



## Opinion

**Ahmed Al-Jarallah**

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

### Hassan III ... A cub from a den of lions

FROM the year 1666, the Alawite rule in the Kingdom of Morocco has been characterized by stability, and the country served as a model of openness to diverse cultures and nations. It has consistently demonstrated resilience in the face of adversity, becoming a symbol of unity between the government and the people.

As a result, the French were unable to subjugate the Moroc-

cans and their leadership for 44 years, and they were expelled in 1956.

King Mohammed V, along with his son, Crown Prince Hassan II, returned to the country,

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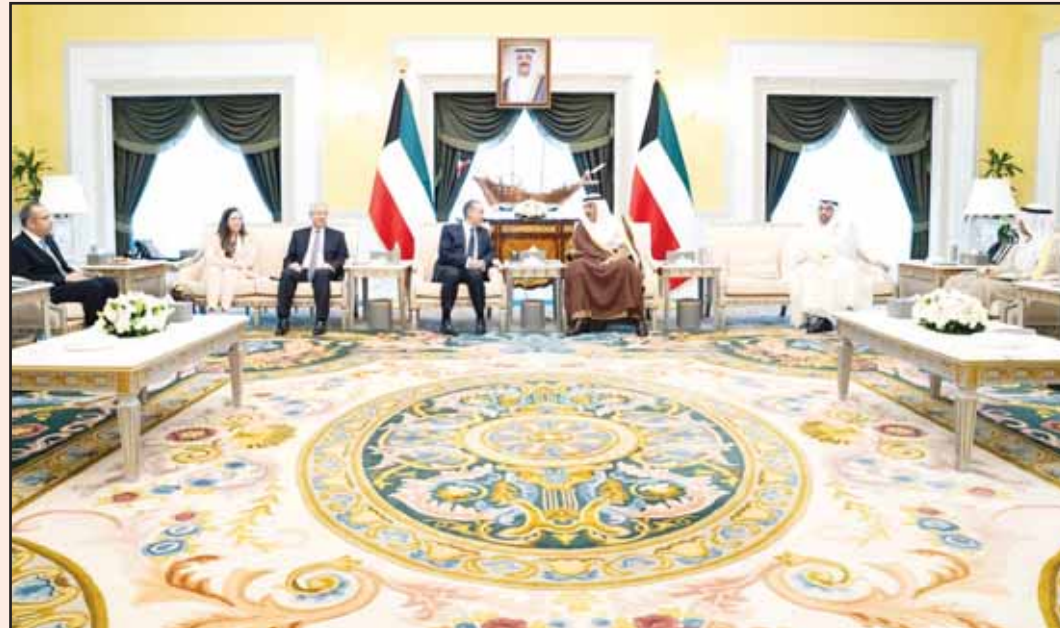
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Egyptian president sends message to Amir

## Kuwait Amir receives Crown Prince, Acting Prime Minister



HH the Crown Prince receives Egyptian Foreign Minister Dr. Bader Abdulatti.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24. (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace on Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received Acting Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace on Sunday Acting Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

Also on Sunday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace on Sunday Egyptian Foreign Minister Dr. Bader Abdulatti on occasion of official visit to the country.

The Egyptian Foreign Minister relayed a message directed to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah from

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## OVER-60 EXPATS WITHOUT DEGREES AWAIT KUWAIT'S DECISION

# SME worker transfer cut to one year with sponsor's nod

By Najeh Bilal and Fares Al-Abdan  
Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: In Kuwait, a wave of anticipation surrounds a vital decision that could reshape the lives of expatriates aged 60 and over who do not hold university degrees.**

The prospect of canceling mandatory health insurance fees for this group gained traction after the Court of Appeal upheld a verdict which was issued on March 2024 that nullified Administrative Decision No. 27 of 2021.

This decision, which previously governed work permit regulations, was deemed invalid by the Court of First Instance, marking a significant moment in the legal landscape.

As the nation awaits formal implementation, the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) disclosed revealing statistics saying by the end of June 2024, the number of expatriates in this specific category stood at 123,235, with 8,956 cases remaining unspecified. These figures underscore the sizeable demographic affected by the ruling.

Meanwhile, another crucial development unfolded within the small and medium enterprises (SME)

sector. The Public Authority for Manpower announced a reduction in the minimum period for transferring workers within SME projects from three years to just one, contingent on sponsor approval.

However, sources clarified a key restriction – workers from SMEs cannot transfer to larger private sector companies.

This policy adjustment was attributed to operational challenges faced by many SME projects, including faltering initiatives and difficulties in sustaining operations.

The reduction in transfer time aims to provide flexibility within the SME ecosystem, ensuring better workforce utilization without compromising the sector's stability.

PACI's comprehensive report shed light on the broader composition of Kuwait's expatriate workforce, revealing a striking disparity in educational qualifications:

The report put the number of University Graduates at 143,488, of whom only 6,561 hold advanced degrees (Master's or PhDs); illiterate workers, 82,040; Basic Literacy (Read and Write): 954,747; Primary Education, 112,933; Intermediate Education 654,738; High School Graduates: 246,851; Diploma Holders: 79,902 and Unspecified Educational Levels: 707,931.

Overall, 2.9 million expatriates aged 20 and above lacked university qualifications, out of a total expatriate population of 3.36 million.

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PACI's comprehensive report reveals a stark educational divide among Kuwait's expatriate workforce:

1. Total University Graduates: 143,488
- Advanced Degrees (Master's or PhDs): 6,561
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5. Intermediate Education Holders: 654,738
6. High School Graduates: 246,851
7. Diploma Holders: 79,902
8. Unspecified Educational Levels: 707,931
9. Total Expatriate Population: 3.36 million
- Expatriates Aged 20 and Above Lacking University Qualifications: 2.9 million



**2** Minister of Information receives Arab Times chief editor in office

**3** Working 1 year without pay, road repair part of penalty

**9** KFH honors the inaugural cohort of Real Estate Evaluation Program

**10** Zain introduces 'The Masters', empowering 30 individuals with disabilities to create, shape their own experiences, and become leaders

## October sees record growth in local bank financing for oil and gas sector

By Mahmoud Shendi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24:** Local banks provided a record 638.4 million dinars in financing to the oil and gas sector (residents and non-residents) in October, marking an increase of 349.7 million dinars from September's 285.7 million dinars.

This represents a substantial monthly growth rate of 122 percent. The year-on-year financing also surged by 513.3 million dinars from 125.1 million dinars in October 2023 over the first ten months of 2024, total financing to the sector reached 2.072 billion dinars.

The bank financing for the oil and gas sector showed fluctuations throughout the first ten months of 2024. Starting at 50.6 million dinars in January, financing grew to 278.5 million dinars in February, then continued its upward trajectory to 286.3 million dinars in March.

A significant decline occurred in April, bringing financing to 167.4 million dinars, followed by a sharp drop to just 19.4 million dinars in May. However, financing picked up again in June to 245.8 million dinars and after further fluctuations, it reached 638.4 million dinars in October.

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Band members perform during the musical show held at the Avenues.

## Army Brass Band performs at Avenues

The Kuwaiti Army Brass Band organized Saturday a distinguished musical show, as part of the Gulf Weeks activities accompanying the 45th Gulf Cooperation Council Summit, which is scheduled to be

hosted by the State of Kuwait on December 1.

Visitors to the Avenues Mall enjoyed the musical show, which included playing songs about Arabian Gulf relations. (KUNA)

## Turkish company leads with lowest Kuwait-Saudi link bid at KD 2.47mn

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24:** Kuwait's Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has opened financial bids for a 12-month design contract for a 111km railway linking Kuwait City to the Saudi Arabian border. This project is part of the larger Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) railway initiative, which aims to construct over 2,000km of new rail lines across the region at an estimated cost of more than \$200 billion, reports International Railway Journal.

Among the four bids received, Turkey's Proyapi Engineering and Consulting submitted the lowest offer at KWD 2.47 million (\$8.15 million). Other bidders included China Railway Company with a bid of KWD 6.77 million, Spain's Sener at KWD 8.82 million, and Systra Turkey at KWD 9.73 million.

Despite nine companies seeking to prequalify for the contract, five were excluded from consideration. The design and consultancy work is expected to be completed within a year, after which tenders for the construction phase will be issued.

Public Authority for Roads & Transportation Vice-President Haifa Al-Jarallah noted that the tender process has been expedited following discussions between Kuwait's Minister of Public Works, Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, and Saudi Arabia's Minister of Transport and Logistics Services, Mr. Saleh Al-Jasser. These meetings also explored the feasibility of a new rail line connecting Kuwait City to Riyadh.

Al-Jarallah emphasized that appointing a design consultant marks the first phase of the railway project. The second phase will involve presenting the project to potential investors and selecting an investment partner, while the third phase will focus on implementation, anticipated to take about 30 months.

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## NewsWatch

**CAIRO:** The Arab League on Sunday emphasized the need to address population issues amid the ongoing instability in the region.

Describing it a critical challenge and key driver of sustainable development, which cannot be achieved without peace and stability, League Assistant Secretary General and Head of the Social Affairs Sector Ambassador **Haifa Abu Ghazaleh** told the sixth session of the Executive Office of the Arab Council for Population and Development that pressing challenges facing Arab populations include migration, internal displacement, rapid demographic growth, high unemployment, reproductive health issues, and the impact of climate change. (KUNA)

**AMMAN:** Police in Jordan shot and killed a man after he opened fire near the Israeli Embassy early on Sunday, authorities said.

Three police officers were wounded in the shootout in the **Rabiah** neighborhood of the capital, Amman. Authorities did not identify the shooter or say what his motive was. (AP)

**WASHINGTON:** France, Germany, the **United Kingdom**, and the **United States** welcomed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors' adoption of a resolution on **Iran**, demanding that it provides explanations on presence of uranium particles at three undeclared locations.

In a joint statement issued by American Department of State, the four countries affirmed that "the resolution responds to Iran's continued failure to provide the IAEA the information and cooperation needed to clarify long outstanding issues relating to undeclared nuclear material detected at multiple locations in Iran."

"These issues are central to the Agency's ability to provide assurance of the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme," the statement read. (KUNA)

## KAC partners with Saudi Railways to sell Haramain high speed rail tickets

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24:** The Kuwait Airways Corporation has entered into an agreement with the Saudi Railways Company (SAR) to offer tickets for the Haramain High-Speed Rail to its customers, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This new service will initially be available for Hajj and Umrah campaigns, followed by offering tickets to individual travelers.

The agreement was signed by Abdul Mohsen Al-Faqan, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Airways and Bashar Al-Malik, CEO of SAR.

Al-Faqan highlighted that the partnership aims to improve cooperation between the two companies and enhance travel services for passengers, particularly those traveling between Makkah and Madinah in Saudi Arabia.

This collaboration will provide added value for Kuwait Airways customers by expanding their travel options, especially for visitors to the holy cities. It is expected to ease travel logistics for pilgrims and tourists by integrating both airlines and rail services.

Furthermore, the agreement facilitates the commercial marketing and promotion of Kuwait Airways services. It will also enable Kuwait Airways to sell tickets for Haramain High-Speed Rail trips at the stations, as well as through its own reservation system.

The partnership includes an electronic link between the Haramain High-Speed Rail and Kuwait Airways' booking systems, streamlining the reservation process for travelers.

## PACI clarifies verification levels in 'My Identity' app

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24:** In response to rumors about changes to Kuwaiti citizenship procedures through the 'My Identity' application, which were denied by the Ministry of Interior, the Public Authority for Civil Information has clarified the matter, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Authority explained that the "My Identity" app incorporates three levels of verification, which are determined by the

method chosen during the registration process.

These levels -- medium, high, and verified -- define the extent of access to specific features within the app.

PACI emphasized that these verification levels adhere to the highest standards of security, ensuring the protection of users' data throughout the registration and verification process.

## Kuwait deports 568 'violators' in 5 days

By Munif Naif  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24:** The General Department of Residence Affairs Investigations of the Ministry of Interior announced the arrest of 396 violators of residency and labor laws and the deportation of 568 expatriates from the country during the period between November 17 and 21.

The ministry highlighted its ongoing efforts to intensify security campaigns in various parts of the country, and actively pursue and apprehend all violators of residency laws.

It affirmed that accountability extends to both the violators and their employers.

## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 04:56 Asr ..... 14:31  
 Sunrise .. 06:19 Maghrib .. 16:50  
 Zohr ..... 11:35 Isha ..... 18:11

# Local

## Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** Mild and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind, with speeds of 15-50 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance for fog forming at night.  
**By Night:** Mild to rather cold

## Weather

and partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance for fog forming over some areas.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	27	19
Kuwait Airport	27	17
Abdaly	27	14
Bubyan	25	14
Jahra	28	17
Failaka Island	26	20
Salmiyah	26	20
Ahmadi	26	16



The Minister of Information Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi meets Editor-in-Chief of the Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah.

## Minister of Information receives Arab Times chief editor in office

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: The Minister of Information Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi received in his office the Editor-in-Chief of the Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah.

The two discussed current media affairs, and also delved into local events. They affirmed the vital role played by the media in supporting national matters and enhancing societal awareness.

## Amir thanked for sponsoring event

## Kuwait honors 20 winners of Quran memorization contest

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: Representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, the Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi honored 20 winners of the 13th edition of the Kuwait International Award for the Memorization of the Quran, its Recitation Modes, and Science.



Al-Wasmi

In a speech delivered on behalf of the sponsor of the award at Al-Barakah Hall in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dr. Al-Wasmi stated, "It is a pleasure to speak to you on this blessed day as we conclude the 13th edition of the Kuwait International Award for the Memorization of the Quran, its Recitation Modes, and Science."

"This award, thanks to Almighty Allah and the continuous support of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, has become a symbol of Kuwait's dedication to serving the Book of Allah and reinforcing its position as a global beacon for the sciences of the Quran."

"This award is not merely a passing competition but a civilizational message that reflects Kuwait's commitment to upholding Islamic values and enhancing the spirit of brotherhood among the Muslim community. It achieves this through the competition of memorizing the Book of Allah, understanding it, and applying its teachings."

"Today, we witness the fruits of sincere efforts that have brought together a group of Quran scholars from different countries, in a faith-driven demonstration that embodies the unity of Muslims around the Holy Book of Allah."

"I express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the esteemed scholars who honored us with their valuable participation in this session by presenting scientific workshops and specialized lectures that enriched this forum and gave an important educational and cultural dimension to this event."

"Their contributions serve as a living example of academic dedication that aims to deepen the understanding of the meanings of the Quran and to connect people to its rulings and values."

"I also extend my greetings to the arbitration committees, who bear the responsibility of evaluation based on the highest standards of integrity and impartiality. They performed their duties with accuracy and objectivity, which played a significant role in highlighting the exceptional Quranic talents we witnessed during this session."

Al-Wasmi affirmed that the ministry views this award as an extension of Kuwait's ongoing efforts to serve Islam and Muslims, adding, "We are committed to ensuring that it continues to be a message of goodness and peace, emanating from this blessed land to the entire world."

He said, "This award, with its successes, has proven to be not only a Quranic event but also a platform for building bridges of brotherhood and cooperation between the nations of the Muslim world and beyond."

We are committed to developing this award year after year by taking advantage of modern technology and strengthening cooperation with various supporting parties to achieve greater distinction and wider reach."

It is worth mentioning that the award's closing ceremony saw the honoring of twenty winners across its four categories. Also, the organizing teams, the arbitration committees, and the winners of the Best Electronic Application Serving the Quran were also honored.



Traditional items at the Kuwait embassy pavilion.

## Kuwaiti embassy takes part in charity bazaar to help 'needy'

BRUSSELS, Nov 24, (KUNA): The Embassy of Kuwait in Belgium participated in a charity bazaar in Brussels on Saturday, alongside other Arab and Asian embassies, to support marginalized children and women and promote humanitarian initiatives.

The embassy's pavilion showcased Kuwaiti culture through traditional clothing, handicrafts, and popular foods, with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ambassador Nawaf Al-Enezi expressed pride in the embassy's involvement, highlighting the event as an opportunity to assist those in need and emphasizing the importance of teamwork and international solidarity in addressing humanitarian challenges.

The event also featured entertainment and competitions for visitors, fostering a vibrant community atmosphere.

## GCC unity priority: Sheikh Mubarak

## 'Gulf Weeks' activities mirror genuine identity

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24, (KUNA): The deputy chair of the Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah said on Saturday that the Gulf Weeks' activities coinciding with the 45th GCC summit mirror the genuine Gulf identity.

Sheikh Mubarak in a press release, issued by the Olympic Committee marking launch

of the Gulf Weeks' events, affirmed that the joint GCC march is substantially backed upon instructions by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the sagacious government.

The GCC leaders' guidelines in this respect aim to bolster

inter-GCC merger and unity, said Sheikh Mubarak who also thanked Minister of Information, Minister of Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi for the invitation to partake in the festivities' inauguration.

He also lauded the efforts by the GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi and organizers of the Gulf activities.



Sheikh Mubarak Faisal

# EMS response teams all set for GCC Summit, Gulf Cup

Doctors, technicians, nurses attend workshop

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff



Director of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department Dr. Ahmad Al-Shatti with other guests at the symposium.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: Director of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department Dr. Ahmad Al-Shatti affirmed the department's full readiness to cover the 45th Gulf Summit, which Kuwait will host in December, as well as the 26th Gulf Cup of Nations.

He highlighted the ongoing coordination and collaboration with EMS teams in various hospitals to ensure their preparedness and to closely monitor all preparations for these upcoming events and activities.

Dr. Al-Shatti said this in a press statement issued on the sidelines of the "Emergency Medicine Updates ... Enhancing Care in Crises" workshop, which took place Saturday morning.

The workshop was aimed at highlighting the latest advancements in emergency medical practices, and witnessed the participation of approximately 150 technicians, doctors, and nurses specializing in emergency care.

Dr. Al-Shatti said the symposium was part of the series of programs and events organized by the department to support scientific initiatives for medical education and continuous professional development.

He affirmed the significance of the symposium in improving the understanding and management of medical emergencies.

Dr. Al-Shatti said it focused on the latest advancements in the field, presented effective strategies for handling various crises, and enhanced collaboration among health-care professionals, as well as encouraging the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

He explained that eight lectures were delivered during the symposium, covering important and emerging topics in the field of medical emergencies, with contributions from numerous doctors, researchers, and emergency medical technicians.

Several key topics were discussed during the symposium, including "Using Artificial Intelligence in Emergency Response", "Exploring Types of Emergencies", "Disaster Preparedness and Risk Assessment", "Health Care Resilience in Disasters: The Case of Gaza", "Emergency Management for the Elderly", "Emergency Challenges in the Wild", and "Mental Health and Psychological First Aid". These topics are important for analyzing common crises such as natural disasters, industrial accidents, and public health emergencies.

Dr. Al-Shatti stressed the importance of distinguishing between these types of emergencies to ensure an effective and appropriate response.

## All services for disabled are now fully electronic

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: To ease the burden on students and owners of educational institutions, the Deputy Director General of the Educational and Rehabilitation Services Sector at the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) Afnan Al-Hussaini says the services and procedures for educating individuals with disabilities are now fully electronic, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement to Al-Anba, she revealed the launch of a new electronic application for the educational and rehabilitation sector, adding that PADA has finished developing new programs to ensure all educational sector procedures related to individuals with disabilities are conducted electronically.

Al-Hussaini highlighted that the automated tracking of all student files registered in schools, rehabilitation centers, institutions, and nurseries under PADA's umbrella is now possible, which eliminates the need for in-person reviews.

She stressed that PADA will begin distributing special "user" access to the educational institutions under its jurisdiction, which will allow them to view student files directly and update data immediately.

Al-Hussaini affirmed that this step is in line with PADA's goal of achieving complete digital transformation, which aims to reduce the burden on both students and educational institution owners.



The governors and officials at the Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center.

## Governors visit GCC pavilion to monitor Summit's preparation

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor Sheikh Sabah Bader Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah visited the GCC pavilion at the Cultural Abdullah Al-Salem Center on Sunday to view Kuwait's preparations for the 45th Gulf Summit, which is scheduled for December 1, 2024.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the governors were accompanied by the head of the pavilion team Walid Al-Hamoud, Maryam Al-Kandari from the Amiri Diwan, and a number of team members.

The tour included a review of the contents of the pavilion, which was recently opened by the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The pavilion is dedicated to the Gulf

Summit hosted by Kuwait on December 1, 2024, and highlights the progress and achievements of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The presentation covered several key topics, including cooperation between GCC countries, inspiring statements by leaders, joint security efforts, and initiatives aimed at enhancing economic integration among the member states.

Sheikh Athbi Nasser expressed his happiness with the visit, and praised the arrangements for the pavilion.

He affirmed that the pavilion highlights and enhances the achievements of the GCC countries in all fields, with the aim of familiarizing citizens and residents of Kuwait with the accomplishments of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The governor also highlighted the importance of promoting Gulf patriotism and loyalty.

## Violating mobile groceries face law

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: Acting Director General of Kuwait Municipality Eng. Manal Al-Asfour says the municipality is collaborating with other government agencies to enhance field supervision of violating mobile groceries, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a press statement, Al-Asfour explained that the campaign targets mobile groceries that are in violation of laws and regulations. Those that comply with the requirements and designated locations will not face any violations or penalties.

The campaigns aim to organize operations and eliminate disorder, as some of these vehicles fail to adhere to designated locations or lack approval from Kuwait Municipality.

Meanwhile, Head of Central Operations at Kuwait Municipality Yousef Al-Fajji confirmed that

inspection campaigns are ongoing and will continue without interruption.

He explained that the current plan focuses on unlicensed mobile groceries. In collaboration with the General Traffic Department at the Ministry of Interior, efforts are being made on a wide scale to reduce the phenomenon of these vehicles operating randomly on roads and highways. Stopping these vehicles along roads and highways leading to spring camps, chalets, farms, and stables is strictly prohibited. Any vehicle found in violation of the law will be dealt with accordingly. The majority of vehicles comply with the law and regulations, and as a result, any unlicensed vehicle will be confiscated, with the owner required to pay a fine to have it released.



Dr. Al-Jassar emphasizes importance of culture in national identity

Int'l Book Fair commemorates Kuwait Capital of Arab Culture 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24, (KUNA): As part of the 47th session of Kuwait International Book Fair, a cultural discussion was held on Saturday, with a number of men of letters, artists and intellectuals taking part. The discussion, held at Cultural Cafe in Hall No. 6 in Mishref, focused on events celebrating Kuwait selection as Capital of Arab Culture

and Media 2025. Secretary-General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar said that Kuwait's recognition as the Capital of Arab Culture and Media in 2025 is vital for enhancing its role as a cultural hub. He emphasized the importance of culture in national identity and

its role in fostering global interactions. The year-long celebration will showcase Kuwaiti literature, art, and intellect through various exhibitions, performances, and cultural exchange programs. Director-General of ALECSO Dr. Mohammad Ould Amar praised the initiative, highlighting ALECSO's unwavering commitment to promot-

ing cultural collaboration across the Arab world. He noted that while a city is chosen as the capital of culture each year, Jerusalem remains the permanent capital. He affirmed ALECSO's dedication to developing vibrant cultural spaces that support social integration and enrich local communities.



A photo from the discussion.

KUNA photo

MoE reports 94 pct completion of school administration dev project

Detailed report on project submitted to minister

By Abdulrahman Al-Shimmari Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff  
**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: The Ministry of Education's Development Department has reported a 94 percent completion rate for the ongoing project to enhance the organizational structure of school administrations.**

defining the roles and responsibilities within school administrations to strengthen leadership and goal achievement and introducing innovative solutions to address organizational issues and meet the evolving needs of the education sector. This is in addition to providing continuous training programs to develop leadership and administrative skills among school staff.



Al-Tabtabaei

zational structure and detailed plans have developed for secure transportation of exam papers and answers in coordination with relevant authorities. Moreover, digital monitoring systems have been introduced to track and analyze the performance of school administrations. The project's specialization cards are central to defining the roles of key administrative positions. For example, the cards for school principals and assistant principals clearly outline their responsibilities, including implementing MoE policies and developing plans for school work; supervising school operations and coordinating relationships with relevant parties.

This is in addition to monitoring student activities and collaborating with stakeholders; ensuring that educational goals and administrative standards are met. The development project also emphasizes educational sustainability, striving to enhance the effectiveness of school leadership and improve the skills of school administrators. The goal is to link administrative policies with educational strategies

to support the broader objectives of Kuwait Vision 2035, which aims to elevate educational standards in the country. The project defines specific roles for various administrative positions within the schools who are responsible for implementing educational policies, supervising the work of school staff, ensuring student welfare and coordinating activities to achieve educational goals. A significant focus of the project is to provide ongoing professional development for school staff. The training programs aim to improve administrative and educational competencies, helping staff stay updated with modern practices. Moreover, regular evaluations and reporting on the progress of school operations help maintain high standards across the board. In conclusion, the Organizational Structure Development Project represents a major step forward for Kuwait's educational system. It is designed to improve administrative efficiency, support school leadership and ultimately contribute to achieving the goals of Kuwait Vision 2035 by creating a more sustainable and effective education sector.

'Warba' continues to empower Kuwaiti youth with knowledge & skills in Rowad 5.0 program

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: Held in its fifth year in collaboration with DIFC Innovation Hub, Warba Bank's flagship Rowad 5.0 program continues to empower Kuwaiti youth by providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to drive innovation and achieve success in their professional lives, solidifying the Bank's commitment to fostering the next generation of leaders and innovators.



Al-Ghaith

Speaking on the program's success, Anwar Bader Al-Ghaith, Deputy CEO of Support Services and Treasury at Warba Bank, said: "The Rowad 5.0 Program has cemented its place as a milestone initiative in Kuwait, consistently graduating talented students who stand out as global innovators. These students are now equipped with essential skills and knowledge, enabling them to address today's challenges and contribute to Kuwait's economy by creating innovative products and solutions that bridge gaps in society." Al-Ghaith added: "Warba Bank is committed to youth development. We firmly believe that they are the foundation of progress and the future of our nation. Through Rowad, we provide a comprehensive educational platform in collaboration with esteemed partners like DIFC Innovation Hub. The program is designed to address global market trends, with a special focus on artificial intelligence and advanced technologies."

Completing Phase 1 and Advancing Towards Greater Success With the first four weeks of phase one coming to an end, Rowad 5.0 is transitioning into its advanced stages, where participants will concentrate on developing solutions tailored to the banking needs. Warba Bank remains committed to fostering their growth and equipping them with the skills required to meet future challenges effectively. Participants in Rowad 5.0 This year, 18 Kuwaiti students are participating in the program in the United Kingdom. The students include: Firas Al-Sallal, Abdulwahab Al-Rashed, Zamel Al-Zamel, Yousef Al-Essa, Bader Al-Enezi, Ahmed Juma, Yousef Al-Aqeel, Abdullah Al-Munaikh, Abdulmohsen Al-Zanki, Khalil Al-Najem, Maryam Ahmad, Abdul Aziz Al-Zanki, Suleiman Al-Mukhaizeem, Fahad Al-Abdulrazzaq, Abdullah Al-Wazzan, Bader Al-Saeed, Khaled Al-Mazidi, and Mohammed Al-Daihani. Sharing his experience, participant Bader Al-Enezi, a cybersecurity student at the University of Manchester, said: "The Rowad Program has opened doors for me to explore the interconnectedness of technology and innovation, especially in the field of artificial intelligence. Collaborating with team members from diverse disciplines has been an enriching experience that will undoubtedly benefit my career. I encourage students to seize this opportunity to enhance their teamwork skills, explore advanced technologies, and embrace innovation." Fellow participant Mohammed Al-Daihani, a business administration student at the University of Manchester, highlighted: "Rowad goes beyond acquiring knowledge; it fosters ethical and responsible innovation. The program has enhanced my communication skills and prepared me for professional growth. For anyone looking to elevate their career prospects and gain hands-on experience, Rowad offers unparalleled opportunities with robust support from Warba Bank and DIFC Innovation Hub." Warba Bank has recently been recognized with prestigious recognitions, including The Most Sustainable Bank and Best Islamic Digital Services Provider in Kuwait 2024 by International Business Magazine. The Bank was also honored by "Network International" for its leadership in digital innovation and by Mastercard for achieving the highest growth in activating digital credit cards in Kuwait. Through programs like Rowad, Warba Bank continues to exemplify its dedication to supporting innovation, education, and the next generation of leaders, reaffirming its role as a pioneer in Islamic digital banking.

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**NOVEMBER**  
Room Promotion

One Night Stay in a Queen Cabana for 2 persons with inclusive of breakfast was BHD 76.230  
 Now BHD 49.550 Net

One Night Stay in a 2 Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons inclusive of breakfast was BHD 170.247 Net  
 Now BHD 110.661 Net

Promo period from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024 Terms & conditions apply\*

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Other Voices

Kuwait's vision and sustainability

**Dr. Jaber Eid Al-Wandah**  
 International Consultant, Sustainable Development  
 Deputy General Manager – Al-Najat Charity

The issue of sustainability in Kuwait's New Vision 2035 has a clear and fundamental presence. What is the relationship between this vision and sustainability? How do we take it into account and showcase it through reports? And what about Kuwait's disclosures regarding sustainable development?



Dr. Al-Wandah

Kuwait's vision has emphasized achieving sustainability, focusing on governance, and highlighted the role of charitable institutions in raising the status of Kuwait. It also stressed the need for all institutions to commit to this vision and work within its framework, ensuring that their goals align with the state's developmental goals and strive to achieve them. If the goals of the 'New Kuwait 2035' vision are citizen participation, respect for the law, effective governance and transparency, a prosperous and diverse economy, a strong state, and distinguished international standing, then charitable institutions – for which we are writing these articles to explain how they can adopt sustainability – are required to engage the relevant stakeholders, foremost among them being the citizens. The core work of these institutions is based on involving citizens, serving them, and earning their trust. These institutions must also fully comply with the law, uphold its banner, and adhere to governance. They

need to understand the impact of their charitable and humanitarian work on the economy, both domestically and internationally, given the increasing number of beneficiaries from their services and projects. Furthermore, they must recognize that their work and efforts are key reasons for elevating Kuwait's status and name on both regional and global levels. When charitable institutions adopt and implement these principles, they contribute to the seven pillars of the New Kuwait Vision and its development plan, particularly the first pillar: a distinguished international standing by improving Kuwait's regional and global presence in charitable work. Additionally, the sixth pillar is a sustainable and diverse economy by developing a prosperous and diversified economy to reduce the state's heavy reliance on oil export revenues. The seventh pillar, a sustainable living environment, ensures the provision of housing through environmentally sound resources and plans. It is essential that charitable institutions consider these pillars, as they must work towards elevating Kuwait's status, ensuring that their projects and operations contribute to a sustainable economy, and operate with the goal of creating a sustainable and environmentally conscious living environment. If these institutions adhere to these principles, it will then be easier for the relevant state bodies to reflect this in their disclosures and voluntary reports on the progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and reaffirm the commitment of state institutions to working in line with these global objectives. So, has the state issued disclosures on this matter? The answer is yes: Kuwait issued two reports, the first voluntary report on sustainable development in 2019, and the second was published this year in 2023.

To be continued

Projects meant to aid orphans

Kuwait opens charitable educational, residential complexes in Jordan

AMMAN, Nov 24, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to Jordan Hamad Al-Marri inaugurated Saturday Kuwaiti-funded charitable educational and residential complexes in the Jordanian capital Amman.

The educational complex comprises of two three-story buildings - a kindergarten and a preliminary school, built on an area of 5,000 square meters in Amman, the Kuwaiti diplomat told KUNA following the inauguration ceremony.

Ambassador Al-Marri added that the residential complex has three four-story buildings, which would be rented and their revenues would be used to pay for the needs of orphans nationwide.



KUNA photo

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan Hamad Al-Marri inaugurates the Educational Complex in Jordan.

Hassan III ...

Continued from Page 1

fueled by the strength of popular steadfastness led by the king, which resisted colonial rule. Moroccans often recall numerous stories of the bond between the people and the king during that difficult period, and draw inspiration from them in their interactions with the Makhzen. The Makhzen is viewed as both a stronghold of openness to all segments of society and a compass that guides the nation toward progress and renaissance, while also ensuring the state's governance from the field.

"I recall that whenever I would say, 'May you live long,' to the late King Hassan II, he would reply, 'Don't say may you live long, but say may Allah bless your life.' This response is a clear indication that the blessing of Allah in the lives of leaders is reflected in the work they do for their people and their nation. That is why the guards and the people shout in unison 'May Allah bless the life of our master' when greeting their king.

This royal lineage, descending from Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), believes that the success and progress of the people are at the core of its fundamental mission. And how much more profound is it when the king possesses a deep culture, is open to diverse societies, and has a vision for development?

I am talking here about the late King Hassan II, a leader who overcame countless challenges and skillfully managed relations.

This historic leader passed the mantle of rule to his son, King Mohammed VI, who was well-prepared by his father's guidance. King Mohammed VI successfully continued along the firm path laid by King Hassan II, and dealt with the region's crises with wisdom and courage.

That is why Morocco today reaps the fruits of the seeds planted by its late kings, as confirmed by the annual

speeches on the Throne Day. King Mohammed VI has turned this occasion into one for accountability and progress.

This cultured king, who is well-versed in diverse cultures, has a great ability to handle matters from a modern perspective.

Morocco's strategic location necessitates flexibility in its policies and a dynamic approach for dealing with internal issues.

During the recent visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Morocco, Crown Prince Hassan III's reception highlighted a new model of leadership in Morocco. The young prince's performance during discussions with the president of the world's most populous country showcased his exceptional capabilities.

Crown Prince Hassan III possesses a strong presence and a deep cultural understanding, embodying many of the qualities of his late grandfather, King Hassan II.

This, if it indicates anything, reflects the continuous training of Morocco's leaders from an early age within the royal palace for preparing them to handle matters with wisdom, no matter the circumstances.

It highlights the remarkable capabilities of the Moroccan kings and the deeply rooted royal traditions that continued for 358 years. This also reflects Morocco's potential for growth and progress, as it is Africa's golden gateway and a vital link between the Arab world and Europe.

Kuwait Amir

Continued from Page 1

President Abdulfattah El-Sisi on bolstering relations between the two nations across all sectors, as well as regional and international developments.

Attending the meeting were Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, Chief of Crown Prince office retired Lieutenant General Jamal Al-Theyab, Foreign Affairs Undersecretary at the

Crown Prince's Diwan Mazen Al-Essa, Assistant Foreign Minister Ambassador Ahmad Al-Baker and Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Osama Shaltout.

Turkish company

Continued from Page 1

This railway initiative is a significant aspect of Kuwait's 2035 national development plan, which aims to position the country as a global commercial and economic hub. The completion of Kuwait's segment of the GCC railway is projected for late 2030.

October sees

Continued from Page 1

Regarding the accumulated financing balance, local banks' oil and gas financing increased by 9 million dinars in October, reaching 2.385 billion dinars compared to 2.376 billion dinars in September. On an annual basis, financing declined by 73 million dinars, or 2.9 percent, from 2.458 billion dinars in October 2023.

The rise in oil project financing marks a recovery from the low levels witnessed in 2021 due to postponed projects resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, falling demand and reduced oil prices. July 2021 saw the lowest level of financing in history, amounting to just 100,000 dinars.

Additionally, the US Energy Information Administration reported a rise in crude and gasoline inventories, while distillate inventories fell during the week ending November 15.

The crude inventories increased by 545,000 barrels to 430.3 million barrels, surpassing analysts' expectations of a 138,000-barrel increase.

However, crude inventories at the Cushing, Oklahoma, delivery center fell by 140,000 barrels. During the

CSC nominates 9,371 citizens for govt jobs

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: The Civil Service Commission has announced that, following the CSC meeting No. (2024/13) held on Nov 7, a total of 9,371 male and female citizens, who had registered in the central employment system, on November 13 were nominated for government institutions, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Bureau has instructed all government agencies covered by the central employment system that they are not allowed to reject a candidate for employment unless they fail to meet the technical standards set by the respective institution, if applicable.

'Water Supply Drain' project

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: The Kuwait Water Supply Charity (Suqya Charity) announced the successful completion of its "Water Supply Drain" project, with the cooperation of the General Awqaf Secretariat. Over 850,000 water bottles were distributed across more than 15 locations, including hospitals, health centers, and government agencies, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a press release, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Suqya Charity Dr. Najib Al-Othman stated that this project is one of the charity's most important initiatives aimed at benefiting the largest possible number of people in Kuwait.

MoE discusses coordination with ministries over secondary exams

Meeting tackles 'security' to transport exam papers

By Abdulrahman Al-Shimiri Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: Confirming the report published by Al-Seyassah on November 10, regarding coordination between the Ministry of Education and the ministries of Interior and Information to prepare for the General Secondary Examinations, Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, Mansour Al-Daihani, held a meeting with officials from the ministries of Interior, Awqaf and Information to focus on preparations for the first

semester exams of the academic year 2024/2025.

The meeting participants reviewed a comprehensive coordination plan between the Ministry of Education and the aforementioned ministries, which included addressing negative phenomena and adhering to the exam violations list.

The plan also covered field measures that the Ministry of Interior will take to enforce laws against entities and individuals managing suspicious websites and social media accounts that undermine the integrity of education. Legal measures were also discussed to ensure the smooth running of the exams and to protect the educational process.

Additionally, the meeting addressed the practical steps that the Ministry of Education, in coordination with the Ministry of Interior,

will take to ensure the security of transporting exam papers from secret printing presses and the safe transfer of answer sheets to and from exam committees.

Security measures to enhance protection at committee headquarters and to manage traffic and vehicle movement around schools were also covered, ensuring that exams are conducted smoothly and securely.

The meeting was attended by Maryam Al-Anzi, the First Deputy for Literary and Religious Education Examinations; Mansour Al-Dhafiri, the First Deputy for Scientific Examinations; Mahmoud Abdul-Ridha, the Administrative Supervisor of Literary Control; Faraj Nafaa, the Administrative Supervisor of Scientific Control; and Arwa Al-Ayyar, the Director of the Public Relations and Educational Media Department.

Talks to focus on healthcare disparities

Kuwait stresses healthcare rights key element of national dev plans

JEDDAH, Nov 24, (KUNA): Kuwait has highlighted healthcare rights as the crux of national development plans, while the matter is given urgent priority on both regional and international levels, said a senior diplomat on Sunday.

The copious amounts of healthcare aid Kuwait has provided numerous countries with is a testament to how integral the issue is to its 2035 development vision, Kuwait Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Sheikhha Jawaher Al-Sabah told KUNA on the sidelines of talks involving the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) independent human rights committee.

Kuwait has "contributed im-

mensely" towards the matter on events of global magnitude, the diplomat underlined, citing the designation of September 7 as a day devoted to awareness about the Duchenne muscular dystrophy disease as a "Kuwaiti brainchild."

On the purpose of the gathering, Sheikhha Jawaher said it aims to further reinforce Kuwait's position as an active member of the OIC, while simultaneously strengthening the notion that access to healthcare is an inalienable right for all, she added.

The four-day talks will look into healthcare disparities around the region and beyond, in addition to bolstering cooperation on the matter within the Jeddah-based bloc.

**Ministry of Commerce and Industry**

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## Russia supplied air defense missiles to North Korea in return for its troops, says S.Korea



South Korean mechanized unit personnel parade with their armored vehicles during the media day for the 76th anniversary of Armed Forces Day at Seoul air base in Seongnam, South Korea on Sept 25. (AP)

SEOUL, South Korea, Nov 24, (AP): Russia has supplied air defense missile systems to North Korea in exchange for sending its troops to support Russia's war efforts against Ukraine, a top South Korean official said Friday.

The US, South Korea and Ukraine say North Korea sent more than 10,000 troops to Russia in October, some of whom have recently begun engaging in combat on the front lines. North Korea's troop deployment threatens to escalate the war, and what Russia could give to the North in return has been a source of rampant international speculation.

The most alarming development for South Korea and the U.S. would be Russia transferring sophisticated weapons technology that can enhance North Korea's nuclear-capable missiles targeting its rivals. Many experts say, though, that it is

unlikely Russia would do this in the initial stage of the North's troop deployment.

Shin Wonsik, national security adviser for South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, told an SBS TV program Friday that South Korea has found Russia provided missiles and other equipment to help it reinforce its air defense network for Pyongyang, the capital. Shin didn't say what specific missiles Russia gave to North Korea.

Lee Illwoo, an expert with the Korea Defense Network in South Korea, said that Russia has likely sent S-400 long-range surface-to-air missiles, launchers and ground-based radar systems. He said that North Korea is capable of building shorter-range surface-to-air missiles on its own.

The S-400 missile, with a range of 400 kilometers (250 miles), is considered one of Russia's most

advanced anti-aircraft weapons. But Lee questioned how significantly it can boost Pyongyang's air defense, saying Russian air defense systems have failed to effectively deal with Ukrainian drone assaults.

Many observers say North Korea has likely felt the urgent need to boost its air defense capabilities after it last month accused South Korea of flying drones to scatter propaganda leaflets over Pyongyang. North Korea threatened to take military action if leaflets were again dropped. South Korea's military has refused to confirm whether or not it was behind the alleged drone flights.

Kim Dae Young, a military expert at the Korea Research Institute for National Strategy, said it's possible that the air defense systems North Korea acquired from Russia could include counter-drone equipment.

## Myanmar desperate army ramps up attacks including beheadings, torture: UN expert



This handout photo provided by the Karen Human Rights Group shows debris of a school building destroyed by an army airstrike in Bilin township in Mon state, Myanmar on March 23. (AP)

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 24, (AP): Myanmar's desperate military junta is ramping up attacks on villages that have fallen to opposition groups, carrying out beheadings and torture, with women, children and the elderly among the victims, the UN independent human rights investigator for Myanmar said in a new report.

Thomas Andrews, a former US congressman from Maine, said in the report to the UN General Assembly circulated Friday that the junta has responded to military defeats and the loss of territory by using sophisticated weapons against civilians and seeking to destroy towns that it cannot control.

Calling Myanmar "an invisible crisis" because the world's attention is focused elsewhere, he said, "Escalating atrocities against the people of Myanmar are being enabled by

governments that allow, or actively support, the transfer of weapons, weapons materials, and jet fuel to junta forces."

Andrews didn't name the governments. But he praised Singapore for cracking down on weapons transfers that has led to a 90% reduction by Singapore-registered companies, and said sanctions imposed by the United States on junta-controlled, state-owned banks have disrupted military supply chains.

The UN special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar lamented, however, that their actions remain an exception.

He called on all countries to address Myanmar's "devastating human rights and humanitarian crisis" by stopping the flow of weapons to the junta, stepping up humanitarian aid to millions in need, and supporting efforts to hold perpetrators

accountable for human rights violations.

Myanmar is racked by violence that began when the army ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021 and brutally suppressed nonviolent protests. That triggered armed resistance and combat across the country, with the military increasingly using airstrikes to counter the opposition and secure territory.

The army is on the defensive against ethnic militias in much of Myanmar as well as hundreds of armed guerrilla groups collectively called the People's Defense Forces, formed to fight to restore democracy.

The military has said in the past that it only attacks legitimate targets of war and has accused the resistance forces of being terrorists.

## Japan holds Sado mines memorial despite S.Korean boycott amid lingering tensions



Guests offer a moment of silence during a memorial ceremony for the Sado Island Gold Mine in Sado, Niigata prefecture, Japan on Nov 24. (AP)

SADO, Japan, Nov 24, (AP): Japanese officials on Sunday paid tribute to workers at the country's Sado Island Gold Mines but offered no apology over Japan's wartime use of Korean forced laborers, highlighting lingering tensions between the neighbors over the issue.

South Korea a day earlier announced that it was boycotting the memorial, saying it had been impossible to settle unspecified disagreements between both governments in time for the event. The Korean absence is a major setback in the rapidly improving ties between the two countries, which since last year have set aside their historical disputes to prioritize U.S.-led security cooperation.

The Sado mines were listed in July as a UNESCO World Heritage site af-

ter Japan moved past years of disputes with South Korea and reluctantly acknowledged the mines' dark history, promising to hold an annual memorial service for all victims, including hundreds of Koreans who were mobilized to work in the mines.

The first ceremony of what Japan has promised will be an annual event held at a facility near the mines took place with more than 20 seats for South Korean attendees empty.

"As a local resident, I must say (their absence) is very disappointing after all the preparations we made," said Sado Mayor Ryugo Watanabe. "I wish we could have held the memorial with South Korean attendees."

Families of Korean victims of mine accidents were expected to separately hold their own ceremony near the mine

on Monday.

At Sunday's ceremony four Japanese representatives, including central and local government officials and the head of the organizing group, thanked all mine workers for their sacrifice and mourned for those who died. None offered any apology to Korean forced laborers for the harsh treatment at the mines.

Akiko Ikuina, a parliamentary vice minister, representing Japan's government, praised the craftsmanship of the laborers and their contribution to the Sado mines.

She noted that "many people from the Korean Peninsula were at the mines under Japan's wartime labor policies" and that they engaged in difficult work under dangerous and severe conditions away from home and their loved ones, and some died in accidents or from illnesses.

## China seeks inroads

## Taiwan president to visit allies in South Pacific

TAIPEI, Taiwan, Nov 24, (AP): Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te will visit the self-governing island's allies in the South Pacific, where rival China has been seeking diplomatic inroads.

The Foreign Ministry announced that Lai would travel from Nov 30 to Dec 6 to the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Palau.

The trip comes against the background of Chinese loans, grants and security cooperation treaties with Pacific island nations that have aroused major concern in the US, New Zealand, Australia and others over Beijing's moves to assert military, political and economic control over the region.

Taiwan's government has yet to confirm whether Lai will make a stop in Hawaii, although such visits are routine and unconfirmed Taiwanese media reports say he will stay for more than one day.

Under pressure from China, which claims Taiwan as its own territory and threatens to annex it by force if needed, Taiwan has just 12 formal diplomatic allies. However, it retains strong contacts with dozens of other nations, including the US, its main source of diplomatic and military support.

China has sought to whittle away traditional alliances in the South Pa-



Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te, center, arrives to speak at a gathering of the largest delegation of foreign lawmakers to visit Taiwan in Taipei, Taiwan on July 30. (AP)

cific, signing a security agreement with the Solomon Islands shortly after it broke ties with Taiwan and winning over Nauru just weeks after Lai's election in January. Since then, China has been pouring money into infrastructure projects in its South Pacific allies, as it has around the world, in exchange for political support.

China objects strongly to such US stopovers by Taiwan's leaders, as well as visits to the island by leading American politicians, terming them as violations of US commitments not to afford diplomatic status to Taiwan after Washington switched formal recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979.



Demonstrators march against the government of President Gustavo Petro, in Bogotá, Colombia on Nov 23. (AP)

## Colombians take to streets to reject proposed reforms, rebuke Petro

Thousands of Colombians took to the streets on Saturday to oppose the policies of President Gustavo Petro, who accused demonstrators of trying to destabilize the government.

Protesters in cities including Bogotá, Medellín and Cali decried a series of proposed health, labor and pensions reforms and accused Petro's administration of corruption.

The crowd, which included retired military officials and opposition lawmakers, waved Colombian flags, with some demonstrators holding signs that read, "No to Petro reforms," and "No to labor reforms."

"I never expected to have to take to the streets to protest, to give my voice of rejection to this corruption," said Luis Carlos Hernández as he marched through the streets of Bogotá, referring to Petro's supporters as "guerrilla bandits."

Petro, a former leftist guerrilla who has denied the accusations, said that only some 20,000 people participated in Saturday's demonstrations as he accused them of trying to overthrow the government and mock voters.

"In Colombia, we will stop the coup d'état," he wrote on X. (AP)



Paramilitary soldiers stand guard with riot gears at a road barricaded with shipping containers ahead of a planned rally by supporters of imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, in Islamabad, Pakistan on Nov 24. (AP)

## Pakistan partially stops mobile, internet services

Pakistan Sunday suspended mobile and internet services "in areas with security concerns" as supporters of imprisoned former premier Imran Khan geared up for a protest in the capital.

The government and Interior Ministry posted the announcement on social media platform X, which is banned in Pakistan. They did not specify the areas, nor did they say how long the suspension would be in place.

"Internet and mobile services will continue to operate as usual in the rest of the country," the posts said. A spokesperson for the Interior Ministry was not immediately available for comment.

Meanwhile, telecom company Nayatel sent out emails offering customers "a reliable landline service"

as a workaround in the areas suffering suspended cellphone service.

Khan has been in prison for more than a year and has over 150 criminal cases against him. But he remains popular and his political party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf or PTI, says the cases are politically motivated.

His supporters rely heavily on social media to demand his release and use messaging platforms like WhatsApp to share information, including details of events.

Pakistan has already sealed off the capital Islamabad with shipping containers and shut down major roads and highways connecting the city with PTI strongholds in the provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. (AP)





'A new era in the real estate market'

## KFH honors the inaugural cohort of Real Estate Evaluation Program

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) honored the inaugural cohort of graduates of its Real Estate Evaluation Program, the first of its kind in Kuwait. Launched earlier in collaboration with the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), the program aims to serve all professionals and individuals interested in the real estate sector in Kuwait.

The honoring ceremony took place at the KFH Auto in the presence of KFH's Executive Management, represented by KFH Acting Group CEO, Abdulwahab Iesa AlRushood, KFH Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Zeyad Abdullah AlOmar, and KFH Group Chief Operations Officer, Abdullah Abu Alhous, and Head of GUST Executive Education, Dr. Abdullah AlFalah.

**KFH Acting Group CEO- Abdulwahab Iesa AlRushood**

During the ceremony, KFH Acting Group CEO, Abdulwahab Iesa AlRushood thanked program graduates and those involved in implementing the KFH Real Estate Evaluation program. He emphasized that this program aligns with KFH's leadership in social responsibility. It also reaffirms KFH's long experience in the real estate sector, aiming to improve customer satisfaction through a comprehensive program developed by real estate experts.

He added that KFH ushered in a new era in the real estate market by launching a program designed to enhance the skills and professionalism of real estate appraisers. This initiative is expected to positively influence transactions and trades within the real estate market.

AlRushood indicated that KFH is committed to enhancing real estate evaluation methodologies to bolster overall economic activity. This initiative seeks to safeguard the rights and

■ **AlRushood:** The program emphasizes KFH's long experience in the real estate sector  
 ■ **AlOmar:** Encouraging human capital to keep pace with development through the latest technical and professional methods  
 ■ **Abu Alhous:** The program graduates will contribute positively to the real estate market  
 ■ **Dr. AlFalah:** A fruitful collaboration with KFH to elevate the Kuwaiti real estate Evaluation market

assets of relevant institutions, companies, and banks by mitigating risks associated with real estate financing, avoiding conflicts of interest, and fostering stability and growth for all assets.

**KFH Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer - Zeyad Abdullah AlOmar**

Meanwhile, KFH Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Zeyad Abdullah AlOmar extended his congratulations to the inaugural cohort of graduates who successfully completed the three levels of KFH Real Estate Evaluation program. He praised the efforts of those involved in the program and their significant contribution to enhancing the real estate market. He also indicated that the program is ongoing and will witness the graduation of new cohorts.

He noted that the recognition of outstanding employees and talents is part of KFH's commitment to developing and encouraging its human resources to keep pace with advancements through the latest technical and professional methods. AlOmar stressed



Abdulwahab Iesa AlRushood, Zeyad Abdullah AlOmar, Abdulla Abu Alhous, and Dr. Abdullah AlFalah with the honorees.

KFH's commitment to supporting and training employees through advanced programs and courses aimed at delivering the best customer experience in the real estate sector, thereby benefiting participants and ensuring market stability.

AlOmar revealed that the program is now available to firms and individuals interested in the real estate market, indicating KFH is collaborating with relevant local and international entities to establish a certified and accredited professional qualification for program completion.

**KFH Group Chief Operations Officer - Abdulla Abu Alhous**

KFH Group Chief Operations Officer, Abdulla Abu Alhous, expressed his confidence in the significance of the academic and professional knowledge acquired by employees through the program. He highlighted the positive contributions that graduates of the program will bring to the real estate sector in Kuwait. The program was developed by a team of specialists and researchers in the real estate field. This initiative aims to empower appraisers to accurately assess the value of real estate assets, make

sound investment resolutions, and preserve real estate wealth.

Abu Alhous emphasized that the KFH Real Estate Evaluation Program will enhance the position of KFH in the real estate market and contribute to the governance of operations while improving performance, in accordance with established standards recognized by regulatory and supervisory bodies.

He stressed the significance of such programs considering the increasing demand for real estate evaluation services from government institutions, Banks, companies, and individuals.

Head of GUST Executive Education Center – Dr. Abdullah AlFalah

Meanwhile, Head of GUST Executive Education, Dr. Abdullah AlFalah, commended the successful collaboration between KFH and GUST through KFH Real Estate Evaluation Program, which is set to enhance the real estate Evaluation market in Kuwait.

AlFalah praised the strategic relationship between GUST and KFH through ongoing and advanced programs that address all areas and sectors benefiting employees, students and the community.

## Al-Shall report highlights Kuwait's fiscal performance, profits of listed companies

Report covers several key areas

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: As September 2024 drew to a close, Al-Shall's weekly economic report offered a deep dive into Kuwait's fiscal health and the performance of its corporate sector, reports Al-Seyassah daily.**

The report covered several key areas, including the state's financial management, oil revenues and the profits of listed companies, all of which painted a complex picture of the country's economic situation.

The Ministry of Finance shared a snapshot of the state's revenues for the fiscal year 2024/2025. By the end of September, the total revenues collected had reached approximately 10.117 billion dinars, about 53.5 percent of the total estimated revenues for the entire fiscal year, which were projected to be around 18.919 billion dinars.

The bulk of these revenues came from oil. Actual oil revenues amounted to 8.881 billion dinars by September 30, accounting for 54.7 percent of the

expected oil revenues for the year, which were forecasted at 16.234 billion dinars.

Oil, as expected, made up the lion's share of Kuwait's revenue, contributing a substantial 87.8 percent to the total revenues. With the average price of oil standing at \$83.3 per barrel for the first half of the fiscal year, it was clear that the oil sector remained the cornerstone of Kuwait's financial stability.

But the report didn't just focus on oil. Non-oil revenues stood at 1.236 billion dinars, coming in at a monthly rate of 206.1 million dinars.

However, the budget had anticipated a monthly rate of 223.7 million dinars for the entire fiscal year, implying a potential shortfall of about 211.7 million dinars if the current pace continued.

On the spending side, the report highlighted expenditure appropriations of 24.555 billion dinars for the fiscal year, which represented a 1.773 billion dinar decrease from the previous fiscal year.

By the end of September, the government had spent 8.521 billion dinars, with an additional 1.446 billion dinars committed, bringing total expenditures to approximately 9.967 billion dinars. The report noted that the monthly average of expenditures was

1.661 billion dinars.

While the government did record a budget surplus of 150.4 million dinars at the end of September, the report urged caution.

There was concern that spending would increase as the year progressed and the ongoing decline in oil prices, coupled with the uncertain future of OPEC+ production policies, posed risks to the fiscal outlook.

Turning to the corporate side, Al-Shall also monitored the performance of Kuwait's listed companies for the first nine months of the year.

By the end of September, 138 companies (about 96.5 percent of the total listed) had reported net profits totaling approximately 2.126 billion dinars. This marked a 3.8 percent increase compared to the same period in 2023, when profits stood at 2.047 billion dinars.

Looking at quarterly performance, profits for the third quarter amounted to 696.9 million dinars, a 1.7 percent increase compared to the 685.1 million dinars recorded in the second quarter.

However, compared to the 744.1 million dinars reported in the first quarter, the third quarter saw a 6.4 percent decline in profits.

## Burgan Bank expands corporate banking with the opening of new Sabhan branch

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: In line with its nationwide network expansion efforts, Burgan Bank announced the opening of its newest corporate branch in Sabhan, strategically positioned to cater to the expanding business community in the area. This new branch underscores the Bank's commitment to delivering personalized banking services tailored for corporate clients while facilitating efficient daily operations.

The Sabhan branch complements Burgan Bank's existing network of corporate branches, including those at the Bank's Head Office and Al-Shaheed Tower, further enhancing the Bank's ability to serve businesses throughout Kuwait. With services designed for routine banking needs such as account management, record modifications, and withdrawals, the new branch is equipped to meet the diverse requirements of companies in Sabhan and the surrounding industrial areas.

Commenting on the branch opening, Mr. Mohammad Najeeb AlZanki, General Manager – Corporate Banking at Burgan Bank, stated: "The inauguration of the Sabhan branch marks a significant milestone in our strategy to enhance corporate banking services across Kuwait. We aim to provide businesses in the Sabhan area with convenient access to banking solutions that support their growth and operational needs. Our commitment to delivering excellence remains at the forefront as we expand our network and service offerings."

Burgan Bank is committed to delivering distinctive and customized financial solutions that address the unique demands of businesses, including those related to upcoming government contracts. This approach not only supports economic growth but also aligns with the Bank's vision to foster economic development and strengthen Kuwait's business landscape. By positioning itself as a reliable partner, Burgan Bank assists companies in overcoming challenges and driving success in the market.



Mr. Mohammad Najeeb AlZanki, General Manager – Corporate Banking at Burgan Bank.

Additionally, Burgan Bank offers innovative payroll solutions to meet diverse business requirements, helping streamline financial operations, particularly salary management. With its continuously expanding corporate banking products and services, the Bank is focused on enhancing financial accessibility and optimizing the banking experience for businesses.

The Sabhan branch will also be supported by Burgan Bank's Relationship Managers, based at the Bank's headquarters, who offer customized banking solutions for more complex corporate requirements, such as financing and facility management.

As Burgan Bank continues to grow its corporate banking presence, the Sabhan branch is part of a broader strategy to provide innovative banking solutions and exceptional customer service, enhancing the experience for businesses across Kuwait.

For more information on the Bank's branches, products and services, please call the Burgan call center at 1804080, or visit the Bank's website [www.burgan.com](http://www.burgan.com).



KIB and Co-Op Societies officials pose for a group photo.

## Bid to promote banking and financial literacy

## KIB strengthens its strategic partnership with the Union of Cooperative Societies

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the ongoing strengthening of its strategic partnership with the Union of Cooperative Societies in Kuwait. This collaboration aims to promote banking and financial literacy while making banking services and products easily accessible to customers as they shop at cooperative societies across Kuwait. This initiative supports the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) campaign, launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) in collaboration with local banks.

In this regard, Musab Al-Shalan, Deputy General Manager - Retail Banking Department at KIB, met with the President of the Union of Cooperative Societies Musab Al-Mulla at the Union's headquarters. Representatives from the cooperative societies participating in the Bank's strategic agreement were also in attendance, including Mubarak Al-Kabeer Cooperative Society, Mishref Cooperative Society, Al-Shaab Cooperative Society, Farwaniya Cooperative Society,



KIB and Co-Op Societies officials hold a meeting.

Abdullah Al-Salem and Al-Mansouriya Cooperative Society, Qurtuba Cooperative Society, Kaifan Cooperative Society, and Al-Shuhada Cooperative Society.

Al-Shaalan highlighted that KIB aims to expand its partnerships with civil society organizations, including cooperative societies, aligning with the Bank's vision and strategy to maintain a strong presence near its customers while they shop. He pointed out the significant role cooperative societies have played since their establishment in meeting the needs of

citizens and consumers across various regions, positively contributing to the country's economic and social development. "This success has even inspired other countries to learn from the Kuwaiti experience in this field," Al-Shaalan stated.

Al-Shaalan added that this initiative reflects KIB's commitment to social responsibility, as the Bank consistently strives to craft its initiatives and activities with care, aiming to make a positive and sustainable impact on Kuwaiti society. He emphasized that supporting and developing civil soci-

ety organizations is a key objective for the Bank in this regard, commending the outstanding performance of cooperative societies, which have become a successful model of productivity and efficiency.

On his part, Al-Mulla expressed his gratitude for KIB's distinguished role in supporting the cooperative sector, which serves a large segment of citizens. He praised the field training and part-time employment project for recent graduates, designed by the Bank for local youth in collaboration with the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies and the participating cooperative societies. He expressed hope for continued successful cooperation in such social development initiatives.

It is worth mentioning that KIB places great importance on promoting banking awareness within the community and consistently seeks to launch initiatives aimed at enhancing financial literacy. The Bank also actively participates in activities and events supporting the "Let's Be Aware" financial awareness campaign, in line with its main slogan, "Bank for Life."

## KPC announces multiple tenders for consulting and maintenance services

**By Najeh Bilal**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: The Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) has floated several new tenders, signaling a focus on strategic development and operational efficiency.

The first tender is for consulting services to review and enhance the corporation's financial investment strategy and policy. The preliminary meeting for this tender is scheduled for Dec 9, with bids due by December 24.

In addition, KPC has initiated a tender for consulting services to study consumption rates of the corporation's assets and those of its affiliated companies, with the same preliminary meeting and bid submission dates as the financial investment strategy tender.

The corporation also announced a special exercise to engage consultants for auditing the governance of work ethics at KPC. The preliminary meeting for this tender is set for December 23, with bids due by January 7, 2025.

KPC also informed stakeholders of the postponement of the preliminary meeting for a tender on the supply, installation and maintenance of communications equipment and support devices for the main building and the Petroleum Training Center. The new meeting date is November 24, instead of the originally scheduled Nov 21.

In a related development, KPC confirmed that, at the request of Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC), it has awarded a maintenance services tender for KUFPEC's main building in the Shuaibh Administrative Area, valued at 447,000 dinars.

Furthermore, KPC has launched an indivisible global tender for the supply of marine lubricants, with bids due by December 24 and a local tender for labor services related to maintenance and operations at the liquefied gas branch in the Shuaiba Industrial Area. The deadline for bids for this labor tender is January 7, 2025.

## Zain introduces 'The Masters', empowering 30 individuals with disabilities to create, shape their own experiences, and become leaders

■ Follows company's recent creation of the first Corporate Employee Resource Group in the region, and a three-day Masters 'Learn and Lead' training program, both specifically for individuals with disabilities

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative technologies and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, has launched 'The Masters' initiative, empowering 30 individuals with disabilities to create and shape their own experiences and giving them a stage to become leaders through a focus on four core impact areas: 1. Co-creating Zain's Disability Inclusion strategy; 2. Embedding accessibility into all products and services; 3. The Learn and Lead program; and 4. Fostering voice and visibility.

This never-before-seen opportunity for people with disabilities soon follows Zain's establishment in September, 2024, of the first Corporate Employee Resource Group (ERG) in the region, specifically for individuals with disabilities. Partnering with PurpleSpace – the networking and professional hub for disabled employees – this partnership signifies a commitment by Zain to create an ERG experience that goes beyond traditional practices,



Zain 'The Masters' group photo.

supported by the company's top management.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented, "As a leading regional purpose driven entity, the introduction of The Masters is another one-of-its-kind initiative from Zain that underscores that disability is not merely a term, but an opportunity for people with disabilities to advocate,

### Bader Al-Kharafi:

■ "The Masters is another one-of-its-kind initiative from Zain that underscores that disability is not merely a term, but an opportunity for people with disabilities to advocate, lead and act."

lead and act. Our mission is go beyond merely offering telecommunication services, as we focus on addressing deficits and

challenges across our footprint and provide meaningful connectivity that leads to equitable systemic change. Throughout

all the communities we serve, we intend to leave no one behind in terms of their ability to be as active and engaged in society as possible."

Zain just completed a Learn and Lead program, holding a three-day training program for 15 Masters from across its eight markets of operation plus participants from Oman. This program, conducted

by The Butterfly, a UAE-based organization renowned for disability training, took place between November 12-14 and focused on Advocacy, Disability Awareness Self-Empowerment, Leadership, Public Speaking, and Presentation Skills.

Following the training, the 15 Masters are set to return to their respective operations and deliver the same training to employees in the lead up to, and post the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which falls on December 3, 2024.

This first-of-its-kind program places disability at the forefront of Zain's organizational and inclusion outlook, empowering individuals with disabilities to lead sessions, have their voices heard, and see their contributions recognized.

The Masters program envisages that employees who are blind, deaf, or with physical disabilities will be given the opportunity to train others at Zain and Omantel, on Advocacy, Disability Awareness Self-Empowerment, Leadership, Public Speaking, and Presentation Skills, giving them a stage and opportunity to lead and shape their own experiences.

Overall, the expected attendance for The Masters' 'Learn and Lead' sessions is expected to reach approximately 1,000. Through this initiative, all the future Zain and Omantel Masters have the opportunity to advocate for themselves and others, sharing their experiences and becoming leaders wherever they are.



ABK flyers

Highest interest payout

## ABK launches new ABK Heroes Kids Account

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to announce the launch of its new ABK Heroes. This new package is designed to resonate with today's younger generation, providing a fresh identity that motivates and empowers children while emphasizing the importance of saving.

Catered to newborns and children until the age of 16, this account reflects ABK's vision to support this conscientious generation that understand the importance of sustainability and manages their finances responsibly.

The ABK Heroes account comes with a host of attractive benefits and features tailored for young savers, including monthly draws for the chance to win the latest Apple Vision Pro, the highest interest payout in Kuwait of 2%, and an eco-friendly debit card that teaches the importance of sustainability while managing finances. Additionally, account holders will enjoy exclusive discounts at various merchants throughout Kuwait, such as Dabdoob,

Trampo, Kiddi, and much more.

Johari Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, stated, "With the launch of ABK Heroes, we aim to instill the culture of savings in customers at an early age. We believe that by making banking fun and rewarding, we can inspire the next generation to embrace smart financial habits."

ABK decided to name the account 'ABK Heroes' as part of its efforts to encourage children to take responsibility at an early age when it comes to managing their finances. ABK will also be hosting a number of activities for the heroes that will help them become more responsible such as financial literacy workshops, helping people in need by visiting them and providing support as well as learning the importance of maintaining health lifestyle.

Marafi continued, "This account also offers parents the opportunity to plan for their children's financial future early on and reflects the Bank's continuous commitment to providing worthwhile solutions that strengthen its leading position in the Kuwaiti banking sector."

Marafi concluded with an invitation to follow the Bank's social media accounts to remain up to date with the latest marketing initiatives and to benefit from the current promotional campaigns and offers throughout the year.



Johari Marafi

## Traditional sectors in China get smarter with 5G+ industrial net

BEIJING, Nov 24, (Xinhua): At one of the busiest container terminals along the midstream of the Yangtze River, the atmosphere is surprisingly calm, with only a few people around. Automatic cranes efficiently lift and transfer cargo, while driverless trucks glide in and get loaded.

"Now, 50 percent of our terminal's loading and transportation is automated, which has created a huge leap in efficiency," said Chen Xiaomian, production and operations manager of Wuhan CSP Terminal Co., Ltd. The company operates the namesake terminal in Wuhan, capital of central China's Hubei Province.

"We only need 12 workers to remotely handle a workload that typically requires 39 workers at a traditional terminal," Chen said. Supported by 5G+ industrial internet, terminal workers can operate cranes using just

a control handle while monitoring progress on a screen.

According to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT), 5G+ industrial internet is a new infrastructure that integrates application model or industrial ecosystems into industrial sectors. It leverages 5G and other advanced telecommunication technologies.

By connecting people, machines and systems along industrial and value chains, 5G+ industrial internet boosts the digital, networked and intelligent development of industrial sectors, helping companies reduce costs and increase efficiency.

As part of its tech-driven growth strategy, China has committed to developing 5G+ industrial internet in recent years, aiming to accelerate the smart upgrades of its traditional industries.

WASHINGTON, Nov 24, (AP): US President-elect Donald Trump announced Friday that he'll nominate billionaire hedge fund manager Scott Bessent, an advocate for deficit reduction, to serve as his next treasury secretary, one of several personnel decisions that he unveiled as he closed out the workweek.

Trump also said he would nominate Russell Vought to lead the Office of Management and Budget, the same position he held during Trump's first presidency. Vought was closely involved with Project 2025, a conservative blueprint for Trump's second term that the GOP nominee tried to distance himself from during the campaign.

The announcements showed how Trump was trying to balance competing perspectives as he pursues an aggressive and sometimes contradictory economic agenda that includes cutting taxes, reducing government spending, putting tariffs on foreign imports and lowering prices for American consumers.

Although Bessent is closely aligned with Wall Street and could earn bipartisan support, Vought is known as a Republican hardliner on budget and cultural issues.

Trump said Bessent would "help me usher in a new Golden Age for the United States," while Vought "knows exactly how to dismantle the Deep State and end Weaponized Government."

After announcing his choices for key financial posts, Trump kept up the pace of what has been a breakneck transition process.

Trump picked Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer of Oregon, a rare Republican who is considered a stalwart union ally, as his labor secretary. He also said he would nominate Scott Turner, a former football player who worked in Trump's first administration, to serve as his housing secretary.

More choices were named for health and national security positions. In less than three weeks since the election, Trump has announced decisions for almost his entire Cabinet.

Bessent, 62, is the founder of hedge fund Key Square Capital Management, after having worked on-and-off for Soros Fund Management since 1991. If confirmed by the Senate, he would be the nation's first openly gay treasury secretary.

He told Bloomberg in August that attacking the U.S. national debt should be a priority, which includes slashing government programs and other spending.

"This election cycle is the last chance for the U.S. to grow our way out of this mountain of debt without becoming a sort of European-style socialist democracy," he said then.

As of Nov. 8, the national debt



Investor Scott Bessent speaks on the economy in Asheville, N.C., Aug. 14, 2024. (AP)



Acting OMB Director Russel Vought speaks during a press briefing at the White House, March 11, 2019, in Washington. (AP)



Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer, R-Ore., accompanied by Majority Whip Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Minn., left, and House Majority Leader Rep. Steve Scalise, R-La., right, speaks at a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, Jan. 25, 2023. (AP)

stands at \$35.94 trillion, with both the Trump and Biden administrations having added to it. Trump's policies added \$8.4 trillion to the national debt, while the Biden administration increased the national debt by \$4.3 trillion, accord-

ing to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a fiscal watchdog. Even as he pushes to lower the national debt by stopping spending, Bessent has backed extending provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017,

which Trump signed into law in his first year in office. Estimates from different economic analyses of the costs of the various tax cuts range between nearly \$6 trillion and \$10 trillion over 10 years. Nearly all of the law's provisions are set to expire at the end of 2025.

Before becoming a Trump donor and adviser, Bessent donated to various Democratic causes in the early 2000s, notably Al Gore's presidential run. He also worked for George Soros, a major supporter of Democrats. Bessent had an influential role in Soros' London operations, including his famous 1992 bet against the pound, which generated huge profits on "Black Wednesday," when the pound was de-linked from European currencies.

Bessent previously told Bloomberg that he views tariffs as a "one time price adjustment" and "not inflationary," and he said tariffs imposed during a second Trump administration would be directed primarily at China. And he wrote in a Fox News op-ed this week that tariffs are "a useful tool for achieving the president's foreign policy objectives," such as encouraging allies to spend more on defense or deterring military aggression.

In addition, Bessent has floated ideas for how Trump could put pressure on Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, whose term expires in May 2026. Last month, Bessent suggested Trump could name a replacement chair early, and let that person function as a "shadow" chair, with the goal of essentially sidelining Powell.

But after the election, Bessent reportedly backed away from that plan. Powell, for his part, has said he wouldn't step down if Trump asked him to do so, and added that Trump, as president, wouldn't have the authority to fire him.

Trump repeatedly attacked Powell during his first term as president for raising the Fed's key rate in 2017 and 2018. During the 2024 campaign, he said that as president he should have a "say" in the central bank's interest rate decisions. Presidents traditionally avoid commenting on the Fed's policies.

Vought, 48, was the head of the Office of Management and Budget from mid-2020 to the end of Trump's first term in 2021, having previously served as the acting director and deputy director. He's paired a deep knowledge of government finances with his own Christian faith.

After Trump's initial term ended, Vought founded the Center for Renewing America, a think tank that describes its mission as renewing "a consensus of America as a nation under God."

The Center for Renewing America released its own 2023 budget proposal entitled "A Commitment to End Woke and Weaponized Government." The proposal envisioned \$11.3 trillion worth of spending reductions over 10 years and about \$2 trillion in income tax cuts in order to bring the budget into surplus by 2032.

## Chinese feature film awarded at Cairo Int'l Film Festival

# Gaza highlighted at CIFF, Palestinian filmmakers awarded

CAIRO, Nov 24, (Xinhua): The Palestinian Gaza Strip, which is facing ongoing devastating Israeli attacks, has been highlighted in the 45th edition of the Cairo International Film Festival (CIFF), with several Palestinian films and filmmakers awarded during the closing ceremony held on Friday evening.

The documentary *A State of Passion* by Carol Mansour, a Lebanese-Canadian filmmaker of Palestinian origin, and Lebanese producer Muna Khalidi, which sheds light on the medical journey of a Palestinian doctor within Palestine, was awarded Best Arabic Film in the Horizons of Arab Cinema competition.

A Palestinian film competition was initiated in this year's CIFF, in cooperation with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation States Broadcasting Union (OSBU).

The first OSBU award at the 45th CIFF was given to the documentary *Square Kilometer Dreams* directed by Palestinian filmmaker Qassam Sbeih, the second to *A State of Passion*, and the third to *Passing Dreams* directed by Palestinian filmmaker Rashid Masharawi.

"Given what is happening in

Palestine this year, and specifically in Gaza, it was important that the films we made about Gaza be screened at the CIFF," Masharawi told Xinhua during the closing ceremony, stressing the significant role of art in supporting just causes.

Meanwhile, in a special program held for the anthology film *From Ground Zero*, which combines 22 short films from Gaza, the films *Soft Skin*, *No Signal*, and *A School Day* received cash prizes.

From day one of the 45th CIFF, the festival showed solidarity with the Palestinian cause by screening *Passing Dreams* as its opening film.

The festival's president, Egyptian veteran movie star Hussain Fahmy, and the CIFF staff all attached to their attire a label pin of the national flag of Palestine as a sign of solidarity and support.

"The 45th CIFF was not held as scheduled last year due to the events in Gaza, so we had to cancel the festival then. We have returned to say through the festival that Gaza is in our hearts and the Palestinian people are always with us," Fahmy told Xinhua in an earlier interview during the festival.

Chinese film *Brief History of a*



People attend the closing ceremony of the 45th edition of the Cairo International Film Festival (CIFF) in Cairo, Egypt, Nov. 22, 2024. (Xinhua)

Family won the Network for the Promotion of the Asia Pacific Cinema Award as the best Asian feature film at the 45th Cairo International Film Festival (CIFF) concluded here on Friday evening.

"This is my first feature film ... It's a great experience. In all the competitions here, it was the only feature-length Chinese language film. So, that's very special and I'm very happy to win the award," Lin

Jianjie, the director, told Xinhua after receiving the award.

"What I want to do is to bring the Chinese film on the international stage. I think this is a very great achievement for the film," he added.

The film tells the story of a Chinese middle-class family and their son's mysterious friend, with a focus on the bonds between family members.

The jury statement said the film demonstrated a subtle exploration of emotions and the use of imagery and sound design. "They told me it doesn't look like a filmmaker's first feature. It's very mature, and it has a very distinct artistic vision," Lin told Xinhua.

The Chinese feature will be screened on Saturday at one of the theaters of Cairo Opera House, where the 45th CIFF was held.

This year's CIFF saw a strong presence of Chinese films. A highlight of the event was the Chinese Cinema Week, during which seven Chinese features were screened. Among these was *Decoded*, directed by Chen Sicheng, who received the CIFF's Golden Pyramid honorary award.

"China has a great cinema industry for a long time, and we used to watch Chinese films while learning filmmaking," said Egyptian film director Khaled El-Hagar, a jury member of the International Critics' Week Competition.

"It is important for the Egyptian and Arab audience to watch films from different cultures such as China, India, and other Asian countries, not just European and Ameri-

can films," he told Xinhua, describing *Brief History of a Family* as "very interesting and intriguing."

During the ten-day festival, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the CIFF and the Beijing International Film Festival to boost cooperation between the two sides in relevant areas.

"Egypt and China have very strong relations for long decades, especially in the field of arts. In fact, the cinematic and artistic experiences of both countries reflect their civilizations and show a similarity in their dramatic style," Egyptian Minister of Culture Ahmed Fouad Hanno told reporters during the closing ceremony.

He added that this artistic cooperation and closeness between Egypt and China would certainly provide a boost to bilateral cultural exchange.

As for the main International Competition of the CIFF, the Romanian film *The New Year That Never Came*, directed by Bogdan Muresanu, won the top Golden Pyramid Award, while Russia's *Postmarks* and Brazil's *Malu* got the Silver Pyramid and the Bronze Pyramid, respectively.

## Variety

**TRIPOLI:** An European Film Festival kicked off in the Libyan capital Tripoli on Saturday.

The six-day event, sponsored by the European Union (EU) Delegation to Libya and the Libyan General Authority for Cinema, Theater and Arts, will screen films from Spain, Italy, Malta, France, Germany, and Libya, according to the EU Ambassador to Libya, Nicola Orlando.

"This is a unique opportunity to celebrate and promote Libya's rich cultural heritage and vibrant contemporary activity," said Orlando.

"We hope that this festival will become a tradition between Libya and Europe, inspiring a new generation of men and women and creating a greater mutual understanding between our countries and cultures," he added.

Abdul Basset Abu Ginda, chairman of the Libyan General Authority for Cinema, Theater and Arts, said the festival is a "positive step in the path of partnership between Libya and the European Union."

"We also hope for more cooperation in the field of technical training and harnessing arts to serve children and families, emphasizing human rights and calling for the rejection of wars and conflicts in order to achieve a world of peace," Abu Ginda said during the opening of the festival. (Xinhua)

**BERLIN:** American photographer and activist **Nan Goldin** has used a speech at the opening of her exhibition in Germany to condemn Israel's war in Gaza.

Goldin, 71, said Friday she wanted to use her retrospective show at the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin "as a platform to amplify my position of moral outrage" at what she described as "genocide in Gaza and Lebanon."

"My grandparents escaped pogroms in Russia. I was brought up knowing about the Nazi Holocaust. What I see in Gaza reminds me of the pogroms that my grandparents escaped," Goldin said.

Goldin is a leading artist and activist whose life and work was documented in the award-winning 2022 film *"All the Beauty and the Bloodshed."*

She spoke of the displacement and destruction in Gaza, and told a cheering audience that criticism of Israel should not be conflated with antisemitism. (AP)

**HALIFAX, Nova Scotia:** A Canadian security forum on Saturday presented an award to Vladimir Kara-Murza, a Kremlin critic and Pulitzer Prize-winning writer who was freed from prison earlier this year in a massive prisoner exchange.

The Halifax International Security Forum presents the award annually in honor of U.S. Sen. John McCain, who died in 2018, to "individuals from any country who have demonstrated uncommon leadership in the pursuit of human justice."

The forum attracts military officials, United States senators, diplomats and scholars.

"I am humbled beyond words to be receiving this prize, but I view it first and foremost as your recognition of all my fellow Russian citizens who have the courage to stand up to Putin's regime and to call out his murderous war in Ukraine in full knowledge of what the price of that will be," Kara-Murza said.

McCain was a regular at the forum and his son, Jack McCain, presented Kara-Murza with the award. (AP)

## Film



This image released by Netflix shows Thomasin McKenzie in a scene from 'Joy.' (AP)

Heartwarming true story of hope and persistence

# 'Joy' is a loud cheer for fertility, science

LOS ANGELES, Nov 24, (AP): Toward the end of Netflix's "Joy," the muffled cry of a newborn baby prompts a man and woman in a hospital to embrace out of pure bliss. They aren't the parents, but they had as much to do with the birth as the mom and dad.

This charming and winning movie charts the decade-long true story of how the world's first IVF baby was born in England in 1978 - a 5-pound, 12-ounce girl who paved the way for millions more. It's an upbeat, very English affair, mixing sober discussion of endometriosis with chocolate biscuits.

The couple embracing that day were pioneering scientist Robert Edwards and Jean Purdy, a young nurse and embryologist. Together with surgeon Patrick Steptoe, the trio succeeded with in vitro fertilization, a method of treating infertility. Edwards would go on to win the Nobel Prize.

"Joy" has been birthed at a time when science is under threat in America - even IVF - so it's downright inspiring to see plucky, smart scientists working hard to change the world. "What we're doing, it matters," says Steptoe, played with quiet economy by Bill Nighy.

"Joy" is the personal stories of the three scientists - mostly through the eyes of Purdy, a polite lab-coated warrior. "If I hear a commotion, I'm not very good at staying out of it," she says. Perfectly played by Thomasin McKenzie, Purdy is both vulnerable and strong, learning through the process to be a better human. James Norton plays Edwards with charm, self-doubt and calm spirit.

Jack Thorne's script nicely explains the massive

pressure the trio faced. IVF may have become common and uncontroversial over the last decades, but back in the late '70s it was experimental and shunned. The Anglican church called it a sin, the newspapers labeled it Frankenstein-ish and other scientists warned of freak babies. "You're aware they'll throw the book at us," Nighy's Steptoe tells the team. "We will unite them all against us."

Purdy, a single woman as the swinging '60s lead to the '70s, is exiled by her own pious mother - "You can't play God with this," the elder woman tells her daughter



This image released by Netflix shows James Norton in a scene from 'Joy.' (AP)

- and disinvented by her church. No matter. "This fight is ours. We don't have a choice," Purdy says. The film also celebrates the brave would-be mothers who volunteered their bodies to be poked and prodded at the edge of science.

Our hero researchers try to argue to the skeptical world in vain that IVF is simply a way for science to help those in need, like glasses for the shortsighted or dentures for those with teeth decay. It's remarkable to return to this debate now when science's great achievements today may be under threat, like fluoridated water.

Director Ben Taylor keeps the story small and intimate, a series of vignettes adding up to almost like a play. It features moments of quiet and polite bravery, and small conversations over a pint of ale - a reminder of the power of performances and that changing the world doesn't need a muscle-bound bro with X-ray vision.

It's held together by a superb soundtrack with witty selections like "Yes We Can Can" by Lee Dorsey, "Nobody But Me" by The Human Beinz and "Here Comes the Sun" by George Harrison, each song encapsulating the moment in time, like pearls on a strand.

"Joy" is not all joy. There is frustration and loss and tears along the way, but it is a triumphant film about the way humans can make the world better and how a baby's cry can be a priceless gift.

"Joy," a Netflix release, is rated PG-13 for "thematic material brief strong language, some sexual references and surgery images." Running time: 115 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four.



## HEALTH/SCIENCE

Bank hosts health screenings for male employees

## Gulf Bank holds 'Movember' campaign to raise awareness about men's health

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: Gulf Bank has organized the "Movember" campaign to further its commitment to employee health and well-being, following the success of Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October. Celebrated globally in November, this initiative focuses on raising awareness about men's health, with an emphasis on important issues like prostate cancer and mental health.

The campaign offered male employees initial medical screenings for prostate cancer and mental health assessments, conducted in partnership with Royale Hayat Hospital and MindWell Clinic.

Gulf Bank remains dedicated to fostering a work environment that supports overall well-being, with a strong focus on health. This initiative aligns with the Bank's sustainability strategy, which aims to promote a comprehensive approach to employee welfare.

Prior to launching the "Movember" campaign, Gulf Bank organized a health and wellness initiative for female employees, which included various health, awareness, and sports activities. This initiative highlights the Bank's commitment to nurturing and empowering its workforce, recognizing both male and female employees as its most valuable assets.

These activities are part of the wide range of initiatives Gulf Bank implements each year as part of its sustainability programs, addressing key community issues. These programs are inclusive, supporting employees of all genders

and people of determination.

Gulf Bank recognizes its essential role in promoting public health, particularly among its employees. The "Movember" campaign provides an opportunity to involve the broader community in meaningful conversations about men's health, which is often overlooked. The Bank aims for this campaign to inspire positive behavior changes and bring greater focus to men's overall health and well-being.

Gulf Bank is dedicated to upholding sustainability principles by promoting gender equality, providing fair benefits to all employees, and implementing sustainability standards both internally and externally. This commitment reinforces the Bank's leadership position in Kuwait.

Gulf Bank aims to be Kuwait's leading bank, fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace to deliver exceptional customer service while contributing sustainably to the community. Through its extensive branch network and innovative digital services, the bank empowers customers to conduct banking transactions conveniently and efficiently, ensuring a seamless experience.

In alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, "New Kuwait," and its commitment to fostering collaborative partnerships, Gulf Bank is dedicated to driving robust sustainability initiatives across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions. The bank is committed to implementing strategically selected and diverse sustainability programs both internally and externally.



Gulf Bank officials during 'Movember' campaign.

Polio cases up

## Yemen reports 1st chickenpox case

ADEN, Nov 24, (Agencies): The Yemeni Ministry of Public Health and Population confirmed the first infection case of chickenpox in Al-Mahrah Governorate, near the eastern borders with Oman, on Saturday.

The patient showed positive response to medication, the Ministry's pandemic surveillance and response team told Yemen news agency Saba.

Persons in contact with the patient showed no symptoms of infection, which sends a reassuring message about the public health situation in the governorate, the team noted in a statement.

**Polio:** Pakistan reported three polio cases on Sunday, bringing the total number of cases in the country this year to 55, according to an official statement.

The Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health confirmed the detection of Wild Poliovirus Type 1 (WPV1) in three districts, including Dera Ismail Khan, Zhob and Jaffarabad.

Dera Ismail Khan, a district in the country's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, has reported six polio cases this year. Meanwhile, the southwestern districts of Zhob and Jaffarabad have reported three and two cases, respectively, the statement said.

The statement said that the Pakistan Polio Program has conducted multiple mass vaccination drives since January 2024, providing vaccines directly to children at their doorsteps.

**Vaping:** Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov signed a law banning vapes and electronic cigarettes starting from mid-2025, the presidential press service reported Saturday.

The law prohibits the import, circulation and use of electronic cigarettes, imposing a fine of 115 US dollars for smoking electronic cigarettes and about 695 dollars for legal entities. Selling electronic cigarettes will result in fines of 230 dollars for individuals and 750 dollars for legal entities.

Importing electronic cigarettes will result in correctional labor for two months to one year or a fine of up to 1,390 dollars. Meanwhile, importing electronic cigarettes in large quantities will result in a fine of up to 2,300 dollars or imprisonment for one to two years.

The law, titled On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts in the Sphere of Protecting Citizens' Health, will come into force on July 1, 2025.

Climate

Critics call it insufficient

## UN approves \$300b yearly aid for vulnerable nations

BAKU, Azerbaijan, Nov 24, (AP): United Nations climate talks adopted a deal to inject at least \$300 billion annually in humanity's fight against climate change, aimed at helping poor nations cope with the ravages of global warming in tense negotiations in the city where industry first tapped oil.

The \$300 billion will go to developing countries who need the cash to wean themselves off the coal, oil and gas that causes the globe to overheat, adapt to future warming and pay for the damage caused by climate change's extreme weather. It's not near the full amount of \$1.3 trillion that developing countries were asking for, but it's three times a deal of \$100 billion a year from 2009 that is expiring. Some delegations said this deal is headed in the right direction, with hopes that more money flows in the future.

It was not quite the agreement by consensus that these meetings usually operate with and developing nations were livid about being ignored.

COP29 President Mukhtar Babayev gavelled the deal into acceptance before any nation had a chance to speak. When they did they blasted him for being unfair to them, the deal for not being enough and the world's rich nations for being too stingy.

Objected

"It's a paltry sum," India negotiator Chandni Raina said, repeatedly saying how India objected to rousing cheers. "I'm sorry to say we cannot accept it."

She told The Associated Press that she has lost faith in the United Nations system.

A long line of nations agreed with India and piled on, with Nigeria's Nkiruka Maduekwe, CEO of the National Council on Climate Change, calling the deal an insult and a joke.

"I'm disappointed. It's definitely below the benchmark that we have been fighting for for so long," said Juan Carlos Monterrey, of the Panama delegation. He noted that a few changes, including the inclusion of the words "at least" before the number \$300 billion and an opportunity for revision by 2030,

helped push them to the finish line. "Our heart goes out to all those nations that feel like they were walked over," he said.

The final package pushed through "does not speak or reflect or inspire confidence and trust that we will come out of this grave problem of climate change," India's Raina said.

"We absolutely object to the unfair means followed for adoption," Raina said. "We are extremely hurt by this action by the president and the secretariat."

Speaking for nearly 50 of the poorest nations of the world, Evans Davie Njewa of Malawi was more mild, expressing what he called reservations with the deal.

Agreement

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a post on X that he hoped for a "more ambitious outcome." But he said the agreement "provides a base on which to build."

There were somewhat satisfied parties, with European Union's Wopke Hoekstra calling it a new era of climate funding, working hard to help the most vulnerable. But activists in the plenary hall could be heard coughing over Hoekstra's speech in an attempt to disrupt it.

Eamon Ryan, Ireland's environment minister, called the agreement "a huge relief."

"It was not certain. This was tough," he said. "Because it's a time of division, of war, of (a) multilateral system having real difficulties, the fact that we could get it through in these difficult circumstances is really important."

U.N. Climate Change's Executive Secretary Simon Stiell called the deal an "insurance policy for humanity," adding that like insurance, "it only works if the premiums are paid in full, and on time."

The deal is seen as a step toward helping countries on the receiving end create more ambitious targets to limit or cut emissions of heat-trapping gases that are due early next year. It's part of the plan to keep cutting pollution with new targets every five years, which the world agreed to at the U.N. talks in Paris in 2015.



A group photo from the cooperation agreement signing between Ali Abdulwahab Al-Mutawa Commercial Company and the Kuwaiti Cancer Patients Care Society.

## Roche's lymphoma drugs made accessible

## AAW, KSCCP bring hope to expatriate cancer patients with affordable care

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 24: Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW) announced today a partnership with the Kuwait Society for the Care of Cancer Patients (KSCCP) to provide advanced cancer drugs from Hoffmann-La Roche, the Swiss multinational healthcare company. This initiative aims to bring hope to expatriate cancer patients in Kuwait, making lymphoma treatment more accessible.

The partnership agreement was signed at AAW's headquarters on Wednesday, November 20th, during a meeting between AAW Chairman and CEO, Mr. Faisal Ali Al Mutawa, and KSCCP Mr. Mohamed Mubarak Al Otaibi, in the presence of the Vice President Hamoud Ali Al-Mutairi, and a delegation from Roche, including the Regional Manager for the Gulf, Dr. Ahmed Tawfik, and Dr. Ali Abu Sharkh.

AAW CEO and Chairman, Mr. Faisal Ali Al Mutawa said, "We are pleased to sign this agreement with the Kuwait Society for the Care of Cancer Patients to provide the latest medications for critical cases of cancer to expatriate patients who are unable to bear the costs of treatment. This initiative is a noble humanitarian act that instills hope and alleviates the suffering of patients."

He added, "We extend our gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of this initiative, with special thanks to the KSCCP, under the patronage of Mr. Mohammed Mubarak Al-Otaibi. At AAW, we remain committed to improving patients' lives and supporting charitable organizations



From right to left: Mr. Hamoud Ali Al-Mutairi, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Society, and Mr. Faisal Ali Al-Mutawa, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Ali Abdulwahab Al-Mutawa Company.

addressing various illnesses."

KSCCP Chairman, Mr. Mohamed Mubarak Al Otaibi said, "This partnership with AAW reflects our shared commitment to providing compassionate care and hope to expatriate cancer patients in Kuwait. By making lymphoma treatments more accessible and affordable, we are easing their burden and supporting their recovery. Thanks to AAW's dedication to this cause, particularly Mr. Faisal Al Mutawa, who consistently demonstrates the spirit of generosity and solidarity."

Roche General Manager for the Gulf Countries, Dr. Ahmed Tawfik

said, "At Roche, we are committed to improving patients' lives through innovation and ensuring that advanced treatments reach everyone in need. We recognize the efforts and the vital role KSCCP plays in supporting expatriate cancer patients and providing them with the care and hope they deserve."

Since its establishment, AAW has been dedicated to supporting organizations in the field of health awareness. The company has contributed to initiatives such as the Ruqaya Abdulwahab Al-Qatami Breast Cancer Foundation, and the National Cancer Awareness Campaign (CAN), among others.

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