to protect their business (21%), overcoming the fear of failure (19%).
- Since 2020, Visa has invested around \$3M in over 250 grants and coaching for women SMB owners through the 'She's Next' grant program globally including in the US, Canada, India, Ireland, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt, Pakistan, Kenya, South Africa, Cote d'Ivoire and Morocco.
- To learn more and apply for the Visa She's Next Grant Program, applicants must submit a short application form with details about their business and digital presence on the dedicated website.



# Green target network helps Zain reduce carbon emissions and mitigate climate change impacts

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Climate change is a global crisis impacting regions worldwide, with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) identified as a hot spot of climate change. Climate models predict temperature in MENA will rise 20% higher than the global average, intensifying drought and flood conditions, and posing increasing threats to humans, and biodiversity. In response to these challenges, transitioning to Net Zero emissions has become a global imperative.

As a leading regional telecom operator, Zain is actively addressing climate-related physical and transition risks while seizing innovation opportunities in sustainable technology.

Zain formally committed to reducing its Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 42% compared to 2020 levels, with the goal of achieving Net Zero emissions by 2050. To realize these objectives, Zain is partnering with Huawei to develop end-to-end green target networks with advanced green and energy-saving technologies, to enhance site's energy efficiency and reduce emissions. Significant progress has already been made across several of Zain's operating

- Over 1,800 network sites in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Sudan have been modernized cutting carbon emissions by 150,000 tons annually
- Zain partnering with Huawei to develop an end-to-end green target network supporting its 2050 Net Zero aspirations



companies (OpCos).

Recently, Zain adopted the simplified green site solution, upgrading conventional diesel-powered sites in a remote desert area of Kuwait to a low-carbon model. Previously, these sites relied on two diesel generators (DG) operating 24/7, resulting in

high energy consumption, high challenges for maintenance, and high emissions-up to 90 tons per site per year.

Engineers had to visit these sites on monthly basis in extreme heat and to perform refueling under temperatures up to 50°C. Following the simplification, the site energy efficiency increased from 55% to 90% with a reduction of the generator runtime by 73% due to solar power. As a result, fuel consumption was reduced by 18,000 liters per site per year, leading to a reduction of CO2 emissions by 49 tons per site per year. Maintenance visits were also cut by 50%.

Zain's green network solution has been widely deployed across its OpCos in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Sudan. Over 1,800 sites have been modernized, cutting carbon emissions by 150,000 tons annually- equivalent to planting 4.8 million trees per year.

In addition to power modernization and clean energy utilization, Zain's green target network adopted advanced technologies across energy, wireless equipment, and Operation and maintenance (O&M). This includes deploying energy-efficient products such as Meta AAUs, ultra-wide band



Zain green network.

RRUs, the extremely large antenna array (ELAA) technology, ultra-wide band power amplifiers, and RF algorithms to greatly improve network energy efficiency.

With these innovations, network energy efficiency has significantly improved. The latest "Obit 0 watt" technology that is based on software features and algorithms, further reduces energy consump-

tion by enabling deep hibernation during non-peak hours.

Looking ahead, Zain plans to expand its green network initiatives across all its OpCos, advancing the ambition of achieving Net Zero emissions by 2050. These efforts demonstrate Zain's commitment to mitigate its impact on the environment and build resilience against climate change.

## Monopoly at risk

### US regulators push to break up Google

NEW YORK, Nov 21, (AP): U.S. regulators want a federal judge to break up Google to prevent the company from continuing to squash competition through its dominant search engine after a court found it had maintained an abusive monopoly over the past decade.

The proposed breakup floated in a 23-page document filed late Wednesday by the U.S. Department of Justice calls for sweeping punishments that would include a sale of Google's industry-leading Chrome web browser and impose restrictions to prevent Android from favoring its own search engine.

A sale of Chrome "will permanently stop Google's control of this critical search access point and allow rival search engines the ability to access the browser that for many users is a gateway to the internet," Justice Department lawyers argued in their filing.

Although regulators stopped short of demanding Google sell Android too, they asserted the judge should make it clear the company could still be required to divest its smartphone operating system if its oversight committee continues to see evidence of misconduct.

The broad scope of the recommended penalties underscores how severely regulators operating under President Joe Biden's administration believe Google should be punished following an August ruling by U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta that branded the company as a monopolist.

The Justice Department decision-makers who will inherit the case after President-elect Donald Trump takes office next year might not be as strident. The Washington, D.C. court hearings on Google's punishment are scheduled to begin in April and Mehta is aiming to issue his final decision before Labor Day.

If Mehta embraces the government's recommendations, Google would be forced to sell its 16-year-old Chrome browser within six months of the final ruling. But the company certainly would appeal any punishment, potentially prolonging a legal tussle that has dragged on for more than four years.

Besides seeking a Chrome spinoff and a corraling of the Android software, the Justice Department wants the judge to ban Google from forging multibillion-dollar deals to lock in its dominant search engine as the default option on Apple's iPhone and other devices. It would also ban Google from favoring its own services, such as YouTube or its recently-launched artificial intelligence platform, Gemini.

Regulators also want Google to license the search index data it collects from people's queries to its rivals, giving them a better chance at competing with the tech giant. On the commercial side of its search engine, Google would be required to provide more transparency into how it sets the prices that advertisers pay to be listed near the top of some targeted search results.

Kent Walker, Google's chief legal officer, lashed out at the Justice Department for pursuing "a radical interventionist agenda that would harm Americans and America's global technology." In a blog post, Walker warned the "overly broad proposal" would threaten personal privacy while undermining Google's early leadership in artificial intelligence, "perhaps the most important innovation of our time."

Wary of Google's increasing use of artificial intelligence in its search results, regulators also advised Mehta to ensure websites will be able to shield their content from Google's AI training techniques.

The measures, if they are ordered, threaten to upend a business expected to generate more than \$300 billion in revenue this year.

"The playing field is not level because of Google's conduct, and Google's quality reflects the ill-gotten gains of an advantage illegally acquired," the Justice Department asserted in its recommendations. "The remedy must close this gap and deprive Google of these advantages."

It's still possible that the Justice Department could ease off attempts to break up Google, especially if Trump takes the widely expected step of replacing Assistant Attorney General Jonathan Kanter, who was appointed by Biden to oversee the agency's antitrust division.

Although the case targeting Google was originally filed during the final months of Trump's first term in office, Kanter oversaw the high-profile trial that culminated in Mehta's ruling against Google. Working in tandem with Federal Trade Commission Chair Lina Khan, Kanter took a get-tough stance against Big Tech that triggered other attempted crackdowns on industry powerhouses such as Apple and discouraged many business deals from getting done during the past four years.

# Asian markets slide despite Nvidia's stellar profit report



A woman walks by a monitor showing Japan's foreign exchange rate against the U.S. dollar at a securities firm in Tokyo, on Nov. 21, 2024. (AP)

## Fed signals fewer rate cuts amid strong economy, Trump policies

WASHINGTON, Nov 21, (AP): Just a few weeks ago, the path ahead for the Federal Reserve looked straightforward: With inflation cooling and the job market slowing, the Fed appeared on track to steadily cut interest rates.

In September, its officials predicted that they would reduce their benchmark rate four times next year, on top of three rate cuts this year.

Yet that outlook has swiftly changed. Several surprisingly strong economic reports, combined with President-elect Donald Trump's policy proposals, have led to a decidedly more cautious tone from the Fed that could mean fewer cuts and higher interest rates than had been expected.

Fewer rate cuts would likely mean continued high mortgage rates and other borrowing costs for consumers and businesses. Auto loans would remain expensive. Small businesses would still face high loan rates.

In a speech last week in Dallas, Chair Jerome Powell made clear that the Fed isn't necessarily inclined to cut rates each time it meets every six weeks.

"The economy is not sending any signals that we need to be in a hurry to lower rates," Powell said. "The strength we are currently seeing in the

economy gives us the ability to approach our decisions carefully."

His comments were widely seen as signaling potentially fewer rate cuts in 2025, a view that sent stock prices falling after they had surged with Trump's election.

Trump has proposed higher tariffs on all imports as well as mass deportations of undocumented immigrants - steps that economists say would worsen inflation. The president-elect has also proposed a menu of tax cuts and deregulation, which might help spur economic growth but would also fan inflation if businesses couldn't find enough workers to meet increased consumer demand.

And recent economic data suggests that inflation pressures could prove more persistent and economic growth more resilient than was thought just a few months ago. At his most recent news conference, Powell suggested that the economy could even accelerate in 2025.

Wall Street traders and some economists now envision just two, rather than four, rate cuts next year. And while the Fed will likely cut its key rate when it meets in mid-December, traders foresee a nearly even likelihood that the central bank could leave the rate unchanged.

## Wall Street closes mixed

TOKYO, Nov 21, (AP): Asian shares were mostly lower on Thursday after a mixed close on Wall Street, with regional markets shrugging off a strong profit report from Nvidia that was released after U.S. markets closed.

Nvidia again topped analysts' expectations, but technology shares in Tokyo declined due to the company's lower-than-hoped-for profit forecasts. In after-hours trading, Nvidia's shares lost 2.5%.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 shed 0.9% in morning trading to 38,001.80, as shares in semiconductor equipment maker Advantest Corp. dropped 2.7%. Chip maker Tokyo Electron shed 1.5%.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 slipped nearly 0.2% to 8,313.50. South Korea's Kospi rose nearly 0.5% to 2,493.91. Hong Kong's Hang Seng dipped 0.2% to 19,662.49, while the Shanghai Composite lost 0.2% to 3,361.58.

Stephen Innes, managing partner at SPI Asset Management, noted the market reaction to Nvidia's results was muted, partly because of the positioning that happened before the release. Its long-term prospects remain complex, he added.

"The bigger question remains: where exactly is the bar for Nvidia now?" Innes said in a commentary. "This push to integrate AI into every corner of the corporate world risks backfiring when the technology is forced into roles it isn't fully equipped to handle."

Trading in the options market suggested Nvidia's profit report was the most anticipated event left in 2024, more than even the Federal Reserve's upcoming meeting on interest rates, according to Barclays Capital.

Nvidia has grown into a nearly \$3.6 trillion behemoth because of nearly insatiable demand for its chips used in artificial-intelligence technology.

It's grown so fast, with its stock nearly tripling for the year so far, that pressure has grown for it to show it can keep leapingfrogging past analysts' already high expectations.

On Wall Street, the S&P 500 finished the day virtually unchanged, at 5,917.11 after coming back from a loss of 1%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average eked out a 0.3% gain, to 43,408.47, and the Nasdaq composite slipped 0.1% to 18,966.14.

In other dealings early Thursday, benchmark U.S. crude gained 17 cents to \$68.92 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, added 18 cents to \$72.99 a barrel.

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar fell to 155.05 Japanese yen from 155.31 yen. The euro cost \$1.0551, down from \$1.0546.

## Solar bribery scheme

### Adani Group stocks fall 20% after fraud charges

NEW DELHI, Nov 21, (AP): One of Asia's richest men, controversial Indian tycoon Gautam Adani, is again in the spotlight. His companies' stocks plunged up to 20% on Thursday after he was indicted by U.S. prosecutors on charges he duped investors in a massive solar energy project in India by concealing that it was being facilitated by an alleged bribery scheme.

In an indictment unsealed by federal prosecutors in New York on Wednesday, Adani, 62, was charged with securities fraud and conspiracy to commit securities and wire fraud.

One result of the U.S. legal action is that the Adani group decided not to proceed with a proposed U.S. dollar-denominated bond offering. Adani Renewables announced the decision in letters to the Bombay Stock Exchange and the National Stock Exchange of India.

In a statement, the group said the allegations against directors of Adani Green "are baseless and denied." The U.S. Department of Justice said "the charges in the indictment are allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty."

Adani is the son of a middle-class family in Ahmedabad in western India's Gujarat state. He quit college to become a diamond trader in Mumbai, India's financial capital. In the 1980s, he started importing plastics before establishing Adani Enterprises, which traded in everything from shoes to buckets and remains his flagship company.

India opened up its economy in the 1990s and a new middle class emerged as tens of millions of people escaped poverty and the economy boomed, prompting Adani to bet on infrastructure and coal.

Adani's first big project, the Mundra port in Gujarat, opened in 1998 and is now India's largest. Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd. is India's biggest private port operator. Within a decade, Adani became India's largest developer and operator of coal mines. According to Adani Power's website, it has expanded to Australia and Indonesia and is on track to be "one of the largest mining groups in the world."

Adani companies, India's second-largest conglomerate, operate airports in major cities, build roads, generate electricity, manufacture defense equipment, develop agricultural drones, sell cooking oil and run a media outlet. Despite his fossil fuel roots, the billionaire Adani Green aims to become the world's largest renewable energy player by 2030.

Adani is considered close to the Hindu nationalist government, and the political opposition has long accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of having close ties with the tycoon. They both hail from the western state of Gujarat.



A tree with dried branches stands outside Adani Corporate House in Ahmedabad, India, Jan. 27, 2023. (AP)

## Targeted policies and innovation drive sustained economic momentum

# China steers global recovery with green growth

BEIJING, Nov 21, (Xinhua): In a world of mounting uncertainties, China is injecting certainty into the global economic landscape with a mix of targeted and effective policies that sustain a steady recovery and unleash new growth drivers.

Building up its impetus of high-quality development, the country has reinforced its role as a world growth engine while strengthening the global industrial chains and spearheading the global green transformation.

Chinese authorities have introduced a range of measures to stimulate growth this year, including a program that promotes large-scale equipment upgrades and consumer goods tradings, and the issuance of ultra-long special treasury bonds. A raft of incremental policies have been rolled out since late September to intensify counter-cyclical adjustments, support businesses and boost market expectations.

The economic effect of these measures has been clear. In October, retail sales climbed 4.8 percent year on year, accelerating from September's 3.2 percent increase, official data showed.

Offline consumption, particularly in dining and lodging, recorded double-digit growth, signaling strong consumer activity. Additionally, online retail sales of home appliances grew over 40 percent for two consecutive months, driven by incentives targeting the replacement of older products with new, energy-efficient models.

Experts believe these measures will drive further gains in the months ahead. "The recent pro-growth policies effectively address insufficient demand. During the fourth quarter, traditionally a peak consumption season, these steps will further demonstrate their impact by supporting and accelerating



Visitors learn about a 800V dual-motor drive system for the new energy vehicle (NEV) at an exhibition on the sidelines of the 2024 World Power Battery Conference in Yibin, southwest China's Sichuan Province, Sept. 1, 2024. (Xinhua)

consumption growth," said Lian Ping, president of the China Chief Economist Forum.

In addition to the rise in consumption, statistics showed marked recovery in other key economic indicators including foreign trade and manufacturing activity for the past month, as well as steady performance in investment and industrial production.

Based on the improved recovery momentum, multiple for-

eign institutions, including UBS and Goldman Sachs, have revised up their China 2024 growth forecasts.

With its GDP expanding 4.8 percent year on year in the first three quarters of the year and on course to realize an annual growth target of around 5 percent, China remains the biggest growth engine of the world economy.

The incremental policy package has played a positive role in driving sustained economic recovery and improvement, further strengthening international investors' confidence in holding Chinese assets, noted Mark Wang, president and CEO of HSBC Bank (China) Company Ltd.

Investments in high-tech manufacturing and services have surged in China, bolstering sectors like green technology, digital economy, and modern infrastructure, and contributing to the resilience and upgrading of the global industrial chains.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) highlights the acceleration of innovation-driven growth. In October, the value-added output of high-tech manufacturing industries grew by 9.4 percent year-on-year, with sub-sectors of intelligent drones, electric vehicles and solar cells soaring by 41.9 percent, 48.6 percent, and 13.2 percent, respectively.

Wang Qing, chief macro analyst at Golden Credit Rating, attributed the growth to robust policy support. "Local authorities are focusing on cultivating new productive forces through increased spending on sci-tech innovation in a race to sharpen their industrial competitive edges," Wang noted.

NBS data showed investments in high-tech industries increased by 9.3 percent over the first ten months, far outpacing the growth of overall investments and reflecting China's commitment to fostering innovation and modernizing supply chains.



KUNA photos  
The concert during which the famous Greek clarinet player Vassilis Saleas, accompanied by a distinguished group of Greek musicians held at Jaber Al-Ali Theater at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center. Inset, left: The famous Greek clarinetist Vassilis Saleas, (right) Turkish violinist Cafer Nazlibas.

Vassilis Saleas and Cafer Nazlibas mesmerize at 24th International Music Festival

## Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center hosts Greek musical masterpieces

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21, (KUNA): "Melodies from Greece," a musical soiree organized on Wednesday as part of the 24th International Music Festival, took the audience to a journey into the depths of magnificent Greek civilization.

The soiree, starring the popular Greek clarinetist Vassilis Saleas and his accompanists, premiered on the stage of the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center.  
The Turkish violinist Cafer Nazlibas, accompanied by a group of Greek

artists also offered a fine mixture of traditional and modern melodies.  
The annual festival is being organized by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) since 1998 to immortalize the Kuwaiti and Arab musical legacy.

Tribute to early 20th-century bond

## Kuwait Nat'l Library re-lives memories of Dickson family

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21, (KUNA): Kuwait National Library on Wednesday held a seminar about memories of the British Dickson family that had lived in Kuwait early in the past century.

The activity that marked 125 years of Kuwaiti-British partnership was attended and sponsored by Sheikh Hala Badr Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis.

Grandson of the late UK Agent in Kuwait Col. Harrold Dickson, Steven Freeth, said during the seminar that his family is greatly faithful to Kuwait, and that his grand parents and his mother had lived all their lives in the country.

Freeth said he was pleased to be in Kuwait lauding the noticeable Kuwaitis' lifestyle change post the oil exploration.

He displayed some pictures of his deceased mother, Zahra, and his grandmother, that was popular with the name Umm Saud during their life in Kuwait.

The pictures showed old harbors, some popular activities and markets. An affiliate exhibition displayed photos of the Dickson family in Kuwait last century.



Stephen Frith, grandson of British Resident Colonel Harold Dickson.



Researcher in Kuwaiti-British relations Issa Muqadda.



Part of the audience with Sheikh Hala Badr Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis in attendance.



Photo Gallery of Dixon Family Memories at the National Library of Kuwait.

## ABK announces Marziyeh Abdolhossain Sarkhosh as Alfouz weekly draw winner

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to announce Marziyeh Abdolhossain Sarkhosh as the winner of the Alfouz KD 10,000 weekly draw on Monday, 18 November, 2024. The draw took place in the presence of a Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative, ensuring transparency.

From the highly coveted mega annual draw of a KD 5,000 monthly salary for 10 years to its KD 10,000 weekly prize, the account has attracted significant attention in the Kuwaiti market. Based on the account's great success, ABK decided to go above and beyond to reward customer loyalty.

With a KD 100,000 quarterly draw, in addition to an exciting KD 20,000 monthly draw, the Alfouz account continues to surpass expectations and deliver even more customer satisfaction.



ABK - Alfouz Winner flyer

To top it off, ABK has simplified the ability to open the account and win! Customers can enter the draws and get extra entry chances for every KD 10 deposited. The more you save, the higher your chance to be the next Alfouz winner!

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account or increase their balance to participate in the upcoming draw, which is scheduled to take place on Monday, 25 November, 2024.

Open an Alfouz account today and enjoy increased opportunities to win the lifestyle you've been waiting for!

To learn more about the Alfouz account and its range of exciting draws and prizes, please follow ABK's Instagram account @abk\_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.

Celebrating culture, success, and unity

## Upkar Diwali get together 2024

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Upkar Association Kuwait, one of the prominent Association of Indians formed in Kuwait, had its Diwali get together on November 15th 2024. The event was well attended by Upkar members as well as their guests. Upkar Association celebrates a number of festivals and other events where all its members can join in to meet and celebrate together.

Diwali is the festival of lights and celebrates the victory of good over evil. The festival is celebrated all over India and is marked with get-togethers with near & dear ones. People visit each other's homes and exchange sweets to celebrate.

The evening was enjoyable with all the guests dressed in beautiful traditional attire. Upkar felicitated all the children who had done exceptionally well in their exams. Lots of group games were played and spot prizes were also given away.

This was the first time that the Upkar ladies offered delectable, homemade traditional Indian foods - which was enjoyed by all.

Upkar has been regularly organizing for its members events and celebrations including Holi, Diwali, Lohri, Sports Day etc. Social events such as Yoga Day and Blood Donation Camp have also been organized.

Going forward Upkar plans to celebrate more community festivals as well as get together for all its members.

Upkar Association will be glad to provide additional information on Upkar membership and can be contacted, at upkarpost@yahoo.com or kindly visit our website www.upkarkuwait.org. In addition our office bearers shall be reachable on - Mr. Jitendra Chaudhary 66457045; Ms. Ritu Nath - 97210178; Ms. Sonali Jagath - 60417119; Ms. Hemali Shringi - 66898319; Mr. Anil Sangtani -



Top & above: Photos during the Upkar Association's Grand Festivities in Kuwait.

97297445; Mr. Vinod Pandir - 99507634 and Mr. Harpreet Singh - 97650826, UPKAR executive committee thanks all

members for over whelming support and co-operation and also looks forward to welcoming new members on board!

## KIB announces winners of Al Dirwaza account's weekly draw

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the winners of the weekly draw held under the Al Dirwaza account's 2024 campaign, which is distinguished by the highest number of winners throughout the year. The third weekly draw, based on customers' October deposits, recently took place in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as representatives from the Bank. The KD 1,000 prize was awarded Khalifah Abdullah Mohammad Almuraikhi, Abdulmohsen Haidar Abbas Yateem, Mohammed Atef Mohamed Abdullah, Shaikhah Khaled Mohammad Alholi, and Abdullah Faheed Hamad Alajmi, whilst the KD 500 prize was awarded to Eissa Mohammad Mahmoud Ali, Abdullah Mohammad Ajaran Alzoabi, Awwad Ahmad Khalaf Alshammari, Ahmed Mohammed Ismail Mohamed, Abdullah Aref Ahmad Altaher, Fakhreya Bardan Jhail Wadi, and Mohammad Mostafa Ahmad Abdulhal-eem.

It serves to note that Al Dirwaza account is a savings account for individual customers, based on the Wakala investment principle, launched by KIB as one of its banking products for in-



Al Dirwaza flyer

dividuals. The account is currently the best of its kind in the sector, with annual expected profits of up to 2% disbursed on a monthly basis, where the customer gets an expected profit of 2% for the first 3 months from the account opening date and up to 1% expected rate onward. The expected profits are automatically deposited into the customer's account within the first day of the beginning of each month.

Al Dirwaza account holders are eligible to enter the weekly, monthly and annual draws on the condition of maintaining at least KD 100 in their

account. For the weekly and monthly draws, each KD 1 that has completed a full month's cycle in the account will count for one chance, and chances are calculated based on the lowest monthly balance preceding the draw. As for the mega draw, chances are calculated for each KD 1 that completes a two-month cycle in the account - based on the lowest two monthly balances prior to the draw.

Al Dirwaza account is also in compliance with the provisions of Islamic Sharia and approved by the KIB's Sh-aria Supervisory Board. Furthermore, the account comes with a wide range of benefits, including the ease of opening the account, which does not require a salary transfer, and the customer's ability to open it remotely without visiting a branch through KIB Online on the Bank's website or KIB Mobile application on smartphones.

Additionally, Al Dirwaza account automatically grants customers instant issuance of an ATM card, with a KD 2,000 ATM daily withdrawal limit, as well as the ability to issue credit cards against the cash collateral in the account. To open the account and participate in its draws, a minimum of KD 100 is required and can only be withdrawn upon account closure.



Author Shifa Saltagi Safadi attends the 75th National Book Awards ceremony. (AP)



KUNA photo  
Kuwaiti novelist Bothayna Al-Essa was a finalist for the Translated Literature award for The Book Censor's Library.



Combo image shows authors Percival Everett, (left), and Jason De Leon as they attend the 75th National Book Awards ceremony at Cipriani Wall Street on Nov. 20, in New York. (AP)



Poet Lena Khalaf Tuffaha at the 75th National Book Awards ceremony. (AP)

## Shifa Saltagi Safadi wins young people's literature award for 'Kareem Between'

# Percival Everett and Jason De León win National Book Awards

NEW YORK, Nov 21, (Agencies): Percival Everett's "James," a daring reworking of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," has won the National Book Award for fiction. Jason De León's "Soldiers and Kings: Survival and Hope in the World of Human Smuggling" won for nonfiction, where finalists included Salman Rushdie's memoir about his brutal stabbing in 2022, "Knife."

The prize for young people's literature was given Wednesday night to American-Syrian author Shifa Saltagi Safadi's coming of age story "Kareem Between," and the poetry award went to Arab origin Lena Khalaf Tuffaha's "Something About Living." In the translation category, the winner was Yang Shuang-zhi's "Taiwan Travelogue," translated from the Mandarin Chinese by Lin King.

The Kuwaiti novelist, Bothayna Al-Essa, was among the finalists for the award in translated literature category for her novel (The Book Censor's Library), published by Restless Books and translated by Sawad Hussain and Ranya Abdulrahman.

Al-Essa's Arabic novel was published in 2019 by Arab Scientific Publishers and Takween Publications, and was included in the list of 100 Books to Read in 2024 by the American Time magazine.

Judging panels, made up of writers, critics, booksellers and others in the literary community, made their selections from hundreds of submissions, with publishers nominating

more than 1,900 books in all. Each of the winners in the five competitive categories received \$10,000.

Everett's win continues his remarkable rise in the past few years. Little known to general readers for decades, the 67-year-old has been a Booker Prize and Pulitzer Prize finalist for such novels as "Trees" and "Dr. No" and has seen the novel "Erasure" adapted into the Oscar-nominated "American Fiction."

In taking on Mark Twain's classic about the wayward Southern boy Huck and the enslaved Jim, Everett tells the story from the latter's perspective and emphasizes how differently Jim behaves and even speaks when whites are not around. The novel was a Booker finalist and last month won the Kirkus Prize for fiction.

"James" has been nicely received," Everett noted during his acceptance speech.

"Demon Copperhead" novelist Barbara Kingsolver and Black Classic Press publisher W. Paul Coates received lifetime achievement medals from the National Book Foundation, which presents the awards.

Speakers praised diversity, disruption and autonomy, whether Taiwanese independence or the rights of immigrants in the U.S. Two winners, Safadi and Tuffaha, condemned the year-old Gaza war and U.S. military support for Israel. Neither mentioned Israel by name, but both called the conflict "genocide" and were met with cheers - and more subdued responses - after calling for support of the Palestinians.

Tuffaha, who is Palestinian American, dedicated her award in part to "to all the deeply beautiful Palestinians that this world has lost and all those miraculous ones who endured, waiting for us, waiting for us to wake up."

Last year publisher Zibby Owens withdrew support for the awards after hearing that finalists were planning to condemn the Gaza war. This year the World Jewish Congress was among those criticizing Coates' award, citing in part his reissue of the essay "The Jewish Onslaught," which has been called anti-Semitic.

### Honored

National Book Foundation Executive Director Ruth Dickey said in a recent statement that Coates was being honored for a body of work rather than any individual book, and added that while the foundation condemns anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry, it also believes in free expression.

"Anyone examining the work of any publisher, over the course of almost five decades, will find individual works or opinions with which they disagree or find offensive," she added.

The National Book Awards have long taken place in mid-November, shortly after the elections, and they're an early snapshot of the book world's reaction: Hopeful after Barack Obama's victory in 2008, when publisher and honorary winner Barney Rosset anticipated "a new and uplifting agenda"; grim but determined in 2016, after Donald Trump's first vic-

tory, with fiction winner Colson Whitehead urging the audience to "be kind to everybody, make art, and fight the power."

This year, as hundreds gathered for the dinner ceremony at Cipriani Wall Street in downtown Manhattan for the awards' 75th anniversary, the mood was one of sobriety, resolve and willed good cheer.

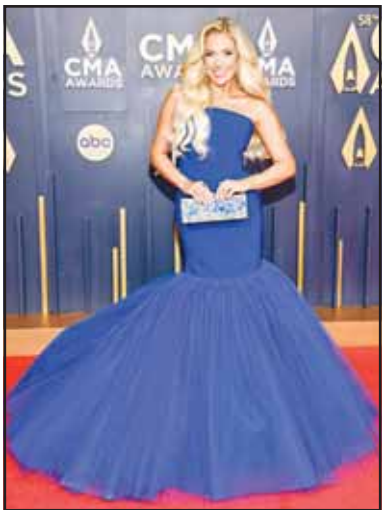
Host Kate McKinnon joked that she was recruited because the National Book Foundation wanted "something fun and light and to distract from the fact that the world is a bonfire." Musical guest Jon Batiste led the audience in a round of "When the Saints Go Marching In" and sang a few lines from "Hallelujah," the Leonard Cohen standard which McKinnon somberly performed at the start of the first "Saturday Night Live" after the 2016 election.

Kingsolver acknowledged feeling "smacked down, at the moment," but added that she has known despair before. She likened truth and love to forces of nature, like gravity and the sun, always there whether you see them or not. The writer's job is to imagine "a better ending than the one we've been given," she said.

At a Tuesday night reading by awards finalists, some spoke of community and support. Everett began his turn by confiding that he really "needed this kind of inspiration after the last couple of weeks. We kind of need each other right now." After warning that "hope is not a strategy," he paused and said, "Never had a situation felt so absurd, surreal and ridiculous."

## Morgan Wallen gets entertainer of the year

# Stapleton rules CMA Awards with 4 wins



Megan Moroney arrives at the 58th Annual CMA Awards. (AP)



MaRynn Taylor arrives at the 58th Annual CMA Awards. (AP)



Caroline Boyer, (left), and Luke Bryan at the CMA Awards. (AP)



Ashley McBryde arrives at the 58th Annual CMA Awards. (AP)

NASHVILLE, Nov 21, (AP): Chris Stapleton took home four Country Music Association Awards and hardly left the stage on Wednesday night, while an absent Morgan Wallen was shut out all evening until taking the night's biggest prize, entertainer of the year.

Stapleton's wins included song of the year and single of the year for "White Horse," and he took the stage at the Bridgestone Arena in Nashville, Tennessee, three times to perform during the ABC telecast, including a show-opening duet with Post Malone.

"I'm really honored for this, thank you very much," the always subdued country traditionalist Stapleton said as he accepted the male vocalist of the year award for a record-extending eighth time.

For much of the night it seemed the leading nominee Wallen, up for seven, would be shut out, until presenter Jeff Bridges gave a botched rendering of his name as "Morgan Waylon" when he announced entertainer of the year.

Four of Wallen's nominations came for his hit collaboration with Malone, "I Had Some Help," though the song, and the first-time nominee Malone, went winless.

But the rapper-singer Malone was all smiles all night at the CMAs after releasing his first country album earlier in the year. With Stapleton, he sang his song "California Sober" in full cowboy regalia, including a bolo tie as big as a belt buckle. He later took the stage solo to sing the emotional "Yours," which he dedicated to his young daughter.

### Performance

Stapleton later performed his own "What Am I Gonna Do" with his wife Morgane, and performed yet again as part of an all-star tribute to George Strait, who received the Willie Nelson Lifetime Achievement Award.

Last year's entertainer of the year, Lainey Wilson, hosted the show along with Luke Bryan and NFL great Peyton Manning, and won two CMAs - female vocalist of the year, and best music video for "Wildflowers and Wild Horses."

For a while it seemed Stapleton would get a sweep, but he lost out on album of the year to a surprised Cody Johnson, who took the trophy for "Leather."

"I thought Chris Stapleton or Jelly Roll was going to win," Johnson said. Old Dominion won vocal group of the year for a record seventh straight time, surpassing the six won by Little Big Town.

The Stapleton-Malone opening and much of the night were a celebration of a time of crossover and collaboration in country.

The telecast, available on Hulu for streaming Thursday, featured performances from artist combos including Brooks & Dunn, representing the 1990s and 2000s, with Jelly Roll, representing country's current moment. They gave an emotional gospel-style performance of Brooks & Dunn's 2005 song "Believe."

Brooks & Dunn followed it up by



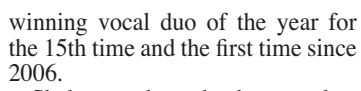
Chris Stapleton performs during the 58th Annual CMA Awards on Wednesday, Nov. 20, at Bridgestone Arena in Nashville, Tenn. (AP)



Kacey Musgraves performs 'The Architect.' (AP)



Post Malone performs at the Annual CMA Awards. (AP)



winning vocal duo of the year for the 15th time and the first time since 2006.

Shaboozey brought the crowd to its feet with a solo performance that began with a bit of his more sober single "Highway" before launching into one of the year's defining hits, "A Bar Song (Tipsy)."

But he lost out on best new artist to Megan Moroney, who won minutes after her own performance.

"Thank you Jesus for putting this dream on my heart," Moroney, a 27-year-old from Georgia, said with misty eyes as she accepted the award.

Wilson opened the tribute to Strait

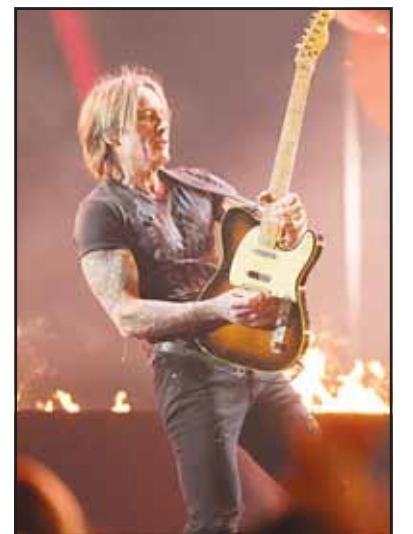
by singing part of his best remembered hit, "Amarillo by Morning."

She was followed by Jamey Johnson, Miranda Lambert, Parker McCollum, Stapleton and Strait contemporary Clint Black, who performed pieces of Strait hits including "Troubadour" and "Honky Tonk

Hall of Fame"

Stapleton handed the 72-year-old Strait the award previously won by Dolly Parton, Johnny Cash, Charley Pride and Nelson himself, calling Strait "true country music royalty, the king of country."

A smiling Strait thanked everyone



Keith Urban performs during the 58th Annual CMA Awards. (AP)



Jeff Bridges accepts the award for entertainer of the year on behalf of Morgan Wallen. (AP)



Luke Combs performs during the 58th Annual CMA Awards. (AP)



Cody Johnson poses with award for album of the year. (AP)



Miranda Lambert performs a medley during a lifetime achievement award tribute to George Strait. (AP)

for the strong renditions of his songs.

"I'm glad I got 'em first," he said. The CMA Awards are nominated and voted on by members of the Country Music Association, which includes music executives, artists, publicists, songwriters and other industry professionals.

## Experts debate authenticity of newly found Chopin work

## Has a waltz written by Chopin discovered in NYC museum?

NEW YORK, Nov 21, (AP) — The brooding waltz was carefully composed on a sheet of music roughly the size of an index card. The brief, moody number also bore an intriguing name, written at the top in cursive: "Chopin."

A previously unknown work of music penned by the European master Frederic Chopin appears to have been found at the Morgan Library & Museum in Manhattan.

The untitled and unsigned piece is on display this month at the opulently appointed institution, which had once been the private library of financier J. P. Morgan.

Robinson McClellan, the museum curator who uncovered the manuscript, said it's the first new work associated with the Romantic era composer to be discovered in nearly a century.

But McClellan concedes that it may never be known whether it is an original Chopin work or merely one written in his hand.

The piece, set in the key of A minor, stands out for its "very stormy, brooding opening section" before transitioning to a melancholy melody more characteristic of Chopin, Mc-

Clellan explained.

"This is his style. This is his essence," he said during a recent visit to the museum. "It really feels like him."

McClellan said he came across the

work in May as he was going through a collection from the late Arthur Satz, a former president of the New York School of Interior Design. Satz had acquired it from A. Sherrill Whiton Jr., an avid autograph collector who

had been director of the school.

McClellan then worked with experts to verify its authenticity.

The paper was found to be consistent with what Chopin favored for manuscripts, and the ink matched a kind typical in the early 19th century when Chopin lived, according to the museum. But a handwriting analysis determined the name "Chopin" written at the top of the sheet was penned by someone else.

Born in Poland, Chopin was considered a musical genius from an early age. He lived in Warsaw and Vienna before settling in Paris, where he died in 1849 at the age of 39, likely of tuberculosis.

He's buried among a pantheon of artists at the city's famed Père Lachaise Cemetery, but his heart, pickled in a jar of alcohol, is housed in a church in Warsaw, in keeping with his deathbed wish for the organ to return to his homeland.

Artur Szklener, director of the Fryderyk Chopin Institute in Warsaw, the Polish capital city where the composer grew up, agreed that the document is consistent with the kinds of ink and paper Chopin used during his early years in Paris.

Musically, the piece evokes the "brilliant style" that made Chopin a luminary in his time, but it also has features unusual for his compositions, Szklener said.

"First of all, it is not a complete work, but rather a certain musical gesture, a theme laced with rather simple piano tricks alluding to a virtuoso style," Szklener explained in a lengthy statement released after the document was revealed last month.

He and other experts conjecture the piece could have been a work in progress. It may have also been a copy of another's work, or even co-written with someone else, perhaps a student for a musical exercise.

Jeffrey Kallberg, a University of Pennsylvania music professor and Chopin expert who helped authenticate the document, called the piece a "little gem" that Chopin likely intended as a gift for a friend or wealthy acquaintance.

"Many of the pieces that he gave as gifts were short - kind of like 'appetizers' to a full-blown work," Kallberg said in an email. "And we don't know for sure whether he intended the piece to see the light of day be-

cause he often wrote out the same waltz more than once as a gift."

David Ludwig, dean of music at The Juilliard School, a performing arts conservatory in Manhattan, agreed the piece has many of the hallmarks of the composer's style.

"It has the Chopin character of something very lyrical and it has a little bit of darkness as well," said Ludwig, who was not involved in authenticating the document.

But Ludwig noted that, if it's authentic, the tightly composed score would be one of Chopin's shortest known pieces. The waltz clocks in at under a minute long when played on piano, as many of Chopin's works were intended.

"In terms of the authenticity of it, in a way it doesn't matter because it sparks our imaginations," Ludwig said. "A discovery like this highlights the fact that classical music is very much a living art form."

The Chopin reveal comes after the Leipzig Municipal Libraries in Germany announced in September that it had uncovered a previously unknown piece likely composed by a young Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in its collections.



A previously unknown musical manuscript, possibly by Frederic Chopin, rests in a display case after it was discovered at The Morgan Library & Museum, Wednesday, Nov. 13, in New York. Its discovery marks the first such find since 1930, though its authenticity remains debated. (AP)

## Film

## Baldwin film applauded

## 'Rust' premiere honors slain cinematographer

TORUN, Poland, Nov 21, (AP) — Alec Baldwin's Western "Rust" had its world premiere Wednesday at a film festival in Poland with a dedication to cinematographer Halyna Hutchins, who was fatally shot in an accident on the set three years ago.

Organizers called for a minute of silence before showing the film, which opened to a full house at the International Film Festival of the Art of Cinematography Camerimage in the city of Torun, and received applause at the end.

Baldwin, the lead actor and co-producer, was pointing a gun at Hutchins during a rehearsal outside Santa Fe, New Mexico, in October 2021 when the revolver went off, killing Hutchins and wounding director Joel Souza. Baldwin has said he pulled back the hammer - but not the trigger - and the revolver fired.

Souza introduced the film at the festival, a popular industry event dedicated to cinematography. He told the audience that initially after the accident he could not have imagined continuing with the production, or even working on a movie set or writing again.

"It just hurt too much," he said. But Hutchins' husband, Matthew, wanted the film to be finished, and came on as an executive producer.

"It was important to him that the people who knew and loved Halyna get to see her final work," Souza said. The mission became "to preserve every single frame that I could of hers,

and to honor her final work."

"Rust" - which includes scene after scene of shootouts - is the story of a 13-year-old boy who is sentenced to be hanged after he fatally shoots a rancher by accident. He goes on the run with his estranged grandfather, played by Baldwin.

Bianca Cline, the cinematographer who finished the project, said Hutchins established the look and feel of the film, and filmed more than half of it. She studied Hutchins' notes to honor her vision.

Hutchins, 42, was a Ukrainian cinematographer on the rise and a mother of a young son. She grew up on a remote Soviet military base and worked on documentary films in Eastern Europe before studying film in Los Angeles and embarking on a promising movie-making career.

Ahead of the premiere, Hutchins' mother, who is suing Baldwin and the production, said she was refusing to attend and that she viewed the film as an attempt by Baldwin to "unjustly profit" from her daughter's death. Baldwin was also not present.

"It was always my hope to meet my daughter in Poland to watch her work come alive on screen," said Hutchins' mother, Olga Solovey, in a statement issued by her lawyer, Gloria Allred. "Alec Baldwin continues to increase my pain with his refusal to apologize to me and his refusal to take responsibility for her death."

Melina Spadone, a representative for Rust Movie Productions, issued a statement saying: "Gloria Allred's misrepresentation of both the Camerimage festival and any profit motivation is disappointing. The decision to complete 'Rust' was made with the full support of Halyna's family."

Baldwin



This image released by Paramount Pictures shows director Ridley Scott, (left), and Paul Mescal on the sets of 'Gladiator II.' (AP)

## Filmmaker calls 'sequel' is his greatest work

## Scott on going big with 'Gladiator II'

NEW YORK, Nov 21, (AP) — An inevitable fact of interviewing Ridley Scott is that, whatever movie he's about to release, you'll find him already knee-deep in his next project.

Scott, Hollywood's perpetual rolling stone even at age 86, may be preparing to unveil "Gladiator II," one of his biggest epics yet, but during an interview earlier this fall, he had the Bee Gees on the brain. Scott is developing a biopic on the Gibb brothers. On a Zoom call from his office in Los Angeles, he was surrounded by meticulously plotted storyboards.

Scott is enthusiastic about the project. "I think the word is beyond talented. They were gifted," he says - even if the Bee Gees brand of music seems quite distant from the no-nonsense British director.

"I'm not a disco guy," Scott says. "I dance like a (expletive) plowman."

Scott is on more familiar turf in "Gladiator II," which Paramount Pictures was to release Thursday. He's back in ancient Rome, among sandals, swords and glistening biceps, for a sequel to his best picture-winning "Gladiator," with Russell Crowe and Joaquin Phoenix. "Gladiator II" is set a couple decades after that film. It focuses on the grandson of former emperor Marcus Aurelius - a minor character in "Gladiator" now played by Paul Mescal - who's mentored as a gladiator by a former slave with aspirations of seizing Rome, Macrinus (Denzel Washington). Pedro Pascal co-stars as the Roman general Marcus Acacius.

"Sequels are always kind of suspect," says Scott. "But to begin with, we had a good logical stepping stone into who next, who survived and where he'd go."

Aside from numerous "Alien" films, Scott has largely eschewed sequels throughout his career. "Gladiator II" had been in development, off and on, for two decades, though. And it ultimately swelled to one of Scott's most massive projects - which is saying something for a filmmaker who just released a 3 1/2-hour cut of his 2023 epic, "Napoleon." Some

reports have pegged the budget for "Gladiator II" at above \$300 million.

But Scott believes in the movie so much that he's called it his best. Why?

"It's to frighten the others," he says, chuckling. "And I think I might be right. I don't want to count my chickens. But it's pretty (expletive) good."

Part of Scott's confidence comes from his belief in his cast, particularly Mescal, the Irish actor who broke out on the series "Normal People" before starring in acclaimed films like "Aftersun" and "All of Us Strangers."

## Profile

"Eighteen months ago I found a show, 'Normal People.' I think for me it looks a bit suburban, et cetera, et cetera. I watch one, then I watch another. I say, 'Who is this guy?' Both the guy and the girl were absolutely interesting. From that, I cast Paul Mescal." Scott says. "You know, Paul has got that harsh profile with the nose. And then a little bit of Albert Finney. There's a bit of Finney about him."

Scott, who paints as a hobbyist, has seemingly been drawn to bigger and bigger canvases as he's grown older. "Napoleon," he says, required 900 personnel; "Gladiator II" took 1,200. He is, himself, a commander of armies. In Malta, Scott and his regular production designer, Arthur Max, erected enormous sets.

"We built Rome," says Scott. "I discovered that you can have a lot of access, nice costumes and all blue screen. But in every shot you take - whether it's (Scott holds his hands up for wide shots, over-shoulder shots and close-ups) you're investing money on the blue. It's more expensive to do that than to build it. So I built the Colosseum 40% full scale. It was cheaper to do that than blue screen."

Far smaller productions have worn down other filmmakers who don't match half the pace of Scott.

But Scott, a self-described "war baby" born in 1937 whose father was a senior officer in the Royal Engineers, has showed no signs of slowing down, nor of fading ambition. Asked where he gets his drive, Scott responds: "DNA."

"My mum was ferocious," Scott says. "You have to stay kind of fit. And I embrace stress. If you don't embrace stress, do not do the job. People get very stressed and frightened and I don't. I've grown to it over the years to just embrace it and walk in and say, 'Right, everybody over here. We're going to do this.' And they listen. Bearing in mind that I'm artificially driven and I'm blessed with a very good eye, the decision is everything. Make the bloody decision. Do not discuss it with everybody including the window cleaner where you're going to put the camera."

To Scott, his most formative training came in commercials. He and his brother, Tony Scott, started out with their film and commercial production company Ridley Scott Associates. Particularly in television, Scott got accustomed to shooting with multiple cameras rolling simultaneously. He didn't make his first feature, 1977's "The Duelist," until he was 40. Now, on movies like "Gladiator," Scott might have eight or 10 cameras rolling for a single scene.

"So I got used to scale," says Scott. "By that time I had probably done 2,500 commercials. And when you're doing a commercial for yourself, the company, you're on your own clock. After 5 o'clock, you pay. So you're constantly against time. I learned that better than any film school could teach you. On every second hand is a dollar sign."

That kind of scale also comes with risk, of course. "Gladiator II" opening in US theaters against Universal Pictures' "Wicked," another highly anticipated movie although one, like the "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" showdown, with different and possibly complementary target audiences. Mescal has teased the moviegoing weekend as "Glicked."

## Variety

NEW YORK: Ed Sheeran was about to join Taylor Swift on stage at a concert over the summer when he got a call from his favorite soccer team.

It needed his help to sign a player. Sheeran, the British pop star, is a minor shareholder at Ipswich Town, which returned to the English Premier League this season for the first time since 2002.

Turns out he is more than just an investor and lifelong fan. He's now part of Ipswich's recruitment team.

"In the summer, we were trying to persuade one particular player to join the football club and realized very quickly that he was an Ed Sheeran fan," said Ipswich CEO Mark Ashton, speaking at a Soccerex industry event

in Miami.

"Ed jumped on a Zoom call with him at the training ground, just before he stepped on stage with Taylor Swift. Hopefully that was a key part in getting the player across the line."

Ashton didn't disclose the player in question, saying only: "He's certainly scoring a few goals."

Sheeran and Swift were on stage together at a show at Wembley Stadium on Aug. 15, a day before Ipswich signed Sammie Szmodics from Blackburn. (AP)



Sheeran

Sheeran and Swift were on stage together at a show at Wembley Stadium on Aug. 15, a day before Ipswich signed Sammie Szmodics from Blackburn. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: A Netflix subscriber filed a class-action lawsuit against the streaming giant over technical issues during the Mike Tyson-Jake Paul fight, the Hollywood Reporter said on Wednesday.

The lawsuit was filed by subscriber Ronald "Blue" Denton in Florida state court early this week. It alleged Netflix was unprepared for the enormous audience and failed to deliver the promised service while continuing to charge customers.

Citing issues such as freezing, buffering lags, and inaccessibility, the suit seeks unspecified damages for breach of contract and violations of Florida's consumer protection and trade practice laws. (Xinhua)

ROME: Italian authorities announced Tuesday the seizure of an illegal excavation of an Etruscan burial site in the

central Umbria region and are investigating two people for suspected theft of urns, sarcophagi and other artifacts worth 8 million euros (\$8.5 million) intended for sale on the black market.

The illegal dig was adjacent to another Etruscan burial site discovered by a farmer tilling his land in 2015, authorities said. They were tipped off by photographs of artifacts and the site that were circulating on the black market that resembled objects found on the farmer's land.

Using a drone for aerial photography and phone taps, they located the second site on land belonging to a local businessman who had access to earth-moving equipment.

At the new site they found two sarcophagi, believed to be of two Etruscan princesses, one still with the skeleton inside, and a burial trousseau complete with urns with burial and hunting scenes, perfume jars and a comb made from bone. (AP)



A woman looks at artist Maurizio Cattelan's piece of art 'Comedian' during an auction preview at Sotheby's in New York, Monday, Nov. 11, 2024. (AP)

## Technology

## Fewer trolls, more connection

## One tech tip: Simple guide to get started with Bluesky

LONDON, Nov 21, (AP): Looking for a new social media platform because X, Threads and Mastodon just aren't cutting it? You could try Bluesky.

People seeking to avoid chaos, noise and political bluster in the aftermath of the US elections are noticing a different mood on the Bluesky social platform, where the vibe is seemingly welcoming and there are noticeably fewer trolls.

The site announced it had rapidly added more than a million new users in the week after Election Day, and has emerged as one of the fastest growing rivals to Elon Musk's X and similar platforms.

If you're tempted to check out the new space, here's a guide on how Bluesky works:

Maybe you're not ready to commit to adding yet another social media account. No problem - you can still look around on Bluesky without signing up because all posts and profiles are public.

You might get a sense of déjà vu because the platform's look and feel are very similar to X. That should be no surprise because Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey was an early Bluesky champion. (Dorsey's no longer involved with Bluesky, which is owned and run by its executive team as a public benefit corporation.)

## Account

If you take the plunge and get an account, you'll need a username. You'll notice Bluesky handles are a little bit different because they end by default in the site's domain, .bsky.social.

You can personalize your handle to make it more memorable, by using your own website's domain or buying a custom one through Bluesky. But it might not be something most newbie users need or want to do right away. Bluesky boasts that it gives users "algorithmic choice" to tailor the content they're shown instead of leaving it up to the whims of a centralized system.

"Our online experience doesn't have to depend on billionaires unilaterally making decisions over what we see," it says.

What it means is that you can follow custom feeds set up by other users, or design your own. If you tap #Feeds in the menu on the left, you'll see some default offerings like Cat Pics and Gardening. My Bangers is a list of your most

popular posts by likes and Catch Up shows the site's most popular posts from the past 24 hours. You can find more by doing a search and tapping the Feeds button.

There's also the usual "Discover" feed of suggested posts and a chronological feed of accounts that you follow.

To help new users settle in, Bluesky has starter packs of recommended feeds and accounts to follow, which anyone can create and share. They don't show up in Bluesky's search results but can be found in directories online.

## Appealing

Or someone might share one with you. After I signed up, a colleague pointed me to one for major news outlets. There are tens of thousands of starter packs, ranging from broadly appealing topics like Taylor Swift to niche interests like cargo bikes or U.K. comedians. You can follow the whole pack or scroll down the list to choose individual accounts.

What about people you followed on X? There's a browser extension tool called Sky Follower Bridge that will help you find X users who've migrated to Bluesky. But check before clicking the follow button to make sure it's not a different user using the same display name or handle.

Ready to join the conversation? You can write posts or reply to others but keep it short because there's a limit of 300 characters - 20 more than on X. You can also upload photos and videos, though videos can't be longer than 60 seconds. GIFs and emojis are, of course, available too. You can still @ people by typing in their username, like posts by tapping a heart icon or use hashtags to highlight a theme. Bluesky has added a menu to hashtags, so when you click on one you'll get different options for seeing, or muting, posts on that topic.

Bluesky's decentralization ethos extends to the content control options it offers.

For starters, users can choose in their settings menu whether to see replies, reposts or quote posts in their feed. Specific words or tags can be muted temporarily, or forever, while accounts can be muted or blocked individually, or in bulk by adding them a moderation list. You can even fine tune the level of adult content that shows up in your feed.

## Online safety top concern

## World-first law in Australia to restrict kids on social media

MELBOURNE, Australia, Nov 21, (AP): Australia's communications minister introduced a world-first law into Parliament on Thursday that would ban children under 16 from social media, saying online safety was one of parents' toughest challenges.

Michelle Rowland said TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, Reddit, X and Instagram were among the platforms that would face fines of up to 50 million Australian dollars (\$33 million) for systemic failures to prevent young children from holding accounts. "This bill seeks to set a new normative value in society that accessing social media is not the defining feature of growing up in Australia," Rowland told Parliament.

"There is wide acknowledgement that something must be done in the immediate term to help prevent young teens and children from being exposed to streams of content unfiltered and infinite," she added.

X owner Elon Musk warned that Australia intended to go further, posting on his platform: "Seems like a backdoor way to control access to the Internet by all Australians."

The bill has wide political support. After it becomes law, the platforms would have one year to work out how to implement the age restriction.

"For too many young Australians, social media can be harmful," Rowland said.

## Mortality rates of heart failure outpace some cancers

## Over 80,000 suffer from heart failure in Kuwait

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Dr. Khalid Al-Hamoud, a heart failure consultant, revealed that around 80,000 people in Kuwait suffer from heart failure, with approximately 4,000 having advanced cases requiring intensive medical intervention.

Heart failure is a significant health concern, affecting 2 percent of the general population and 10 percent of those aged over 65.

Dr. Al-Hamoud also announced the first national forum focused on organ failure (heart, kidneys, lungs, and liver) in collaboration with the University of Chicago Medicine, Kuwait Medical Association, and the Kuwait Foundation for the

Advancement of Sciences.

The event will take place at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel this Saturday, with over 300 local and international medical professionals attending.

The forum aims to address challenges in diagnosing and treating organ failure, improve patient care before and after organ transplants, and discuss the latest scientific advancements.

Dr. Al-Hamoud noted that the mortality rate for heart failure within five years of diagnosis is higher than that of some cancers, with 48



Dr. Al-Hamoud

percent of patients passing away compared to 30 percent for colon cancer and 10 percent for breast cancer. For severe cases, treatments such as mechanical heart pumps or heart transplants may be necessary.

Dr. Al-Hamoud emphasized the Ministry of Health's vital role in supporting such initiatives to improve healthcare services in Kuwait. He also highlighted the forum's focus on the economic burden of treating patients abroad and the Ministry's efforts to develop local medical infrastructure.

The event will bring together specialists in cardiology, nephrology, pulmonology, liver disease, organ transplant surgery, immunology, and nursing to foster collaboration and enhance patient care.

## Face transplant

## Japan reports 1st bird flu outbreak

TOKYO, Nov 21, (Xinhua): An outbreak of avian influenza has been confirmed at a poultry farm in Japan's Izumi City, Kagoshima Prefecture, marking the first case in Kyushu this season, Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries announced Wednesday.

Multiple chickens were found dead at the farm on Tuesday and genetic testing revealed the presence of the H5 strain of the avian influenza virus.

In response, the Kagoshima Prefectural Government began culling approximately 120,000 chickens at the farm early on Wednesday. The affected area includes 89 poultry farms within a 10-kilometer radius, housing approximately 5 million chickens.

**Animal diseases:** Philippine Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel has authorized the Bureau of Animal Industry to set up livestock, poultry and meat industry inspection sites in Metro Manila and surrounding areas to control the spread of animal diseases, the country's Department of Agriculture said Wednesday.

"These livestock, poultry, and meat industry inspection sites should serve as a defensive wall against the spread of animal diseases that threaten not only the local livestock and poultry industries but also public health and food security," Laurel said.

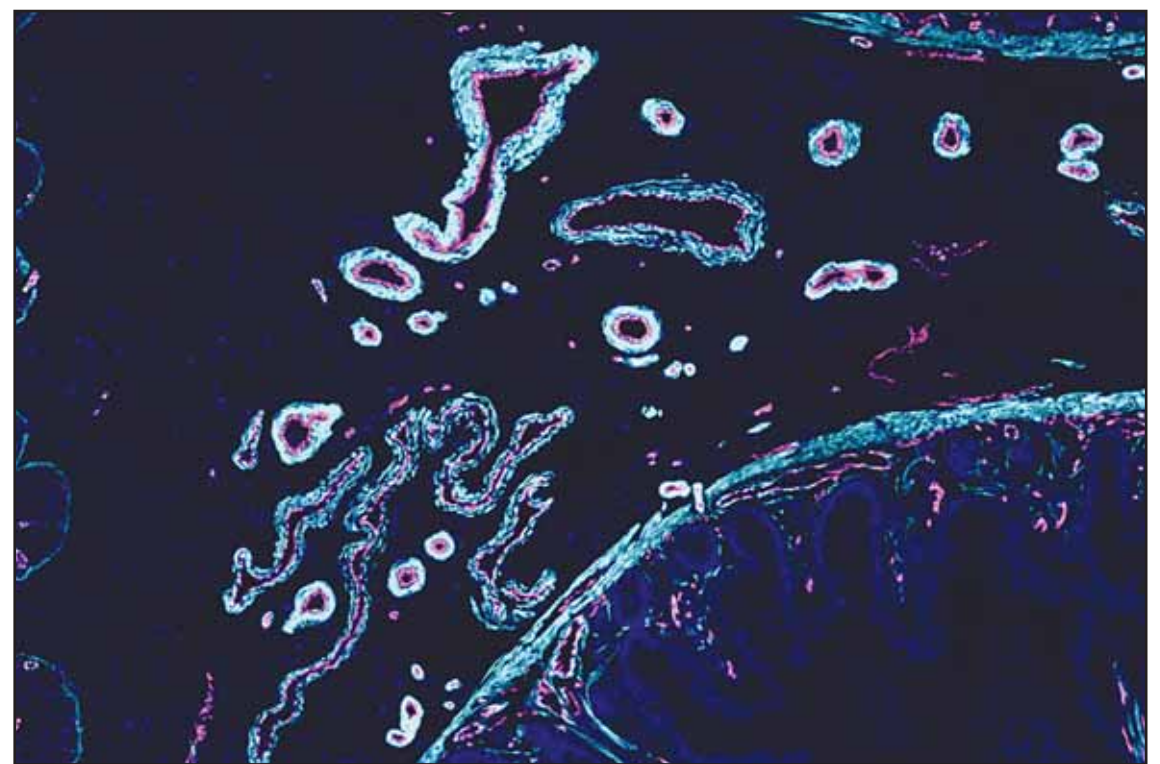
African Swine Fever (ASF), which has had a devastating impact on the hog industry since its first outbreak in 2019, recently had a resurgence in a region near Manila, the ministry said in its press release, adding that new outbreaks in other previously ASF-affected areas "are continually reported."

**Face transplant:** A man in the US state of Michigan has received a life-changing face transplant a decade after he attempted to take his own life and survived, according to Mayo Clinic, the medical center that performed the surgery.

Derek Pfaff, the 30-year-old man in Harbor Beach, Michigan, had a tragic incident during his college years which left his face severely damaged by a gunshot. Despite undergoing 58 reconstructive facial surgeries in 10 years, Pfaff was still unable to eat solid food or speak casually with friends and family, according to a release of Mayo Clinic on Tuesday.

He got the face transplant in February this year at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. The procedure lasted more than 50 hours and involved a medical team comprising at least 80 healthcare professionals, including surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, technicians, assistants and other specialists.

The intricate transplant required replacing virtually everything below Pfaff's eyebrows and part of his forehead, including his upper and lower eyelids and intraorbital fat, upper and lower jaws, teeth, nose, cheek structure, neck skin, hard palate and parts of his soft palate, according to Mayo Clinic.



This image provided by Ana-Maria Cujba shows blood vessels in a portion of the human small intestine, March 21, 2024. (AP)

## Experts map out human body one cell at a time

Researchers have created an early map of some of the human body's estimated 37.2 trillion cells.

Each type of cell has a unique role, and knowing what all the cells do can help scientists better understand health and diseases such as cancer.

Scientists focused on certain organs - plotting the jobs of cells in the mouth, stomach and intestines, as well as cells that guide how bones and joints develop. They also explored which cells group into tissues, where they're located in the body and how they change over time.

They hope the high-resolution, open-access atlas - considered a first draft - will help researchers fight diseases that damage or corrupt human cells.

"When things go wrong, they go wrong with our cells first and foremost," said Aviv Regev, co-chair of the Human Cell Atlas consortium who was involved with the research.

The findings were published Wednesday in Nature and related journals.

The group plans to release a more complete atlas in 2026, profiling cells across 18 organs and body systems. That includes the skin, heart, breasts and more.

The current cell map not only charts the many types of human cells, but it also shows the relationships of cells to each other, said Dr. Timothy Chan, a cancer expert at the Cleveland Clinic. (AP)

## Hope for fungal skin infections cure

## Fat molecule may treat heart disease

SYDNEY, Nov 21, (Xinhua): Australian researchers have discovered that a natural fat molecule could serve as a treatment for diabetes-induced heart disease.

In a new study published in Cardiovascular Diabetology on Wednesday, a team from Monash University in Melbourne found that the fat molecule lipoxin A4 (LXA4) can significantly reduce inflammation, and improve function of diabetic hearts.

Heart failure and heart attacks are among the leading killers of people with diabetes.

Chengxue Helena Qin, senior author of the new research from the Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, said the team's findings show that LXA4 could be used to treat diabetic heart disease.

"We found that LXA4 could halve inflammation and scar formation, specifically in cases of heart disease induced by diabetes," she said in a media release on Thursday.

"With recent advancements in developing more 'drug-like' LXA4, our findings point to the potential of LXA4-based therapies as a promising new way to manage diabetic heart disease," she said.

Previous studies have shown that LXA4 can prevent chronic inflammation and reduce diabetes-induced atherosclerosis, a chronic disease caused by the build-up of plaque in arteries, but its impact on diabetic hearts had never been studied.

For the study, two groups of mice with type-1 diabetes were administered either LXA4 or a control substance twice

per week over six weeks.

The research team found that the hearts of the control group exhibited increased inflammation while those of the group treated with LXA4 had reduced inflammation and improved cardiac function.

**Skin disease:** Patients with fungal skin infections in South Sudan are increasingly flocking to the Juba Teaching Hospital, drawn by the expertise of Zheng Jianfeng, a Chinese dermatologist from the 12th batch of the Chinese medical team stationed in the country.

Benson Kocho, a 32-year-old teacher at Bethel Secondary School in Juba, the capital of South Sudan, is among the patients seeking treatment from Zheng.

With a tumor on his upper lip, Kocho came to the hospital on Nov. 8 after local doctors reached their wit's end over his medical situation.

"The tumor started small but it kept on developing in late September. It grew so big that I could not close my mouth. It gave me a stigma because everybody was asking me what this is," he told Xinhua on Tuesday, adding that the condition had even forced him to wear a face mask before his students.

Kocho said he was lucky to meet Zheng, because the Chinese doctor with "a true spirit of humanity" sympathized with his condition and performed an operation on him the same day.

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## SPORTS

## Alajuelense wants soccer ruling body to enforce rule

## Team threatens FIFA with legal action in bid for spot at Club World Cup

ZURICH, Nov 21, (AP) — The winningest team in Costa Rica is asking FIFA for a spot in next summer's Club World Cup and says it is willing to take legal action if denied.

Alajuelense, which has won 30 league titles, wants FIFA to enforce the rule that forbids clubs from the same ownership to participate in the tournament.

"The claim is based on the principles of eligibility set in the rules of the tournament," the club said in a press release.

Team spokesman Marco Vazquez noted that Mexican clubs Leon and Pachuca belong to the same owner, Jesus Martinez, of Grupo Pachuca.

"Those are the rules that FIFA established - there cannot be multi-ownership," Vazquez said Wednesday. "There are two Mexican clubs from the same owner and the rulebook is clear. What we are asking is to review what FIFA itself established."

The FIFA-run competition has been expanded from seven teams to 32 and will be staged in the United States from June to July next year. FIFPRO, however, said a players' strike can't be ruled out. The players' union has concerns about the physical and mental impact on players as a result of an increasingly congested schedule.

Teams that qualified expect to earn millions in FIFA prize money at the tournament.

Vazquez said Alajuelense has "hired a law firm in Spain, and they have all the details" of the team's potential legal action.

FIFA has not publicly reacted to the team's announcement and didn't immediately answer a request for comment.

Alajuelense is the best-ranked team in Central America for the CONCACAF but 40th overall in the region.

CONCACAF has four spots in the Club World Cup. The teams that qualified are: the Seattle Sounders, Monterrey, Leon and Pachuca. Lionel Messi's Inter Miami will participate as a guest of the host.

All five clubs were announced for the Dec. 5 draw in

Miami.

In Mexico, besides Leon and Pachuca, there are another two companies that own two or more clubs in the first division. Grupo Caliente owns Tijuana and Queretaro, while Grupo Orlegi controls Atlas and Santos. TV Azteca owns Mazatlan and has partial ownership of Puebla.

On May 2023, the Liga MX announced that multi-ownership will be forbidden but gave owners four years to sell.

Jesus Martinez Murguia, who runs the Leon club, said they will sell part of the team to comply with the rules but will still have a partial ownership.

## Lyon routs Roma in Women's CL



Wolfsburg's scorer Alexandra Popp, left, and Istanbul's Jazmin Jackmon, right, challenge for the ball during the Women's Champions League, group A, soccer match between VfL Wolfsburg and Galatasaray A.S. in Wolfsburg, Germany. (AP)

## Chelsea, Madrid into quarterfinals

PARIS, Nov 21, (AP) — Two goals in two minutes by substitute Kadidiatou Di-ani roused Lyon to a late-surging 4-1 win over Roma and a place in the Women's Champions League quarterfinals.

Roma stung the record eight-time European champion by taking a 74th-minute lead that provoked a fierce fightback, started by veteran France forward Diani scoring from close range on corners in the 77th and 79th.

Chelsea and Real Madrid also won in Group B to join Lyon in the knockout stage with two rounds to spare.

Lucy Bronze's spectacular volley after just 64 seconds set Chelsea on its way to a fourth straight win, 3-0 over last-place Celtic.

Teenager Linda Caicedo, the 2023 World Cup star for Colombia, was Madrid's standout in a 3-2 win at Twente after trailing in the first half.

Germany great Alexandra Popp scored a hat trick and had two assists in Wolfsburg's 5-0 win against overmatched Galatasaray.

That set up a key game on Dec. 11 when Wolfsburg hosts Roma, both on six points, with second place behind Lyon at stake.

Heavily favored Lyon had not conceded a goal in three straight wins in the Champions League before being stunned by Roma's 18-year-old Giulia Dragoni. The on-



Chelsea's Mayra Ramirez, foreground and Celtic's Shannon McGregor vie for the ball, during the Women's Champions League soccer match between Chelsea Women and Celtic Women, at Stamford Bridge, London. (AP)

loan forward from Barcelona scored with a left-footed shot that was Roma's only on-target effort all game.

Lyon awoke and from near identical spots from the right flank, Kadidiatou Di-ani pounced on loose balls to score from three yards (meters) each time. Another substitute, Eugenie Le Sommer, had an immediate impact by scoring in the 89th and captain Wendie Renard rose in stoppage time with a header from another corner.

Chelsea's winning run is now all 11 games under new coach Sonia Bompastor, who led Lyon to its last

Champions League title in 2022.

The English league leader had too much quality for Celtic. After Bronze's opener, Chelsea added a header in the 25th by Wieke Kaptein and a stoppage-time penalty by Eve Perisset.

Teenage star Linda Caicedo's twisting dribbles tormented the Twente defense and helped seal Real Madrid's place in the quarterfinals.

The Colombian scored in first-half stoppage time and set up Signe Bruun for a simple finish in the 71st minute to rally Madrid for a 3-2 win, one week after beating Twente 7-0

at home.

Madrid was tested in the first half and Twente led in the 29th when Jaimy Ravensbergen connected on a free kick curled into the goalmouth.

Caicedo turned the game just before halftime finishing off an attack she started with a direct run into the penalty area. Her first shot was saved, and when a followup effort was deflected to her feet, Caicedo calmly scored from close range.

When Caicedo ran at the Twente defense in the 71st, she created space to cross the ball low for Denmark forward Bruun to score.

Madrid's win was assured in stoppage time when Alba Redondo ran clear to score, though Twente closed the gap with almost the last kick, a 20-yard (meter) shot by Sophie Te Brake.

Madrid has nine points, six clear of Twente, and advances as it also holds the head-to-head tiebreaker.

While the 19-year-old Caicedo was starring in the Netherlands, the 33-year-old Popp was as good as ever in Germany.

Wolfsburg had won 5-0 in Istanbul last week, and Popp set the two-time European champion on course for a repeat result in the third minute. Her first goal was a low shot from near the penalty spot, and she added headers in the 15th and 88th.

Popp also created chances for Janina Minge to shoot in the 31st from the edge of the penalty area, and crossed for Lena Lattwein to score with a header in stoppage time.

## Double Olympic champ Alistair Brownlee retires from triathlon

LONDON, Nov 21, (AP) — Double Olympic champion Alistair Brownlee announced his retirement from triathlon at the age of 36.

Brownlee won gold medals in London in 2012 and Rio de Janeiro in 2016, with his younger brother, Jonny, making the podium on both occasions. The siblings' exploits helped to push triathlon into the mainstream in Britain, with current Olympic champion Alex Yee of Britain crediting them as inspirations.

Alistair Brownlee was also world champion in 2009 and 2011, and a four-time European champion.

He wrote on X it was "time to close this chapter." "This marks my transition from professional triathlon, a moment approached with both dread and excitement in equal measure," he wrote. Brownlee said he was excited to try new challenges and had some "projects I'm eager to tackle."

But he knew his time as an elite triathlete was over. "It has got more difficult for me," he said in an interview published on the website of Britain's Olympic team. "I can't do anywhere near the training that I used to be able to do. So I also found it hard at times being on the start line, knowing that I'm not prepared to the level that I'd like to be."

"And I'm older, I'm 36. I've done it for a long time and there's a lot of other things I want to do with my life."



In this file photo, Britain's Alistair Brownlee, poses for the media with his gold medal for winning the men's ITU World Championship Series Triathlon race in London. (AP)

## Coach Genesio guiding Lille to success after outwitting Ancelotti and Simeone

PARIS, Nov 21, (AP) — Just a year ago, Bruno Genesio left Rennes amid general indifference.

Back to work at Lille this season, the French coach is being hailed as a master tactician, drawing comparisons with his most famous peers.

The reason behind the hype? A triumph against Carlo Ancelotti's Real Madrid in the Champions League followed by a win over Diego Simeone's Atletico Madrid. Add to this an excellent start in Ligue 1 and Lille is unbeaten in its past 10 matches going into Sunday's game against Rennes, Genesio's former club.

The 1-0 victory against Madrid in October and the 3-1 defeat of Atletico in Spain allowed Genesio to enter a very exclusive circle. The unexpected Champions League results made him only the second coach to secure wins on the biggest stage against Ancelotti, Simeone, Pep Guardiola, and Jose Mourinho. The only other coach was Jurgen Klopp.

Genesio previously led Lyon to a win over Guardiola's Manchester City, and Mourinho's Fenerbahce lost at Lille in Champions League qualifying this summer.

What is even more impressive is that the 58-year-old Genesio has handled an avalanche of injuries in his squad since he replaced Paulo Fonseca at Lille in June.

The former Lyon coach needed great adaptation skills and versatility to help Lille climb to fourth place in Ligue 1. Lille has gone seven games without defeat, its longest unbeaten run since December 2023.

"These results perfectly symbolize the strength of my group and the state of mind it's in," Genesio said after a

1-1 Champions League draw against Juventus, another side with a great European pedigree. "We only had 20 players on the team sheet, including three young players who have never played in Ligue 1."

At the various clubs he coached, Genesio has been truthful to his ideal of a game based on possession, pressing and taking risks.

"He dares to do things that perhaps others wouldn't dare to do, like fielding attacking players and pressing high up the pitch against big teams," said Gilles Rousset, who was part of Genesio's staff at Lyon and when he coached in China.

"He likes to try and cause problems that his opponents don't expect. It's not for nothing that his teams often beat the big clubs," Rousset told French magazine So Foot.

Despite the injuries, Genesio has players with the technical quality required to develop the football he likes. Among the standouts are Jonathan David, the Canada striker with seven league goals, Kosovo winger Edon Zhegrova - who has reportedly caught the eye of Manchester United - and goalkeeper Lucas Chevalier, whose stellar performances have led to a first international callup with France this month.

Sunday's match against Rennes will give Genesio the chance to add another win against a famed tactician: Jorge Sampaoli, the former Argentina coach, who signed an 18-month deal with Rennes during the international break.

In other matches, leader Paris Saint-Germain hosts Toulouse on Friday, and second-placed Monaco takes on Brest. Third-placed Marseille travels to Lens on Saturday.

## \$200m more in backlog

## Soccer clubs worldwide get \$125 mln in money owed from player transfers

ZURICH, Nov 21, (AP) — Soccer clubs worldwide have been paid \$125 million in money owed to them from transfers of their former players, FIFA said Wednesday, with money routed via its finance house in Paris, and there's a backlog of another almost \$200 million.

A further \$31.7 million has been agreed but not sent yet.

The payments are being allocated to more than 5,000 grassroots and professional clubs by the FIFA Clearing House.

FIFA published an update on two years of work by the clearing house, which started in November 2022 to bring more transparency to the often murky multi-billion dollar trans-

fer industry. It also tries to ensure smaller clubs get cash they are owed from transfer sales of players they nurtured.

When Moisés Caicedo made a British transfer record move from Brighton to Chelsea last year, his former clubs in Ecuador were entitled to share millions of dollars from the 115 million pounds (\$145 million) fee.

The money routed by FIFA "was a dream," the president of CD Espoli, Lenín Bolaños, said in the FIFA report, with plans to pay for a practice ground, medical clinic and a gym.

Some parts of the FIFA transfer market rules in place since 2001 are

under review after a European court ruling last month in a case brought by former France midfielder Lassana Diarra.

The current FIFA system entitles players' former clubs who trained them between the ages of 12 and 21 to share up to 5% of a future transfer fee.

However, clubs often were unaware a transfer had gone through or did not have the expertise or resources to pursue a claim. Now the online process is managed by the FIFA finance house which notifies buying clubs of approved payments that must be made within 30 days.

The wealthiest buying markets

England and Saudi Arabia have paid the most in so-called "training rewards" FIFA said - \$50.1 million and \$18.7 million, respectively, in the past two years.

The leading net recipients have been clubs in the Netherlands (\$8.7 million), France (\$7.8 million) and Argentina (\$7.1 million).

One reason for the backlog is that clubs are not compliant with the system, the FIFA report said. It said at least 1,600 clubs in more than 100 countries are accredited.

"There are still important challenges ahead and areas for improvement," FIFA chief legal officer Emilio Garcia said in the 52-page report.

## Best of the Rest

**Palmeiras closes gap on Botafogo:** Jose Lopez scored in the 89th minute as Palmeiras recovered from a goal down to clinch a 2-1 away victory over Bahia in Brazil's Serie A championship.

Luciano Rodriguez gave the host the lead by combining with Gilberto Moraes before firing a low 20-yard drive into the far corner.

The visitor equalized just before halftime through playmaker Raphael Veiga, who sent a dipping free-kick into the top-right corner.

Lopez completed the turnaround when he latched onto Vanderlan's cross from the left wing with a diving header that rebounded in off the underside of the crossbar.

The result leaves defending champion Palmeiras just two points behind leader Botafogo with four match days remaining. In other Brazilian top-flight fixtures on Wednesday, Botafogo could only manage a 0-0 draw at Atletico Mineiro, Gremio was held to a 2-2 home draw by Juventude, Flamengo won 2-1 at Cuiaba, Sao Paulo drew 1-1 at Bragantino, and Athletico Paranaense secured a 2-0 home victory over Atletico Goianiense. (Xinhua)

**Gimenez fires Boca past Union:** An early goal from Milton Gimenez gave Boca Juniors a 1-0 home win over Union Santa Fe in Argentina's Primera Division.

The 28-year-old striker headed home in the fourth minute after Exequiel Zeballos' piercing run and cross from the left flank. The host defended resolutely thereafter to secure its ninth win of the campaign.

Fernando Gago's men are now eighth in the 28-team standings with 34 points from 23 outings, two points behind Union. (Xinhua)

## Promoting health and wellness through community engagement

# Dasman Diabetes Institute Joins Gulf Bank 642 Marathon as Official Health Awareness Partner

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Gulf Bank is proud to announce that Dasman Diabetes Institute, established by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS), will serve as the Official Health Awareness Partner for the 10th Gulf Bank 642 Marathon. Organized by Suffix and supported by key partners, this milestone event will take place on November 30 at Souq Sharq, uniting the community in a shared commitment to health, fitness, and wellness.

Dasman Diabetes Institute, renowned for its efforts in diabetes prevention and health education, will play an instrumental role in raising awareness about the benefits of an active lifestyle. At the marathon, the Institute will host interactive activities aimed at encouraging healthy habits and providing valuable insights into diabetes prevention.

Najla Aleisa, Chief Marketing Officer at Gulf Bank, highlighted the importance of addressing diabetes as a critical health challenge in Kuwait. "Through this partnership with Dasman Diabetes Institute, we are taking meaningful steps to educate the community and inspire preventive measures to combat this growing health concern."

Dr. Faisal Hamed AlRefai, Acting Director General of Dasman Diabetes Institute, stated: "We are proud to support the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon as its Official Health Awareness Partner. This partnership underscores our commitment to educating the public about diabetes prevention and the importance of physical activity. Notably, Kuwait ranks among the top 10 countries worldwide for diabetes prevalence, with 20% of the population affected. Together, we are fostering a culture of health and wellness in Kuwait, and we look forward to seeing families, athletes, and community members join us in this shared mission."

Ahmed Almajed, COO of Suffix, shared his excitement about the collaboration, saying: "Having Dasman Diabetes Institute as our Health Awareness Partner elevates the marathon's impact beyond the race. With their expertise, we are creating an experience that promotes

### Najla Aleisa:

- The Gulf Bank Marathon plays a key role in supporting national efforts to combat diabetes and promotes a more active lifestyle.
- Faisal AlRefai: Kuwait ranks among the top 10 countries with the highest diabetes rates, with 20% of the population affected.
- Ahmed Almajed: Our goal is to inspire everyone to embrace physical activity and foster a healthier lifestyle across the community.

both fitness and health education, inspiring participants to make lasting lifestyle changes."

He added: "We are working alongside Gulf Bank and all sponsoring partners to encourage everyone to embrace physical activity and transform the community's lifestyle into a healthier one."

Najla Aleisa added: "The Gulf Bank 642 Marathon has always been about more than just a race; it's a platform for positive change. Celebrating our 10th anniversary, we are doubling down on our commitment to empowering the community toward a healthier future. By bringing together individuals of all ages and fitness levels, we aim to inspire a day dedicated to wellness, education, and community spirit."

As the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon draws near, this collaboration reinforces the event's mission to promote a healthier lifestyle for all. Welcoming everyone from beginners to seasoned runners, the marathon offers diverse categories that bring the community together in a shared commitment to health and wellness.



Gulf Bank and Dasman Diabetes Institute officials pose for the camera.

# Italy wins Billie Jean King Cup

Two-time Grand Slam finalist Paolini stars

**MALAGA, Spain, Nov 21, (AP): Two-time Grand Slam finalist Jasmine Paolini capped a breakthrough season by leading Italy to its first Billie Jean King Cup title since 2013, defeating Rebecca Sramkova 6-2, 6-1 to seal a 2-0 victory over Slovakia in the final of the women's team competition.**

When Paolini's win ended, she was joined on court by her teammates, and they embraced each other, then danced and sang along as the Gypsy Kings' version of "Volare" blared on the loudspeakers.

The No. 4-ranked Paolini was the runner-up at the French Open in June and at Wimbledon in July, making her the first woman since Serena Williams in 2016 to get to the title matches at Roland Garros and the All England Club in the same season. Before this year, Paolini, who is 28, had lost in the first or second round in all 16 career appearances at majors.

"Unbelievable year. Unbelievable. A crazy year. To finish like this, with a title ... it's amazing. I don't have words to describe it. I'm trying just to enjoy every moment," Paolini said. "I feel lucky to be in the position. I feel lucky to be part of this team."

She also teamed with Sara Errani to win a doubles gold medal at the Paris Olympics in August. They were lined up to play in the concluding match against Slovakia, but it wasn't needed because Italy clinched the best-of-three series by sweeping the two singles matches.

"Jasmine raised her level really high this year. ... She's an example for all of us," said her teammate, 78th-ranked Lucia Bronzetti, who took Wednesday's opener by a 6-2, 6-4 score against Viktorija Hrucakovska before a crowd that included Interna-

tional Tennis Hall of Famer and equal rights pioneer Billie Jean King herself.

Bronzetti called it an "honor" to compete in front of the woman for whom the event is named, saying, "She is a great person, a great legend."

Italy, which eliminated Iga Swiatek and Poland in the semifinals, earned its fifth championship a year after finishing as the runner-up to Canada.

"I'm so proud of them. They fight every day," Italian captain Tathiana Garbin said. "This journey was incredible."

The triumph adds to what's been quite a recent run for Italy in tennis, including two Grand Slam trophies in 2024 and the No. 1 men's ranking for Jannik Sinner, who helped his country claim last year's Davis Cup. Sinner and Italy meet Argentina in the men's quarterfinals Thursday.

This is the first time the two premier International Tennis Federation team events are being held at the same site, although the women's matches are being played in a much smaller venue. They are using a temporary court set up under a white tent, with a capacity of 4,000; the men are playing in a permanent arena with 9,200 seats that were full Tuesday for Rafael Nadal's last match before retirement in Spain's loss to the Netherlands.

Bronzetti never had played a BJK Cup singles match until this week. She said she didn't find out until Tuesday night that she would be in the lineup against Slovakia. "I didn't sleep very well," Bronzetti said.

"You're not playing just for yourself," she said. "You're playing for your team and your country."

Serenaded by chants of her first name - "Loo-Chee-Ah! Loo-Chee-Ah!" - that mingled with the sounds of a drum and red plastic horn played in the cheering section behind Slovakia's bench, Bronzetti claimed the last three games of the first set and the last four of the match.



Al-Qadsiya looking for a new victory.

## Burqan faces Yarmouk

# Al-Qadsiya seeks to maintain Championship winning streak

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: The third round of the Federation Volleyball Championship concludes with two exciting matches today at the Federation Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Halls Complex. In the first game, Al-Qadsiya faces Al-Sulaibikhat at 5:00 pm, followed by Burqan taking on Al-Yarmouk at 7:00 pm.

Al-Qadsiya enters the match with a perfect record, having earned 6 points from victories over Al-Shabab and Al-Yarmouk. The team aims to extend its winning streak to three under the guidance of Bahraini coach Redha Ali. Key players for the "Yellows" include Nasser Abdul Samad, Nasser Dashti, and Rashid Anbar, alongside international talents like Iranian profes-

sional Mohammad Reza Beyk and Dutch star Thijs Ter Horst.

On the other side, Al-Sulaibikhat is still searching for its first points after losses in the opening rounds to Burqan and Kuwait Club. The team hopes to bounce back and secure a positive result against formidable opponent.

In the second match, Burqan, also sitting on 6 points with two wins, is the favorite against Yarmouk, who has yet to earn any points. Burqan has delivered strong performances so far, solidifying its position as a serious title contender.

The tournament follows a single-round league system, with the top four teams advancing to the semifinals. The first-place team will face the fourth, while the second-place team will play the third, with the winners advancing to the final to compete for the championship.

## Al-Arabi welcomes Mohammed Karim

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Al-Arabi Club has bolstered its volleyball team by signing Iraqi professional Mohammed Karim, who will compete with the team in the ongoing Federation Championship.

Karim brings an impressive track record from the Iraqi League, having previously played for top clubs like Gas South, Erbil, and the Marine Club. An international player for the Iraqi national team, Karim is known for his exceptional skills and physical presence.

Standing at 196 cm tall, the 1998-born athlete plays in position 2 and is expected to make a significant impact for the "Greens." He will team up with Dominican professional Santos as Al-Arabi aims



Mohammed Karim to maintain strong performances in the championship.

Al-Arabi, who narrowly won its opening match against Al-Shabab 3-2, faced a challenging game against Kazma late yesterday evening.



Italy's tennis team celebrates on the podium after winning the Billie Jean King Cup final against Slovakia at the Martin Carpena Sports Hall in Malaga, southern Spain. (AP)

# Al-Qadsiya edges Al-Sulaibikhat ahead of Gulf Clubs Championship

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Al-Qadsiya secured a 2-1 victory against Al-Sulaibikhat in a friendly match held at the Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium's subsidiary field. Moroccan professional Ismail Khafi netted both goals for the "Yellows" in their final warm-up before departing to Manama to face Bahrain's Al-Riffa in the third round of Group Two of the Gulf Clubs Championship next Wednesday.

Currently, Al-Qadsiya holds third place in Group Two with one point from two rounds. Al-Riffa sits in second with three points after defeating Qatar's Al-Arabi, while Saudi Arabia's Al-Ettifaq leads the standings with six points. Al-Arabi trails in fourth place with one point, tied with Al-Qadsiyah but behind on goal difference.

Montenegrin coach Zeljko Petrovic expressed confidence in the team's readiness, boosted by the return of international players Khaled Ibrahim, Khaled Al-Rashidi, Eid Al-



Kuwait Club and Al-Qadsiya continue preparations.

Rashidi, Rashid Al-Dosari, Adhbi Shehab, and Moaz Al-Dhafiri following their commitments with the Kuwait national team in the 2026 World

Cup qualifiers.

The team plans to return to Kuwait on Thursday to prepare for its fourth-round rematch against Al-Riffa on

December 4. The administrative staff confirmed that the squad is complete, except for Ahmed Shabib and Abdulaziz Wadi, who remain sidelined due to previous absences.

Montenegrin coach Nebojsa Jovovic resumed training sessions for Kuwait Club after a brief vacation. Key international players, including Fahad Al-Hajri, Sami Al-Sanea, Abdulrahman Kamil, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, Reda Hani, Mishari Ghannam, Faisal Zayed, Mohammed Daham, Yousef Nasser, and Khaled Al-Kharqawi, are set to join the squad today.

The team will travel to Uzbekistan next Sunday to face Nasaf Qarshi in the fifth round of Group D matches in the AFC Champions League 2.

Al-Arabi is set to resume training on Saturday following a rest period granted after its qualification for the Asian Challenge Cup semifinals. The team will head to Doha in mid-December for an external training camp featuring several friendly matches as preparation for the Zain Premier League, which resumes in early January.

## Best of the Rest

**James misses Leicester match:** Chelsea defender Reece James will miss Saturday's English Premier League game against Leicester because of a hamstring problem.

Chelsea coach Enzo Maresca confirmed the latest setback for the England international, who has endured two years of injury disruption. "We have, for sure, just one injured player and that is Reece. Unfortunately, he felt something small and we do not want to take a risk with him at the weekend," Maresca said on Thursday.

James missed the 2022 World Cup because of a knee injury and last year had surgery on a recurring hamstring problem. (AP)

**Zhang seeks treatment in Holland:** China striker Zhang Yuning has confirmed that he will go to Holland next week to receive treatment on his ankle injury.

The Chinese striker said he twisted his right ankle after scoring the winner in injury-time of China's 1-0 win over Bahrain last Thursday.

According to a statement issued by his club Beijing Guoan on Wednesday, Zhang felt acute pain on his right ankle and needed further medical checks to determine the injury.

The 27-year-old forward has made up his mind that he will next week go to a rehabilitation center in Amsterdam, Holland, which he has visited several times before, to have his injury treated. (Xinhua)



New Orleans Pelicans guard Javonte Green (4) fouls Cleveland Cavaliers forward Jaylon Tyson (24) in the second half of an NBA basketball game in Cleveland. (AP)

# Sports

Team ranked 2nd in Asia

## Kuwait flag football team makes strides on the global stage

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Former Vice President of the Asian American Football Federation, Sheikh Mishal Talal Al-Fahad, commended the Kuwaiti national flag football team for securing second place in Asia and ranking 24th globally in the latest classification by the International Federation of American Football. He emphasized that this historic milestone reflects the team's outstanding performance and results in various international tournaments, including their participation in the 2024 World Cup held in Finland last October.

Sheikh Al-Fahad, the founder of flag football in Kuwait, highlighted the significance of this achievement. He noted that Kuwait's position among top teams in Asia and globally is remarkable, especially considering the team's limited experience, the short duration since the game's introduction, and the lack of support compared to other nations.

He urged the relevant authorities to extend greater support and attention to the sport, which has garnered significant interest and participation among Kuwaiti youth. He emphasized that these young athletes have the potential to compete and achieve success on multiple levels. Sheikh Al-Fahad also recalled the team's impressive performance in the 2014



Sheikh Mishal Al-Fahad in the middle of the Kuwait flag team.

Asian Beach Games in Phuket, where they clinched second place despite being newly established at

the time.

Sheikh Al-Fahad congratulated the Kuwaiti American Football

Committee, led by Madi Al-Mutairi, on this remarkable achievement and the team's advancement in global

rankings. He viewed this progress as a promising indicator of the committee's efforts and strategic planning,

which aims to pave the way for Kuwait's qualification for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

## Kazma crowned champion of 3x3 basketball tourney



Kazma players receive their winning medals.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Kazma claimed the 3x3 Basketball Championships after a thrilling 18-15 victory over Al-Nasr in the final at the Union Hall in Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Halls Complex.

Al-Qurain secured third place by defeating Kuwait Club 21-12 in the playoff for

the third and fourth spots.

Kazma delivered outstanding performances throughout the tournament, earning it a well-deserved title. Representing the Orange team were players Abdullah Ibrahim, Abdulaziz Al-Fadhli, Saho Al-Saho, and Yousef Al-Balushi.

## Al-Qurain ends Al-Salmiya streak

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Al-Qurain ended Al-Salmiya winning streak with 28-27 victory in the eighth round of the preliminary stage of the Handball League. The same round also saw Al-Arabi secure a comfortable 31-22 victory over Al-Yarmouk.

The loss dropped Al-Salmiya to second place, remaining at 12 points, equal with Al-Arabi, who moved ahead on goal difference. Al-Qurain climbed to seventh place with 8 points, while Al-Yarmouk stayed at

the bottom of the standings without points in 13th place.

The tournament follows a single-round league format, with the top six teams advancing to the Premier League. This next stage will feature a three-division league system, where teams carry over their preliminary points. Meanwhile, teams ranked seventh to fourteenth will compete in a two-division league to finalize their standings.

Matches between Kuwait Club and Kazma were postponed due to their ongoing participation in the Asian Championship, set to conclude tomorrow in Doha, Qatar.



Al-Qurain defense succeeded in stopping the challenge of Al-Salmiya.

## Jerome scores career-high 29 as Cavs rout injury-riddled Pelicans

CLEVELAND, Nov 21, (AP): Ty Jerome scored 27 points in the first half and finished with a career-high 29 as the Cleveland Cavaliers never trailed in a 128-100 win over the New Orleans Pelicans on Wednesday night.

Jerome, starting in place of injured point guard Darius Garland, had 16 points in the second quarter and buried seven 3-pointers before halftime. Cleveland is off to the best start in franchise history at 16-1.

Georges Niang added 20 points and first-round pick Jaylon Tyson had 16 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists in his first pro start for the Cavaliers. Jarrett Allen had 16 points and 11 rebounds.

Rookie forward Antonio Reeves, who averaged 2.9 points per game, scored 34 points, and Brandon Boston Jr. had 14 points for the injury-riddled Pelicans.

**Bucks 122, Bulls 106**

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo had 41 points, nine rebounds and eight assists as the Milwaukee Bucks beat the Chicago Bulls.

Brook Lopez scored 21 points, Damian Lillard had 20 points and 10 assists, and AJ Green added 18 points to help the Bucks win for the fourth time in five games following a 2-8 start.

Zach Lavine scored 27 points to lead Chicago. Torrey Craig added 15, while Nikola Vucevic and Coby

White had 14 each.

**Warriors 120, Hawks 97**

In San Francisco, Andrew Wiggins scored 27 points, Stephen Curry added 23 points and eight assists and the Golden State Warriors beat the Atlanta Hawks 120-97 on Wednesday night.

Trayce Jackson-Davis finished with 14 points and 11 rebounds, and Buddy Hield contributed 11 points off the bench.

Jalen Johnson led the Hawks with 15 points and 14 rebounds, and Trae Young also had a double-double with 12 points and 11 assists.

Draymond Green, who had made multiple 3-pointers in each of the past five games, went 0 for 4 from deep and had nine points, nine assists and seven rebounds for the Warriors. Green and Wiggins each

had two blocked shots.

Guard Brandin Podziemski left the game in the fourth quarter after getting hit in the face and didn't return. Coach Steve Kerr said x-rays on Podziemski's nose, which he broke in a preseason game, were negative.

**Knicks 138, Suns 122**

In Phoenix, Jalen Brunson scored 36 points, Karl-Anthony Towns added 34 and the New York Knicks beat the Phoenix Suns 138-122 on Wednesday night for their fourth straight win.

All five Knicks starters scored in double figures. Josh Hart had 19 points, 11 rebounds and six assists.

Devin Booker scored 33 points on 12-for-23 shooting and Jusuf Nurkic had 14 points and 12 rebounds for the injury-depleted Suns, who have lost five straight.



Milwaukee Bucks' Giannis Antetokounmpo dunks past Chicago Bulls' Zach LaVine and Coby White during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Milwaukee. (AP)

**Thunder 109, Trail Blazers 99**

In Oklahoma City, Jalen Williams scored 30 points, Isaiah Hartenstein had a double-double in his season debut, and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Portland Trail Blazers.

Hartenstein, a free agent pickup who played for the New York Knicks last season, had been out with a broken bone in his left hand. He had 13 points, 14 rebounds and four blocks in 29 minutes and provided rim protection and bulk for a team that has struggled with injuries in the frontcourt.

**Grizzlies 117, Philadelphia 111**

In Memphis, Jaren Jackson Jr. had 25 points, Desmond Bane added 21 points and 10 rebounds and the Memphis Grizzlies set a season-high with 19 3-pointers in a win over the Philadelphia 76ers.

Jaylen Wells added 14 points for Memphis as Grizzlies head coach Taylor Jenkins became the winningest coach in franchise history.

**Clippers 104, Magic 93**

In Inglewood, James Harden scored 24 points and the Los Angeles Clippers won their sixth game in a row at their new arena, beating the Orlando Magic 104-93 on Wednesday night.

Harden shot just 5 of 14 from the field, but he made 11 of 12 free throws to go with seven rebounds and five assists. Amir Coffey scored 18 points and Ivica Zubac added 17 on 8-of-11 shooting and 12 rebounds.

The Magic had their six-game winning streak snapped after holding every opponent under 100 points during that span.

## Australia and the US tied at the Davis Cup quarterfinals

MALAGA, Spain, Nov 21, (AP): Australia's Thanasi Kokkinakis emerged from a tight-as-can-be tiebreaker by saving four match points and eventually converting his seventh to get past Ben Shelton 6-1, 4-6, 7-6 (14) in the Davis Cup quarterfinals on Thursday, before Taylor Fritz pulled the United States even by defeating Alex de Minaur 6-3, 6-4.

On an indoor hard court at the Palacio de Deportes Jose Maria Martina Carpena in southern Spain, the 77th-ranked Kokkinakis withstood 21 aces from Shelton, a big-serving left-hander who is ranked 21st and reached the U.S. Open semifinals in 2023.

That was followed by U.S. Open runner-up Fritz's far more straightforward victory over No. 9 de Minaur.

Those two singles results meant the best-of-three quarterfinal would be de-

cided by doubles, with Shelton heading back on court to team with Tommy Paul for the U.S. against Paris Olympics gold medalist Matt Ebden and Jordan Thompson. The Shelton-Paul duo was a surprising, last-minute substitution for Summer Games silver medalists Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram.

The Americans own a record 32 Davis Cup championships but haven't reached the semifinals since 2018 and haven't claimed the title since 2007, their longest drought in the team competition. Australia, a 28-time champion, was the runner-up the past two years.

The U.S. and Australia are the two winningest countries in the event.

Whichever advances will take on defending champion Italy - which is led by No. 1-ranked Jannik Sinner - or Argentina on Saturday.

## Al-Qadisiya strengthens water polo team with Filipovic

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 21: Al-Qadisiya Club has bolstered its water polo team by signing Serbian national team captain Filip Filipovic to compete in the current season.

The 37-year-old Filipovic boasts an impressive career, including multiple Olympic appearances with Serbia and a professional stint in some of the world's top water polo leagues.

Hassan Abu Al-Hassan, the club's game manager, expressed confidence in Filipovic's impact, describing him as a significant addition to both Al-Qadisiya and the development of water polo in Kuwait. He emphasized the team's ambition to continue



Serbian star Filip Filipovic

building on its successes from previous seasons and maintaining its dominance in the sport.