



Opinion

Dear Minister of Social Affairs, charity work has become a business

Ahmed Al-Jarallah Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THERE is no doubt that the majority of people highly appreciate the efforts of the Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah in eliminating the negative practices that have long plagued social and charity work for over thirty years.

The charity sector and cooperative societies have been working in accordance with the agendas of their officials who pursue ideological agendas, which eventually led them into unethical practices, including human trafficking.

This situation mirrors the case of fictitious companies, which were established based on the influence of certain parliamentarians and had fraudulently obtained labor quotas from the Public Authority for Manpower. This manipulation resulted in an influx of loose and marginal labor into the country. It is inconceivable for a company to employ ten thousand

workers without a single active project to justify their presence.

The owners of these fictitious companies issue visas to expatriates for a fee of KD 1,000, sometimes charging even more than the cost of the visa itself. After a year, they pocket an additional KD 400 to KD 500 for renewals, and as they say, "you can do the math."

As a result, the population census file has been inflated, while the entity responsible for addressing this issue, which is the National Assembly, was complicit in this crime. The Council of Ministers made the right decision by approving the

amendment to the Foreigners' Residence Law.

This situation calls for the urgent amendment of the Charity Work Law, especially after witnessing how some MPs defended suspicious organizations and entities that perpetuated these harmful crimes.

Over the past thirty years, many such organizations were established under dubious names and operated in a state of chaos, prompting multiple international warnings concerning their activities.

What is truly perplexing is that some of these associations exploit the

process of assessing the need for their workers and engage in human trafficking, much like fictitious companies. They view it as a lucrative source of income, even though it is illegal. These individuals have little regard for Kuwait's interests or reputation because they are hustlers.

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NBK Wealth hosts exclusive forum featuring global investment leaders



Gulf Bank hosts renowned marketing expert Kolster for an inspiring lecture on building iconic brands



Kuwait unveils 57 rare Islamic artifacts at Saudi arts expo

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Representative of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, handed on Tuesday a letter from His Highness to King Salman bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia, inviting him to the Gulf Cooperation Council Summit, slated to be hosted by Kuwait on Dec 1.

The letter, received by Minister of State and Council member Prince Turki Bin Mohammad Bin Fahad Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, also touched upon deep-rooted relation between the two brotherly countries.

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received a letter on Tuesday from Tajik counterpart, Sirojiddin Muhriddin, on strengthening bilateral ties and developing them across various sectors, as well as cooperation on regional and international fronts.

According to a Ministry statement, this was during Al-Yahya's reception of Tajik Ambassador to the country Zubaydullo Zubaydov. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: The risk management center of the GCC Secretariat held on Tuesday a workshop as part of the Gulf Week ahead of the 45th GCC Summit to be held in Kuwait on December first.

GCC Center researcher Bandr Al-Husseini said during the workshop that the center was eager to explore means to enhance Gulf cooperation within risk management, exchanging expertise on the matter. (KUNA)



The Minister of Foreign Affairs during his meeting with the Palestinian Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Rami Tahboub.

Palestinian leader updates Amir on relations, key developments

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a letter on Tuesday from Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

The letter on bilateral ties and developments of the current situation in occupied Palestinian lands, as well as efforts to achieve regional security and stability, was received by Minister of

Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya during his reception of Palestinian Ambassador to the country Rami Tahboub. Meanwhile, the State of Kuwait vehemently condemned on Monday Israeli occupation legislation banning the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the

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Kuwait nabs fraudster duo selling residency permits for KD 300-500

600 workers traced to companies tied to accused



Kuwait's Acting Prime Minister, Defense and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah poses for a group photo with his counterparts from the Gulf Arab region during the 21st session of the GCC Defense Ministers meeting in Doha on Tuesday.

Kuwait DM joins counterparts for talks in Qatar

GCC drills key to stronger defense: Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef

DOHA, Nov 26, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Acting Prime Minister, Defense and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah met his counterparts from across the wider Gulf Arab region for talks in Qatar on Tuesday, saying the gathering comes amid highly complex circumstances.

Ahead of a pan Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit due in Kuwait next week, he addressed the 21st session of the GCC Defense Ministers meeting,

saying his country is committed to push forward bloc-wide defense cooperation in a bid to protect the region's stability and security.

He went on to heap praise on a spate of joint GCC military drills that had taken place as of late, saying that such exercises are instrumental in bringing effective "defense strategies" to fruition, hoping the gathering would ultimately achieve its objectives.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef arrived in Qatar, Tuesday, to attend the 21st session of the GCC Defense Ministers.

Qatari Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for Defense Affairs Sheikh Saud Al-Thani, senior GCC military officials, and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Qatar Khaled Al-Mutairi received Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef.

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DGCA affirms commitment to boost aviation safety, ensure sustainability

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26, (KUNA): Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Acting Chief Duajj Al-Otaibi affirmed Tuesday commitment to enhancing aviation safety standards and ensuring a safer and more sustainable future for the aviation industry.

Al-Otaibi made these remarks while inaugurating the fifth aviation safety summit of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Middle East Office.

He asserted that aviation safety is a priority in the face of increasing challenges of rapid advancements, growth of air traffic and evolving regulatory framework.

The summit will address innovation

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KUNA photo Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Acting Chief Duajj Al-Otaibi

'No changes after allocation draw'

Updated housing care rules protect beneficiaries, heirs

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Minister of State for Housing Affairs, and Chair of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare

(PAHW) Abdullatif Al-Mishari issued a ministerial decision for amending certain provisions of the housing care regulations.

According to the decision, the third paragraph of Article 62 of the housing care regulations has been revised.

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Malware threats on rise

Beware of bogus deals in e-shopping, says Mol

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Ministry of Interior has issued a warning to consumers about suspicious advertisements promising high discounts, cautioning that these promotions could potentially be linked to malware, reports Al-Seyassah

daily. In a recent post on the X platform (formerly Twitter), the Ministry emphasized the importance of safe online shopping practices.

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Kuwaiti jet ski champion sets Guinness record for 4th time

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26, (KUNA): The Guinness World Records on Tuesday honored Kuwait's world-famous jet ski champion Mohammad Burbayea for setting a new Guinness record for the fourth time by winning 28 medals during world jet ski events.

Burbayea was awarded during a ceremony organized on Tuesday under the patronage of Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.

Addressing the event, which was attended by the minister's representative, Acting Director-General of the Public Authority for Sports Bashar Abdullah, and Guinness Envoy Kenzy Al-Defrawi, Burbayea said that he was proud of this great achievement, which, he said, raised the name of Kuwait worldwide.

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KUNA photo Kuwait's world-famous jet ski champion Mohammad Burbayea.

Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:57	Asr	14:30
Sunrise ..	06:20	Maghrib ..	16:50
Zohr	11:35	Isha	18:11

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: A significant decrease in temperature and cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-45 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Weather

By Night: Cold and clouds and chance of rain will decrease gradually with moderate to fresh southeasterly wind changing to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 20-50 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	27	18

Kuwait Airport	29	18
Abdaly	28	15
Bubyan	27	18
Jahra	28	17
Failaka Island	28	20
Salmiyah	24	19
Ahmadi	22	17
Nuwaisib	29	20

Shaping future of media sector discussions on agenda

Kuwait participates as Global Media Congress begins in Abu Dhabi

By Salem Al-Methen

ABU DHABI, Nov 26, (KUNA): The third edition of the Global Media Congress 2024 (GMC) began on Tuesday in Abu Dhabi, with wide international participation, including Kuwait, to discuss the future of the media sector.

The Congress, held under the patronage of Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Presidential Court of UAE, brings together leaders, experts, and media professionals to explore the latest developments and trends shaping the media sector, and discussing its challenges and opportunities, as well as enhancing sustainability and efficiency in the global media landscape.

Kuwait's participation is represented by the Ministry of Information Undersecretary, Dr. Nasser Muhaissen, on behalf of Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs.

The World Media Congress aims to carve out new directions for the future of media by providing in-depth insights into the challenges and opportunities within the sector, and creates an interactive environment for participants to exchange ideas, share expertise, and explore modern technologies that contribute to the evolution of media.

The Congress is divided over three days into three main themes that represent current and future trends in the media world: new media standards and trends, media content and digital media challenges.

Day One focuses on exploring the latest trends in news production, including the impact of artificial intelligence technologies and new business models reshaping the sector.

Day Two analyzes diversity and inclusion in media production, with an emphasis on the trends of modern content platforms and how to meet the changing

needs of audiences.

Day Three highlights the opportunities and challenges faced by content creators in light of rapid digital transformation.

The additional sessions provide deep insights into how to leverage digital tools to enhance audience engagement, innovate new monetization strategies, and maintain content authenticity.

The significance of this event lies in its unique opportunity to enhance dialogue among various stakeholders in the sector, exchange ideas on addressing current challenges, and explore avenues for innovation in the media industry, which would contribute to a sustainable future.

Dr. Ahmad Al-Mansoori, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Media and Creative Industries at the UAE University, told KUNA that the Global Media Congress is an exceptional platform that attracts a distinguished group of decision-makers, experts, and professionals to discuss the future of media, especially amidst the rapid transformations taking place both regionally and internationally.

He added that with the 3rd edition of this event being held in Abu Dhabi, the Congress strengthens the UAE's position as a global hub that combines creativity, technology, and innovation in the media industry.

This year's edition focuses on three main pillars that summarize the most pressing contemporary media issues, including new media standards, media content, and digital media challenges.

Dr. Al-Mansoori pointed out that discussing these themes opens new horizons for understanding the fundamental shifts in how media content is produced, distributed, and consumed, contributing to the advancement of professional practices aligned with future aspirations.

He added that as an academic, he sees that this event as an ideal opportunity for communication between experts, researchers, and professionals to enhance partnerships and support media innovation, and that it also strengthens the role of academic institutions in preparing talents capable of keeping up with digital changes and developing responsible media that is aware of both local and global issues.



Dr. Al-Mansoori

No pay, no jobs for teachers whose citizenship withdrawn

Transfers, secondments annulled to pre-empt shortages

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Ministry of Education (MoE) has taken steps to address the impact of citizenship withdrawal decisions on its workforce, resulting in the suspension of salaries for affected male and female teachers.

The ministry has also instructed educational districts to ensure that these teachers are no longer allowed to teach.

Sources from the Ministry confirmed that the withdrawal decisions have created vacancies within the education sector and the first batch of 70 affected employees has already been identified.

A second group of administrators and teachers is expected to be included in the ongoing decisions, further intensifying the challenges faced by the ministry.

To manage the resulting teacher shortage, the Ministry of Education has initiated some measures by working to exempt educational institutions from the ministerial decision that currently restricts transfers and secondments within the ministry.

This exemption is crucial to promptly address the shortage, especially with mid-year exams approaching.

The Coordination Department in the Public Education Sector is collaborating with educational districts to identify and deploy alternatives to fill the gaps left by the affected staff.

The Ministry's efforts aim to ensure that students' education is not disrupted during the critical mid-year examination period, despite the administrative challenges.

The withdrawal of citizenship for a significant number of teachers and administrators poses immediate operational and ethical challenges.

On one hand, the Ministry must maintain the integrity of its workforce; on the other, it must uphold its responsibility to students and the broader educational system.

Efforts to address the shortage will likely include internal adjustments and possible recruitment drives to ensure the continuity of education services.

These developments underline the delicate balance between administrative decisions and their impact on essential public services.

Fairs held at Avenues to mark 'Gulf Weeks'

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information Dr. Nasser Muhaissen stated that Kuwait's hosting of the 45th Gulf Summit early December coincides with the launch of Gulf Weeks activities, which began three days ago under the patronage of the Minister of Information and Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.

The event includes around 30 activities, events, workshops, and symposiums covering a variety of cultural, artistic, and scientific themes. These are organized in collaboration with several state institutions, including Kuwait University and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET).

In an exclusive press statement issued on the sidelines of his opening of the photographic exhibition accompanying the Gulf Summit, which is being held by the Ministry of Information with the cooperation of the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council from November 24 to 30 at the Avenues Mall, Dr. Nasser Muhaissen said, "The Gulf Cooperation Council Secretariat's exhibition at the Avenues aims to introduce both Kuwaiti and Gulf societies, and the public in general, to the milestones in the journey of the Gulf Cooperation Council. It also highlights the areas of cooperation among the six Gulf states, their origins and current status."

He revealed that another exhibition "The Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Exhibition" was also opened at the Avenues, which showcases the role of Gulf news agencies in documenting and chronicling cooperation between the GCC states.

Dr. Muhaissen explained that Gulf news agencies play a vital role in documenting important events, and preserving valuable moments in their archives, particularly those related to the Gulf Cooperation Council's journey. This work ensures that the public, both now and in the future, can understand the ongoing efforts of the GCC member states and witness the depth of the fraternal bond and cooperation among them, thus spreading a culture of unity and collaboration.

He revealed that the KUNA exhibition at the Avenues Mall features over 48 rare photographs from the archives of various Gulf news agencies that document the history of the Gulf summits from their inception in 1981 up to the present, as preparations continue for the 45th summit in Kuwait.

Photo by Mohammad Morsi
Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan Emil Karimov and ambassadors from different countries visit a book stall.

Kuwait Library marks 'Shusha'

Kuwait, Baku ties on fast track: Karimov

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan Emil Karimov confirmed that the Azerbaijani-Kuwaiti relations are advancing rapidly across all levels; considering that both official and public relations between the two countries are strong and deep in political, cultural, religious and other fields.

In his speech during a ceremony organized by the National Library of Kuwait on Monday on the occasion of Shusha, Azerbaijan being named the 'Capital of Culture for the Islamic World 2024'; Karimov disclosed that Shusha was designated as both the cultural capital of Azerbaijan and the capital of culture for the Islamic world for 2024 at the 12th conference of culture ministers held in Doha, Qatar on Sept 25, 2023.

He said Shusha was reconstructed under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev within a short period, restoring life to this historic land. "Tremendous efforts were exerted to preserve and promote historical, cultural and religious monuments; transforming Shusha into a hub for international events and forums within the Islamic world. This development has been widely appreciated by various cultural, scientific and religious organizations, including Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)," he added.

Karimov described this designation as evidence of the growing support and respect that Azerbaijan receives from the Islamic world. He affirmed it reflects special admiration for Shusha, which fully embodies the richness of Islamic culture. He believes this recognition will further strengthen cooperation and solidarity among Islamic nations.

He also pointed out Shusha's historical, cultural and strategic significance for Azerbaijan. In the second half of the 18th century, Shusha became renowned for its carpets, silk, fabrics and ceramic dishes; reaching global markets," he disclosed.

The Ambassador reminded the audience that in 2020, Azerbaijan's territories, including Shusha,



Emil Karimov

which had been under Armenian occupation, were liberated by the Azerbaijani Army during the 44-day Patriotic War. "On Nov 8 of that year, after 28 years of waiting, Shusha was liberated, marking a significant and symbolic moment for the Azerbaijani people," he asserted.

He expressed gratitude for the support of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states that stood by Azerbaijan's territorial integrity during the Karabakh conflict and during the 44-day war. "Today, multilateral cooperation projects for the reconstruction of Karabakh are underway, involving countries in the Islamic world," he affirmed.

Meanwhile, Director of the National Library Suham Al-Azmi emphasized that cooperation with ambassadors marks a significant step forward in fostering cultural exchange and advancing bilateral relations. She praised the strong ties between Kuwait and Azerbaijan, commending the Azerbaijan Embassy's efforts in strengthening these relations.

Al-Azmi stated that the celebration coincided with Shusha's announcement as the 'Capital of Islamic Culture for 2024' -- a recognition of the city's rich cultural history as a center for literature, art and heritage.

Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sonmez affirmed that Turkey and Azerbaijan are more than just neighboring nations; as they are one people, united by common history, culture and aspirations.

She stressed that under the leadership of presidents Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Ilham Aliyev, the partnership between the two countries has reached exemplary levels and serves as a model for the region and beyond. She further underscored Shusha's importance as a cultural city -- a cradle for Azerbaijani art, literature and music; as well as its historical position as the center of cultural and intellectual activities.

"Therefore, Shusha was named 'Cultural Capital of the Turkic World' in 2023 and 'Cultural Capital of the Islamic World' in 2024. Being a proud symbol of resilience and heritage underscores its global cultural significance," she added.

Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Totonji also affirmed that Shusha's importance extends beyond Azerbaijan, connecting nations, particularly Azerbaijan and Iran, which share common history, language and traditions. He pointed out that Shusha's music resonates with the same 'maqam' system, which is mainly melodic, used in Persian classical music, and that the poetic works of Azerbaijani writers often draw inspiration from Persian traditions.

Kuwait keen on enforcing int'l anti-corruption pacts

DOHA, Nov 26, (KUNA): Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority's (Nazaha) chairman Abdulaziz Al-Ibrahim affirmed on Tuesday that Kuwait was keen on implementing and following up on international anti-corruption accords and agreements.

Speaking to KUNA on the sideline of Doha's senior officials preparatory session head of Wednesday's second ministerial meeting for OIC anti-corruption organizations, Al-Ibrahim pointed out that the importance of executing all international laws and procedure against corruption in all of its forms.

He indicated that Nazaha would explore cooperation with the meeting's attendees to better counter corruption and fend off its negative effects on society.

He said that the ministerial meeting would begin with signing the Makkah Agreement amongst OIC members within the domain of law and anti-corruption.

The agreement not only intensifies anti-corruption cooperation, it also helps exchange data and expertise in this regard, affirmed the Kuwaiti official.

Al-Ibrahim noted that Nazaha had actively participated in outlining the Makkah Agreement, which would hopefully benefit anti-corruption efforts amongst OIC members.

Heads of anti-corruption organizations would also look into ways to implement the tenets of the agreement, working on the mechanisms of the accord, he added.



Al-Ibrahim

Other Voices

Ambassador Genge: prominent career of service and friendship

By Nasser Al-Hajri

As Ambassador Manelisi Genge concludes his remarkable tenure as South Africa's Ambassador to Kuwait, we take this moment to celebrate an extraordinary career and a legacy of distinguished diplomacy.

Ambassador Genge, an experienced career diplomat, has dedicated over three decades to advancing South Africa's foreign relations. Backed with an impressive academic background -- including a PhD in History from Michigan State University -- his expertise in global affairs and history has informed his strategic approach to diplomacy.

Since assuming his role in Kuwait in October 2020, Ambassador Genge has been instrumental in deepening the ties between the two countries. One of his notable achievements is promoting South Africa as a top destination for Kuwaiti tourists. Just this past summer, 1,713 Kuwaitis visited South Africa, drawn by its breathtaking landscapes, rich wildlife, and unparalleled experiences in nature.

Thanks to his efforts, Kuwaitis are exempt from visa fees, making South Africa even more accessible for those seeking adventure, culture, and relaxation.

His broader diplomatic contributions

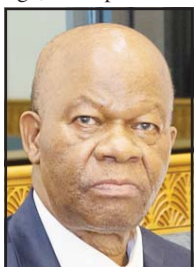
include facilitating the South Africa-Kuwait Joint Commission for Cooperation (JCC) Agreement and amending protocols to prevent double taxation. Under his leadership, the volume of South African food exports to Kuwait increased, reflecting his focus on fostering meaningful economic and cultural connections.

Ambassador Genge's career began in academia as a lecturer in History at the University of the North, now the University of Limpopo, before transitioning to research at the Africa Institute of South Africa. This foundation propelled him to key roles in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), where he served as Director of Eastern Europe, Acting Chief Director for Central and Eastern Europe, and Chief Director for East Asia and Oceania.

His ambassadorial assignments have included Sudan, the Republic of Congo, Belgium, and lastly Kuwait.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Ambassador Genge is admired for his intellect, professionalism, and genuine warmth. His work has not only advanced South Africa's global standing but also created lasting relationships and fond memories among those who have had the privilege of working with him.

As Ambassador Genge enters retirement, we extend our deepest gratitude for his exemplary service. We wish him a retirement filled with peace, joy, and the satisfaction of a career that has truly made a difference. Ambassador Genge's legacy will undoubtedly inspire the next generations of South African diplomats.



Manelisi Genge

Revenue generation eyed

MoSA plans to auction 11 parks

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi says the ministry has developed a plan to auction its 11 parks, for which it has approached the Ministry of Finance and received initial approval. The ministry is now awaiting a letter from the Fatwa and Legislation Department to support the ministry's position on putting these parks up for auction. The goal is to invest these properties and generate financial income for the ministry.

Dr. Al-Ajmi made these remarks during the celebration of International Children's Day, organized by the Department of Women and Childhood at the ministry, which was held under the patronage and presence of the Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah recently in Khalidiya.

In a press statement issued yesterday, he explained that the Ministry of Social Affairs, with this plan, aims to transition from

a ministry that solely provides financial assistance to a ministry that generates its own revenues. This marks a historic shift in the ministry's operations, as it seeks to enhance its role and contribute to the state's revenue development. In the near future, the ministry will generate financial income that will directly benefit the state budget.

Dr. Al-Ajmi revealed that the cooperative societies law is still under review, adding that the ministry is working on presenting improvements and amendments to the law to address previous shortcomings, with the aim of developing a comprehensive new law.

Regarding the ministry's plan to upgrade nurseries, he said the ministry oversees two key departments: the Private Nurseries Department and the Motherhood and Childhood Department, both of which focus on child welfare, indicating that many new activities for children will be announced on a weekly basis.



'KAC needs bold reforms to reclaim position in aviation'

"A FEW days ago, the newspapers printed unexpected news report: 'The British Airways would halt its flights to Kuwait during the first quarter of next year.' This decision came as a surprise, especially given the deep historical ties between Kuwait and Britain, including their shared history in aviation," columnist **Adnan Abdullah Al-Othman**, wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"The British Airways has long been more than just a carrier for Kuwait; it symbolizes decades of connection and cooperation.

"The roots of this relationship run deep. According to British reports, the first British aircraft appeared in Kuwait in 1919. At the time, Kuwait was unfamiliar with aviation.

"The first planes to touch down were military aircraft from the British Royal Air Force, established in April 1918. These aircraft symbolized Britain's growing dominance in the Arabian Gulf.

"In the early days, Kuwait lacked an airport; flights primarily arrived from Iraq. Eventually, a simple runway was built, capable of accommodating both military and civil planes.

"By the time Kuwait Airport was formally established, it had become a vital hub for Imperial Airways flights connecting the East and the West.

"Yet, history offers little solace as we confront the present. British Airways' decision to stop flights is not the first of its kind.

"Germany and the Netherlands also ceased their operations in Kuwait earlier, but the British case feels different. British Airways has always stood out, not just for its historical ties but also for its competitive prices and high-quality service.

"It offered travelers unparalleled access to London, America, and beyond with the added benefit of three travel classes -- luxuries not currently matched by Kuwait Airways.

"The bigger concern is what this decision says about Kuwait's position in international aviation. Has Kuwait International Airport fallen behind, destined to be viewed as a regional facility rather than a global hub?

"Why are international carriers stepping away? Is it merely due to competitive pricing from Gulf and Turkish airlines, or are there deeper issues, such as the quality of services and infrastructure at Kuwait International Airport?"

"Moreover, how is it that Bahrain successfully negotiated the return of British Airways, while Kuwait remains silent? The lack of an official response or acknowledgment from civil aviation authorities is concerning.

"As British Airways and others retreat, Kuwait Airways stands in stark contrast -- an airline with a proud history but one facing significant operational challenges. The fleet is limited, service quality lags behind competitors, and the airline lacks strategic agreements with other carriers, leaving passengers to fend for themselves during layovers.

"Earlier this year, I experienced these shortcomings firsthand. On a trip to Hong Kong via Thailand, I had to collect my bags, go through passport control, and recheck them for the final leg of the journey. The same ordeal repeated itself in Geneva. This lack of coordination with other airlines is frustrating and reflects poorly on the Kuwait Airways.

"So, what's the solution? Kuwait needs bold reforms to reclaim its place in global aviation. Two potential paths stand out:

"Kuwait could establish a new airline in partnership with the private sector, following the example of Riyadh Air in Saudi Arabia. Such a carrier could enter the market with strong financial backing and a modern fleet, competing with regional and international players.

"Alternatively, the government could privatize Kuwait Airways, transferring current employees to retirement or other state positions. A fresh management team, free from bureaucracy, could rebuild the airline from the ground up, adopting innovative strategies and global best practices.

"Kuwait's aviation future is at a crossroads. As international airlines withdraw, the nation must act decisively to enhance its airport facilities, improve customer experiences, and develop a world-class airline that can compete on the global stage.

"Failure to act risks relegating Blue Bird to the sidelines of international travel while neighboring countries continue to soar; so it is time for Kuwait to dream big, take flight and

reclaim its place among the world's leading aviation hubs."

Also:

"The postponement of the government program has sparked a wave of optimism, signaling a shift in thinking that could pave the way for a transformative era in Kuwait," Dr **Ahmad Al-Jarallah**, former Minister of Health wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"This new phase offers a historic opportunity to address long-standing issues, implement radical reforms, and establish a strong foundation for the country's future -- one that prioritizes the welfare of both the nation and its citizens.

"For years, complex and intertwined challenges hindered progress. However, the current climate, marked by a genuine desire for reform and a willingness to confront obstacles, provides a unique chance to revive Kuwait and chart a new course toward sustainable development.

"The new government approach prioritizes coordination and integration among ministries and agencies, moving away from isolated efforts.

"An effective strategy requires each ministry to present a comprehensive vision, detailing its projects, objectives, and timelines. Clear implementation mechanisms, identification of potential obstacles, and proposed solutions must accompany these visions to ensure they address pressing national priorities effectively.

"Ministers are expected to actively oversee the preparation and execution of these plans, submitting regular performance reviews to the Council of Ministers. This level of accountability and transparency will enable the government to measure progress and adjust strategies as needed.

"Past government programs often lacked specificity and failed to tackle critical issues. For example, last year's health program included vague goals such as 'developing' and 'establishing' without addressing core concerns like social security hospitals, healthcare system restructuring, or waste reduction. Moving forward, clarity, measurable outcomes, and performance indicators must take precedence.

"The formation of specialized work teams comprising qualified individuals is essential. These teams, under ministerial supervision, should develop precise and flexible plans, adhere to strict timelines, and submit periodic progress reports. Such an approach ensures efficiency and minimizes the risks of delays or mismanagement.

"A major obstacle to progress has been the appointment of unqualified individuals to leadership positions, often driven by favoritism and nepotism.

"These appointments have stifled development and protected personal interests at the expense of national progress. The government's decision to pause leadership appointments reflects its commitment to reassessing and rectifying this issue.

"Senior position roles must be filled based on merit, expertise, and a clear alignment with the country's reform agenda.

"Health, education, and housing should remain at the forefront of the government's agenda, as these directly impact citizens' daily lives. Improving service quality, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, and streamlining processes will rebuild trust between the state and its people.

"In health, for instance, greater collaboration with the private sector, medical associations, and other stakeholders is crucial. Constructive dialogue and partnerships can help shape a modern healthcare system that meets the nation's needs.

"The media plays a critical role in fostering transparency and preparing the public for reform initiatives. By providing accurate and balanced information, the media can engage citizens in understanding the challenges and solutions, making them active participants in the national development process.

"The officials must also engage with civil society and opinion leaders more systematically to bridge communication gaps and garner broader support for reforms.

"The path ahead requires unwavering commitment from every official and minister. This is not merely a bureaucratic obligation but a national duty to invest in Kuwait's future. Achieving this vision necessitates transcending narrow political interests and focusing on collective goals.

"This era holds immense promise, but it also places a historic responsibility on the government to deliver. With determination, clarity, and a focus on efficiency, Kuwait can reclaim its leading position among nations, fulfilling the aspirations of its citizens with fairness and effectiveness.

"If these reforms are implemented earnestly, Kuwait's renaissance will not just be a dream but a tangible reality."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Ministry of Defense photo
Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah receives the Algerian Army Chief-of-Staff of Lt. Gen. Said Chengriha.

MoD official meets Algeria army chief

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26, (KUNA): Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah received on Monday Algerian Army Chief-of-Staff of Lieu. Gen. Said Chengriha and his accompanied delegation.

During the meeting, they discussed key

mutual interests, particularly enhancing and developing military cooperation between the two countries, Ministry of Defense said in a press statement.

The meeting was attended by Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Financial Affairs Hanadi Al-Kandari and members of the administrative board.



KUNA photo
Municipality trucks can be seen everywhere in Kuwait areas.

Cleaning drive in full swing ahead of Dec GCC Summit

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26, (KUNA): Director of Public Relations and spokesperson for Kuwait Municipality Mohammad Sandan, announced that field cleaning teams have been fully mobilized in preparation for Kuwait hosting the upcoming Gulf Summit next month, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Sandan revealed that a comprehensive field plan has been implemented, with 140 machines dedicated to cleaning roads and main streets, and 800 workers divided between morning and evening shifts.

Additionally, 400 transport trucks have been placed on standby to manage neglected vehicles, ensuring the city is in optimal condition for the high-profile event.

The Public Relations Department also conducted a series of inspections, resulting in the removal of 13 abandoned and scrap cars from the area.

This is in addition to issuing 18 general cleanliness violations and 39 removal notices were placed on neglected cars and commercial containers. The department also replaced 19 old containers with new ones.

MoE inks deal for repair of CCTV cams in schools

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Ministry of Education (MoE) has signed a contract with a specialized company for the maintenance and operation of surveillance cameras in its schools, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a letter addressed to the Undersecretary of General Education, the Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Mansour Al-Daihani revealed that the contract was signed on October 31, 2024, for the upkeep and operation of the surveillance cameras and their associated equipment in the schools of the Ministry of Education.

He requested the facilitation of the contractor's and technical team's tasks, as specified in the aforementioned communication, and urged for cooperation with the Information Systems Department to allow maintenance of the surveillance cameras both inside and outside official working hours.

Al-Daihani explained that the signed contract highlights the obligation of the second party to maintain the devices covered under the agreement, in accordance with the terms and technical specifications outlined in the referenced contract documents.

The first party is required to pay the second party a total amount of KD 62,451 as compensation for performing the contracted works, in line with the conditions set forth in the contract documents.

The contract period is set for eight months, beginning from the date specified in the order to commence work. The contractor is responsible for performing initial maintenance on all contracted devices, including renewing the software licenses for camera control, cleaning the devices to remove dust and dirt, replacing damaged or worn-out spare parts with new ones, and replacing any irreparable devices, all in accordance with the terms of the contract. This must be completed within a maximum of 60 days from the contract signing date.

The contractor is also obligated to carry out regular preventive, corrective, and urgent maintenance for all contracted devices for a period of six months, starting from the completion of the initial maintenance work outlined above.

The first party reserves the right to renew the contract for an additional period under the same terms and conditions, including agreed prices. The renewal can be made without objection from the second party, provided the first party notifies the second party in writing, and the second party acknowledges receipt of this notification at least two months prior to the contract's expiration.

Call to deport diesel thief

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Ahmadi Security Director Brigadier General Mohammad Rajab has sent a recommendation to the Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Major General Hamad Al-Munaifi to deport an expatriate who was caught red-handed stealing diesel from the Burgan oil field, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to security sources, when the Ministry of Interior's Operations Room received information from a citizen that he suspected a disguised individual of stealing diesel, a patrol team was immediately dispatched to the location.

The suspect was apprehended along with his vehicle, and referred to the Ahmadi Police Station for further questioning.

Come join Kuwait Navy, MoD invites volunteers

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The General Staff of the Army (Administration and Human Resources Authority) of the Ministry of Defense's has announced the commencement of volunteer applications for the Naval Forces, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This recruitment drive is open to individuals holding university degrees, diplomas, high school certificates and those with qualifications below high school. The application period ends on Dec 5. The prospective candidates are encouraged to submit their applications within this time-frame to be considered for the honorable military service in the Naval Forces.

For detailed information on eligibility criteria, required documents and the application process, applicants should refer to the official announcements from the Ministry of Defense.

This initiative reflects the Ministry's commitment to strengthening the nation's defense capabilities by enlisting qualified individuals across various educational backgrounds.

Joining the Naval Forces offers a prestigious opportunity to serve the country and contribute to its maritime security.

Security crackdown: Jahra security patrols are carrying out their campaigns against wanted individuals and lawbreakers, which has so far resulted in the arrest of 13 wanted persons. They also detained six individuals as they were in a disoriented state and were found in possession of suspected narcotic substances, and five street vendors.

According to a security source, Jahra securitymen also seized five violating vehicles and referred them to the impoundment garage.

Security campaigns and checkpoints will continue throughout the governorate to ensure public safety and to arrest wanted individuals.

CCTV cams proof leads to divorce

Man falls into own trap

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: In a recent ruling, the Family Court granted a divorce to a Kuwaiti woman after surveillance footage revealed that her husband had not only cheated on her but also physically abused her.

The husband had installed cameras to monitor activities around the house, including the servants, but it was this very evidence that exposed his mistreatment and betrayal of his wife.

Lawyer Hawra Al-Habib, representing the wife, emphasized the severity of the husband's actions, noting that while some family disputes can be resolved, it is impossible to heal a relationship when there is abuse and betrayal.

Al-Habib highlighted that both Sharia law and the legal system do not tolerate such disrespect towards a wife, affirming the court's decision as necessary for upholding her dignity and rights.

Jail term suspended: The Court of Appeals has decided to suspend the one-year prison sentence issued against the former deputy director of Public Sports Authority who was found guilty of disbursing KD 241,000 to a club in violation of established terms and procedures, and adjourned the issuance of the ruling of the case after two weeks.

Earlier, the lower court had sentenced the former deputy director of the Public Sports Authority to one-year imprisonment with hard labor on charges of causing significant harm to the authority's funds and providing unauthorized finan-

cial support for a competition.

The Public Prosecution had charged the accused and another individual, both public employees, with causing serious damage to their employer's funds due to negligence and failure to perform their duties. This involved approving a request for financial support for local championships in violation of applicable regulations, resulting in harm to public funds.

Kuwaiti dies in accident: A citizen died after his vehicle collided with a concrete barrier in Mutla'a. His body has been referred to the forensic medicine department.

According to a security source, when the Ministry of Interior's operations room received a report about the accident, security personnel and paramedics were immediately dispatched to the scene. Upon arrival, they found the driver injured and quickly rushed him to the hospital. Unfortunately, he succumbed to his injuries before reaching the hospital.

An investigation is currently underway to determine the cause of the accident.

Rescue police stats: Rescue patrols have been carrying out their security campaigns in all governorates throughout the last seven days. These campaigns resulted in the resolution of seven quarrels, the referral of nine individuals to the Drugs Control General Department as they were in possession of substances suspected to be narcotics, the arrest of 21 individuals for consuming liquor, and the seizure of 109 vehicles.

According to the weekly statistics on the rescue patrols, 231 wanted individuals were arrested in cases related to absconding, expired residency, and criminal convictions. Also, 5,772 traffic citations were issued, and 12 vehicles were impounded.

A security source stated that the rescue patrols will continue their operations in all governorates for apprehending wanted individuals and outlaws.



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MEW shows disappointing 18% 'spending rate' on dev projects

Power supplied to 116 public buildings in Al-Mutla'a

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has reported an 18 percent spending rate on its projects during the first six months of the current fiscal year, relative to the total estimated budget for purchasing non-current assets for these projects, say sources who criticized this decline.

Sources pointed out that the allocated budget for this item is KD565.354 million and only KD105.226 million of which has been spent, leaving a balance of KD415.816 million. Sources have raised concerns about the discrepancy between the ministry's low spending rate and its commitment to launching 21 vital projects included in its development plan for the current fiscal year. Despite this commitment, only a few of these projects have been initiated or completed during the designated period, sources revealed.

Sources stated that one key project that remains delayed is the Nuwaiseeb power generation station, which is expected to produce 3,600 megawatts in its first phase. The station has not been

launched yet, despite the urgent need for additional electricity generation to avoid power outages or the need to purchase energy from the Gulf Interconnection Network, as it occurred during the summer months of this year.

On the other hand, the ministry has encouraged citizens to adopt modern energy-efficient air conditioning systems that operate with Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) technology, which can reduce energy consumption by up to 30 percent. It also urged homeowners to ensure their properties are properly insulated, which would help save electricity and reduce the load on the electrical grid.

Initiative

This initiative was part of the ministry's participation in the 13th Industries and Construction Exhibition, being held at the Jumeirah Beach Hotel from Nov 25-28.

Dalal Al-Otaibi, Senior Mechanical Specialist in the Ministry's Electrical Extensions Department, explained that the ministry's participation aims to raise awareness about energy-saving air conditioning systems and the benefits of building insulation.

In a press statement Monday, Al-Otaibi confirmed that VRF systems offer year-round energy savings, as they operate according to specific needs and can be individually controlled by room. "In contrast, older air conditioning systems consume more energy and put added strain on the na-

tional grid," she stated.

While there have been proposals to encourage the adoption of such energy-saving technologies, Al-Otaibi emphasized that these measures have not yet been implemented. "The ministry continues to push for wider adoption of these systems to both reduce consumer energy costs and alleviate pressure on the electrical grid," she added.

Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Housing Welfare has announced the completion of electricity supply to all 116 public buildings across the residential suburbs N6 to N11 in Al-Mutla'a Residential City, with the Fire Department building being the last to be connected, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Rashid Al-Anzi, PAHW Acting Director General, confirmed that 113 buildings had already been handed over to the beneficiaries and coordination is underway to deliver the remaining building.

These public buildings, including schools, mosques, police stations, citizen service centers and health facilities, provide essential services to citizens.

Al-Anzi also revealed that the second phase of public building construction in Al-Mutla'a has started, with work underway in 68 buildings.

Work on operating the lighting network for remaining roads in other suburbs, including N5 and N12, is ongoing, with cooperation from the Ministry of Electricity and Water to ensure the completion of services for the public.



The new board of directors

Al-Seyassah photo

Public Relations Association elects new board members

The Kuwait Public Relations Association held its General Assembly, during which members approved the new Board of Directors in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The elected board members are as follows - Jamal Al-Nasrallah, President; Mohammed Al-Mousawi, Vice President; Mohammed

Al-Yassin, Secretary; Waad Al-Kandari, Treasurer and members of the Board of Directors are Mazid Al-Maousharji, Bashar Al-Hunaidi, Yousef Abbas, Mubarak Al-Mansour and Hamad Al-Humaidi.

Jamal Al-Nasrallah, the newly elected president, emphasized the association's commitment to advancing the public relations profession in Kuwait.

He highlighted the importance of aligning the association's efforts with sustainable development goals.

Al-Nasrallah also welcomed new members and encouraged others interested in the field of public relations to join the association, reaffirming its role as a platform for professional growth and collaboration.

Municipal Council's technical committee to meet

Amendment to building regulations on agenda

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Technical Committee of the Municipal Council will be holding its 13th meeting of the third legislative term, chaired by Munira Al-Amir, to discuss six items on its agenda.

These six items include:

■ the letter from the Director General of Kuwait Municipality for the study and preparation of a draft amendment to the building regulations

■ the proposal submitted by the Vice Chair of the Municipal Council Khaled Al-Mutairi and member Fahad Al-Abdul Jader for the construction of five floors for administrative and service buildings within suburban centers.

■ the request to add activities to chart No. 18, related to integrated and distinguished project buildings (residential neighborhoods)

■ the letter from Kuwait National Petroleum Company re-

garding the allocation of new sites for fuel stations on expressways.

■ a letter submitted by Kuwait Commute Company about the development of building regulations for new buildings to improve accessibility for people with disabilities.

■ a proposal from Issa Hussein Al-Yousefi and Sons Company regarding amendments to the requirements and specifications for residential complex buildings both inside and outside Kuwait City.

Meanwhile, the Hawally Committee of the Municipal Council will hold its sixth meeting of the third session, chaired by Nasser Al-Jadaan.

The meeting will address several important items, including a letter from the heirs of the late Ahmed Al-Sayegh regarding the relocation of an electrical transformer before construction facing Plot No. 57 in Mishref.

The committee will also discuss the approval of entrances and exits for parking lots serving Ghanima Al-Waqyan and Saad Al-Adasani Mosques in Saddiq, as well as the parking lot opposite the Public Authority for Civil Information.

Amir congratulates newly-elected Uruguay president

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Tuesday a cable of congratulations to President-elect of Uruguay, Yamandu Orsi, on winning the elections.

His Highness the Amir wished

success and wellbeing to the president, and the friendly people of Uruguay further progress and prosperity.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to President-elect Yamandu Orsi, on winning the elec-

tions, wishing him success in all his endeavors.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to President-elect Yamandu Orsi, on winning the elections.



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The six governors during their meeting with State Minister of Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Welfare Abdullahif Al-Mishari.

Governors meet with Minister Al-Mishari

Meet discusses executing development projects related to Kuwait Municipality

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The governors of Kuwait (Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi, Hawally Governor Ali Salem Al-Asfar, Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Ali Al-Sabah, Mubarak Al Kaber Governor Sheikh Sabah Bader Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Jahra Governor Hamad Jassem Mohammad Al-Habashi and Ahmad Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah) held a meeting with the State Minister of Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Welfare Abdullahif Al-Mishari.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the meeting was aimed at discussing and expediting the implementation of development projects related to Kuwait Municipality, and addressing the obstacles that are hindering their com-

pletion.

The minister affirmed that he, from the time he took office, has been keen about taking the necessary decisions to ensure the success of these projects.

The governors highlighted the importance of the projects in the six governorates linked to Kuwait Municipality due to their vital role and extreme significance.

Meanwhile, the Farwaniya Governor stated that the meeting was the result of ongoing correspondence between the governors and the State Minister of Municipal Affairs Abdullahif Al-Mishari.

He indicated that the discussions also covered other essential issues, such as improving the hygiene standards and managing urban expansion, which requires high-level coordination.

Warba Bank announces winners of Al Sunbula weekly draw

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Warba Bank, Kuwait's premier provider of corporate and investment banking services, today announced the winners of the latest Al Sunbula weekly draw as part of its continued commitment to reward loyal customers. The draw was held in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in addition to Warba Bank officials.

This week, ten Al Sunbula account holders each received a cash prize of KD 1,000. The winners are as follows: Ms. Amal Khaled Ali Al-Sihan, Mr. Mishaal Rashid Raghian Al-Sharie, Ms. Khalida Hamad Fahad Al-Juwaid, Mr. Mubarak Mudhi Mubarak Al-Azmi, Mr. Fahad Sanat Shamroukh Al-Otaibi, Mr. Omran Mohammad Latif Karim, Mr. Ahmad Fahad Al-Rashed Al-Rashed, Ms. Huda Abdullah Abdul Karim Al-Saeed, Mr. Sultan Shabib Jariou Al-Ajmi, and Ms. Dima Khaled Yousef Al-Awadhi.

Designed to support customers' savings goals, Al Sunbula account offers a unique savings opportunity, combining attractive returns on their savings with the chance to win cash prizes through regular draws year-round.

Explained the eligibility criteria, Mr. Abdulaziz Saud Al-Bakhait, Area Man-

ager of the Retail Banking Group at Warba Bank, said, "Customers are required to deposit a minimum of KD 100 to qualify for both the weekly and grand Al Sunbula draws. For every KD 10 in their account, customers receive one entry based on the lowest monthly balance, increasing their chances of winning as their balance grows. The balance must remain in the account for a full month to be eligible to the weekly draw, and two months to be eligible to the grand draws. What differentiates Al Sunbula is that there are no restrictions on deposits or withdrawals, and the more a customer deposits, the higher their chances of winning."

In addition to the benefits of Al Sunbula account, Warba Bank recently introduced its latest banking solution, Customer Onboarding, as part of its ambitious five-year strategy. This innovative digital service allows non-Warba customers to easily open an Al Sunbula account online via the Bank's website, without the need to visit a branch. Through this new automated system, unique within Kuwait's banking sector, new customers can complete their account setup in five minutes, at any time and from any location.

Having achieved significant milestones in a short period, Warba Bank has acquired a leading position as a provider of innovative digital banking services to individuals and businesses. The Bank is also one of the local banks with the highest number of shareholders, further strengthening its commitment to serving every segment of the local community.



Al-Bakhait

Move to raise awareness on combating all forms of violence against women

Italian Embassy launches 'Red Bench' initiative in Kuwait

By Paulo Francisco X. Fernandes
Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Italian Ambassador to Kuwait, Lorenzo Morini, stressed the need for collective efforts to stop violence against women.

During an event organized at the Italian Embassy in Kuwait, he explained that "on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and in line with the UN's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign, the Italian Embassy has launched the 'Red Bench' initiative in Kuwait. This initiative aims to raise awareness and commitment to combating all forms of violence against women."

The Italian envoy noted that the "Red Bench" initiative began in Italy ten years ago, with the idea of placing a red bench in public spaces like parks, buildings, ministries and other locations to symbolize the frustration women feel due to violence, with red symbolizing blood.

He emphasized that "combating violence against women is a central issue that requires sincere and collaborative efforts to eliminate this negative phenomenon," adding that they brought a red bench from France to Kuwait "to send a message to the world about the need to stop violence against women."

Awareness

In response to a question about the level of awareness in Kuwait regarding the issue, he said, "Violence against women is not just a problem for Kuwait or Italy but is a cultural issue involving some misconceptions." He added, "Awareness in Kuwait is growing, but we must unite to

increase it worldwide."

Morini also highlighted the active role of the United Nations in raising awareness about the need to stop violence against women and protect women and children through various events and activities.

Ghada Al-Taher, UN Resident Coordinator in Kuwait, explained that "laws protect women from violence," noting that "the issue lies not in the laws but in their implementation and that everyone must understand that violence against women is neither acceptable nor a sign of masculinity."

She pointed out that there are strict laws in place, but the real question is how to ensure these laws are respected, emphasizing the importance of women knowing their rights and reporting violence when it occurs to ensure legal enforcement.

Regarding centers for abused women in Kuwait, Al-Taher said, "We have had meetings with the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Human Rights, Sheikha Jawaher Al-Daiij, who stressed her rejection of violence against women and the need for their protection."

She noted that these centers are receiving significant attention and are being developed. She also mentioned that there are several centers for the protection of abused women in Kuwait and that the UN is ready to provide support if requested.

When asked about statistics on abused women in Kuwait or the region, Al-Taher referenced a UNFPA report stating that "two-thirds of women experience violence, particularly in conflict zones and areas with armed conflicts, which increases the number of abused women." She also pointed out that "every 10 minutes, a woman is subjected to violence

worldwide."

Regarding women prisoners in occupied territories and the violence they endure, Al-Taher explained that the international definition varies, but UN Women and UNFPA statistics include all cases of abused women, whether related to honor killings, conflict zones, or sexual violence used as a weapon of war.

Al-Taher also pointed out that sexual violence and harassment are the most common forms of abuse women face globally.

Discussions

She noted that the UN will organize various events and roundtable discussions on this topic, including screenings and the coloring of events with the color orange, to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which ends on December 10.

She thanked the Italian Ambassador for inviting her to participate in the important event, highlighting the global issue of violence against women. She referenced statistics from UN Women, which estimate that around 736 million women -- almost one in three women aged 15 or older -- have experienced physical or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime.

These women, she said, are at higher risk of long-term mental, physical, reproductive and sexual health consequences. She also noted the increased vulnerability of women and girls, particularly during times of conflict and crisis. According to the UNFPA, nearly two-thirds of women and girls in the most affected areas of the Arab region have experienced violence.

Al-Taher, reflecting on her experiences, expressed her empathy for women survivors of violence and re-



Photo by Samer Shiqr

Italian Ambassador Morini with others during the launching of the 'Red Bench' initiative.

iterated her vision for a world where girls can thrive and reach their full potential free from the threat of violence.

She called for raising awareness and promoting actions to address violence against women and support women's rights, stating, "As we work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, the UN in Kuwait remains committed to empowering women and eliminating gender-based violence, in partnership with you."

Balsam Al-Ayyoub, a member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Club and founder of the "Be Strong" sports and development project for women, said, "As an athlete, I believe

that women should be strong, self-reliant and able to stand on their own."

She emphasized that violence against women should not be treated as just a problem but as a cultural issue that must change, starting with how we raise our children. She added, "Equality in life is important; we cannot empower girls to be strong while neglecting boys."

Much of the violence in the world, including murder and domestic violence, occurs because women raise children incorrectly."

Sundus Hamza, a human rights activist and member of the "Ithar" campaign and the campaign to abolish Article 153 related to honor

crimes, emphasized the importance of supporting women's issues and rights. She pointed out that "violence is a serious violation of women's and girls' human rights."

Hamza also highlighted the efforts of women's rights organizations to ensure the proper implementation of laws related to honor crimes, aimed at protecting women and supporting their transition from victims to survivors.

She expressed hope that, with new leadership, they could also abolish Article 153, which is based on Napoleonic law that permits honor killings, a law that contradicts both Sharia and international women's rights laws.

Kazakhstan envoy boosts tourism appeal in Kuwait

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Embassy of Kazakhstan organized a round-table discussion on Monday to promote the country's growing tourism potential.

In his speech at the event, Kazakh Ambassador to Kuwait Azmat Berdibay disclosed that the ancient Great Silk Road, which linked the East and West, passed through the heart of modern-day Kazakhstan. He noted that this historic route was not only a vital trade passage, but also a cultural bridge, fostering interactions between the peoples of Asia and the Middle East.

Berdibay further stressed the shared values between Kazakhstan and Kuwait, despite their geographical distance. These values, he said, include a deep tradition of hospitality, respect for cultural diversity, and a mutual commitment to innovation.

The ambassador also highlighted the growing interest in Kazakhstan as a tourist destination, particularly from the Gulf countries. He presented figures for 2024, which showed a steady rise in the number of visitors: 14,213 tourists from Oman; 11,042 from the United Arab Emirates; 8,094 from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; 3,795 from Kuwait; 1,626 from Bahrain; and 1,310 from Qatar. He also cited the direct flights between Kuwait and Almaty, operated by Jazeera Airways, as a key factor in facilitating travel and allowing thousands of Kuwaiti citizens to explore Kazakhstan.

He added the National Bureau of Statistics reported that more than 6.2 million tourists visited Kazakhstan in 2023. He highlighted this significant increase as evidence of the country's growing appeal on the international tourism stage.

He affirmed that Kazakhstan's progress in the global tourism sector was

further underscored by its improved ranking in the World Economic Forum's Global Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index, where it moved from 80th to 66th place out of 117 countries.

He also pointed out that Kazakhstan offers a visa-free regime for citizens of over 80 countries, including Kuwait, which allows Kuwaiti visitors to stay for up to 30 days without a visa.

For those planning to visit, the ambassador noted that Kazakhstan has launched a dedicated online portal, 'Kazakhstan.travel', which provides up-to-date information on the country's natural attractions, cultural sites, restaurants, and accommodations.

He added that Kazakhstan is home to 13 national parks and 10 reserves, all of which are integral to the world's natural heritage. Visiting these sites offers travelers a unique opportunity to experience the unspoiled beauty of Kazakhstan's diverse landscapes, he asserted.



Photo by Rizk Taufiq

Ambassador of Kazakhstan during the round-table discussion.

Dear Minister

Continued from Page 1

Therefore, the burden is heavy on the Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, who must work tirelessly to rid Kuwait of these damaging flaws. She understands that we are now in an era where it is imperative to eliminate the problems caused by this long-standing legacy. Her role in this effort is vital, as reforming charity work, which once a hallmark of Kuwait's reputation as "the land of goodness" in the region and the world, cannot be compromised or tarnished.

The unfortunate reality is that some opportunists have managed to exploit their influence to carry out dubious activities under the guise of charity work.

The Minister of Social Affairs must also work on ending the ongoing breaches within her ministry, particularly concerning the cooperative societies, which are often at the center of scandals. These range from manipulated elections to issues related to the supply of goods, some of which fail to meet specifications, as well as the allegations of bribery and other serious offenses.

The people of Kuwait place their trust in the minister's leadership and believe in her ability to tackle these issues and rid the country of such corrupt practices. This is especially important as we are living in an era of reform and are hoping to restore Kuwait's position as a pioneer in the region.

Kuwaiti jet

Continued from Page 1

He said he had started his 17-year career as an amateur in 2007 and then made a success story through perseverance and hard training, and obtained top positions and medals during many championships.

The Kuwaiti champion, however, underlined that he was very determined to set new Guinness records and win more medals in the future.

DGCA affirms

Continued from Page 1

in safety management, strengthening regional and international partnerships, and developing new mechanisms to ensure aviation safety under all circumstances, he explained.

Al-Otaibi invited participants to share constructive insights and expertise to enrich the discussions and develop practical solutions that contribute to shaping the future of the aviation industry, emphasizing that outcomes will not remain as recommendations but will translate into tangible policies.

As for ICAO's regional office director, Mohammad Abu Baker, he spoke of the organization's 2050 strategic goals of zero fatalities in international aviation from accidents and acts of unlawful interference, zero carbon emissions, as well as allowing aviation to become a thriving, connected, accessible, inclusive, and affordable transport system.

The global passenger traffic continued to increase in 2023 with around 4.2 billion passengers

transported worldwide, up from 3.2 billion passengers in 2022, revealed Abu Baker, indicating that it remains slightly below pre pandemic (2019) levels with 4.5 billion passengers having been transported worldwide.

He highlighted that number of flight departures for scheduled commercial operations continued to increase by approximately 13 percent with over 35 million departures in 2023, compared to around 31 million in 2022.

There was a 3.1 percent increase in the total number of accidents, he stated, noting that the flight departures increased around 13 per cent during the same period of time.

Abu Baker spoke of the decrease of global accident rate of 1.87 accidents per million departures in 2023 by 17.9 percent from the 2022 rate of 2.05 accidents per million departures.

He underlined the objective of the summit saying that it is to foster a collaborative approach to managing aviation safety by aligning strategies, sharing experiences, and addressing emerging issues within the region.

Beware of

Continued from Page 1

To protect themselves, consumers were advised to:

n Download shopping apps only from official stores associated with trusted platforms, such as Android and iOS.

n Verify that the electronic link is authentic, ensuring it leads to the official website of the store and is not a fake or fraudulent site impersonating a legitimate business.

n Avoid making payments over public Wi-Fi networks, as these can be easily hacked, compromising personal and financial information.

The Ministry's warning comes amid growing concerns about online security and scams targeting consumers through tempting but fraudulent offers.

Updated housing

Continued from Page 1

It now states that once the draw for the distribution of housing alternatives (actual distribution) is conducted for eligible beneficiaries, no amendments to these beneficiaries will be allowed, regardless of changes in family circumstances such as marriage, divorce, death, or others.

The decision further specifies that in the event of the death of an eligible beneficiary, their ownership rights will be transferred to their legal heirs, in accordance with Articles 65 and 65 bis of the regulations.

GCC drills

Continued from Page 1

In other news, the Military Affairs Sector of the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) praised the distinguished role of Kuwait in the journey of joint Gulf action.

This came in a statement by the Ministry of De-

fense after commander of Mubarak Al-Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College (MAJCS), Air Vice Marshal Fahad Al-Khurainj, received retired Major General Abdullah Mohammad Al-Shaya from the GCC Military Affairs Sector on Monday.

Al-Shaya gave a lecture to the students of MAJCS 29th course titled the journey of joint Gulf military action.

This lecture came within a series of lectures held by MAJCS that included lecturers from various civil and military academic specializations from inside and outside of Kuwait, to give lectures addressing military, political and strategic affairs.

Palestinian leader

Continued from Page 1

Near East (UNRWA) action in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Kuwait's diplomatic attaché Razan Aziz Al-Daihani announced this in a speech she delivered in the eighth exceptional session of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Executive Council on supporting the agency's educational activities in Palestine.

Al-Daihani stressed Kuwait's strong condemnation and denunciation of the Israeli occupation's step against UNRWA.

She emphasized that Kuwait would continue backing all UN agencies, including UNRWA, affirming the need of international concerted efforts of multilateral world governance system of which UNRWA is an "integrated part".

This act is part of a chain of Israeli occupation violations that runs counter to international law, international humanitarian law and international resolutions, she noted.

Al-Daihani called on the international community to necessarily and decisively face Israeli occupation plots aiming to eradicate UNRWA and its efforts which support Palestinians.

The session was held upon a request from some member states of UNESCO Executive Council to support continuing UNRWA educational activities.

In other news, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on Tuesday expressed deep concern over escalating violence by the Israeli occupation forces in Lebanon, which has claimed at least 97 lives, including eight children and 19 women, between November 22 and 24.

During a press briefing in Geneva, OHCHR Spokesperson Jeremy Laurence said that seven paramedics were killed last week in three separate Israeli strikes in southern Lebanon. This brings the total number of health workers killed to 226 between October 7 and November 18, 2023.

"Israeli military action in Lebanon has caused wide-scale loss of civilian life, including the killing of entire families, widespread displacement, and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, raising serious concerns about respect for the principles of proportionality, distinction, and necessity," Laurence stated.

He reiterated the High Commissioner's call for an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon and Gaza, emphasizing that the only way to end the suffering of civilians is through an immediate and permanent ceasefire on all fronts.

Council's panel delays talks on 7 key building regulation items

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Technical Committee of the Municipal Council, chaired by Munira Al-Amir, recommended in its thirteenth meeting of the third legislative term yesterday to suspend the discussion of seven items in the building regulations until the final amendments are submitted, as requested by the executive body of the municipality.

The committee also postponed the approval of some building regulation charts and their related items after being briefed by the representative of the executive body and the head of the committee tasked with reviewing the building regulations, requirements, and specifications.

It requested that the executive body submit the amended items, which have been agreed upon between the municipality and the committee, and specify a timeline for submission in an official letter to be presented to the Municipal Council within a week.

The committee affirmed the importance of adhering to the agreed timeline; otherwise, the Municipal Council and the Technical Committee will proceed with discussing the proposed charts based on the current models if the new tables are not submitted as agreed.

It reserved the proposal submitted by Vice President of the Municipal Council Khaled Al-Mutairi and member Fahad Al-Abduljader regarding the allowance for constructing five floors for administrative and service buildings within suburban centers.

Ministry of
Commerce and
Industry

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Michael Boulos and his wife Tiffany Trump, Lara Trump, Eric Trump and Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump listen as Donald Trump Jr., speaks at a campaign rally at Van Andel Arena on Nov 5 in Grand Rapids, Mich. (AP)

Trump Jr emerges as political force of his own as he helps his father launch a second term

NEW YORK, Nov 26, (AP) — When Donald Trump, House Speaker Mike Johnson, Elon Musk and Robert F. Kennedy Jr. circled up aboard the president-elect's plane over some McDonald's burgers and fries recently, Donald Trump Jr. was seated in the center of that power foursome.

The central spot occupied by Trump's eldest son, as captured in a photo widely shared online, reflects how Trump Jr. has become a prominent player in his father's political orbit and a potential heir to his Make America Great Again movement.

For the son of a president-elect, Trump has already had an outsized impact on the next White House. He lobbied hard for the former president to choose his good friend, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, to be his running mate.

"I exerted 10,000% of my political capital," Trump Jr. said of his effort in an interview with Tucker Carlson on the night of the election. "I may get a favor from my father in like, 2076. I used it all."

As an honorary chair of the Republican president-elect's transition team,

Trump Jr. is part of a core group of people deciding who will fill top jobs in the next White House, and his imprint is clear.

Trump Jr. pushed in particular for roles for former Democratic Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, whom the president-elect has chosen to be director of national intelligence, and Kennedy, who is in line to lead Health and Human Services.

Another close ally, Sergio Gor, will be running the personnel office. He and Trump Jr. run a publishing company, Winning Team Publishing, which has published two of the former president's books.

The younger Trump has said he has no plans to join his father's administration in the way his younger sister Ivanka Trump did during the first Trump term. His brother Eric is also an honorary chair of the transition but hasn't been as much of a political player. Eric's wife Lara has been more involved, serving as co-chair of the Republican National Committee.

Trump Jr. is expected to continue to be a vocal supporter of his father and his agenda and has made it clear he

wants to be an influential voice from the outside, according to a person familiar with his thinking who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal planning.

The president-elect's style — brash, indelicate and pugilistic — is distilled in his son. Donald Trump Jr. often takes a more aggressive tack than his father, in his calls for disrupting government as usual, in the way he dives into the culture wars with gusto and in his enthusiasm for trolling.

"He's probably the best embodiment of the take-no-crap attitude of the Republican Party," said Scott Jennings, a Republican political strategist.

Trump Jr.'s attitude and the way he communicates don't make him sound like a regular political figure, Jennings said, and that's part of the appeal.

"I think that's one thing about the Trumps that is probably broadly true but certainly for him: They just don't participate in the normal political pabulum that sort of pre-Trump politicians were schooled in or trained to do."

Epshteyn isn't accused of doing anything illegal

Trump transition team suggests sidelining top adviser over pay-to-play allegations

WASHINGTON, Nov 26, (AP) — The top lawyer on Donald Trump's transition team investigated a long-time adviser to the president-elect over allegations he used his proximity to Trump to score payments from those seeking roles or influence in the new administration.

The review conducted by lawyer David Warrington recommended that Trump aides sharply constrain adviser Boris Epshteyn's access to the president-elect, according to a person familiar with the matter. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss an internal matter.

The personnel drama spotlights the unusual and often-disorganized cast of characters around Trump who contributed to the chaos of his first term, some of whom are part of the transition to the second as he looks to build out his administration before he takes office on Jan. 20.

Among those Epshteyn is alleged to have sought payments from is Scott Bessent, Trump's nominee to be treasury secretary. Bessent mounted a months-long campaign to win the job but was opposed by Epshteyn allegedly after the hedge fund executive didn't agree to pay

him a substantial retainer.

The review also examined a complaint from former Missouri Gov Eric Greitens, who resigned in scandal but has expressed interest in joining Trump's administration. Greitens signed a declaration last week recounting a Nov 7 conversation with Epshteyn that alleged that his "overall tone and behavior gave me the impression of an implicit expectation to engage in business dealings with him before he would advocate for or suggest my appointment to the President. This created a sense of unease and pressure on my part."

Epshteyn isn't accused of doing anything illegal — securing fees for access to senior government officials is the bread and butter of Washington's lobbying establishment — but the investigation appeared designed to weaken or eliminate his prominent position within Trump's orbit. The president-elect has long chafed at those he viewed as using him for their own personal gain.

"As is standard practice, a broad review of the campaign's consulting agreements has been conducted and completed, including as to

Boris, among others," said Trump communications director Steven

Cheung. "We are now moving ahead together as a team to help



This combination photo of US President-elect Donald Trump's longtime friends, aides and allies shows Boris Epshteyn, from top row left, Richard Grenell, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Howard Lutnick, from center row left, Linda McMahon, Stephen Miller, Elon Musk, Brooke Rollins and from bottom row left Lara Trump, Dana White and Susie Wiles. (AP)

President Trump Make America Great Again."

Veterans of other presidential campaigns and transitions said such a review was anything but standard, and Cheung did not comment on Epshteyn's role going forward.

Epshteyn, who served briefly in a mid-level role in Trump's first White House, became a central player in Trump's life after he left office in 2021. He was one of the architects of Trump's legal team and strategy as the former president faced an array of criminal and civil threats after the Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol and his efforts to overturn the 2020 presidential election.

Epshteyn himself was indicted on state charges in Arizona related to alleged efforts by Trump allies to subvert that election and has pleaded not guilty. He holds the title of senior counsel and senior adviser to Trump, but even before the review he was not expected to take a role in the incoming administration.

"I am honored to work for President Trump and with his team," Epshteyn said in a statement. "These fake claims are false and defamatory and will not distract us from Making America Great Again."

Eric Trump, the president-elect's son who went to college with Epshteyn, told Fox News that if the reported allegations were true, his old friend might not be around the campaign much longer.

"Listen, I have known Boris for years, and I have never known him to be anything but a good human being," Eric Trump said Monday. "So, that said, I will tell you, my father's been incredibly clear. You do not, you do not do that under any circumstance. And, believe me, there will be repercussions if somebody was."

The investigation into Epshteyn was first reported by the conservative website Just the News.

"I suppose every President has people around them who try to make money off them on the outside. It's a shame but it happens," Trump told the website. "But no one working for me in any capacity should be looking to make money. They should only be here to Make America Great Again."

During the 2022 midterms, some in Trump's orbit also represented candidates seeking his endorsement, leading to accusations that aides were profiting off their proximity to the former president.

Ukraine says Russian attack sets new record for the number of drones used

KYIV, Ukraine, Nov 26, (AP) — Russia launched 188 drones against most regions of Ukraine in a nighttime blitz, the Ukrainian air force said Tuesday, describing it as a record number of drones deployed in a single attack.

Most of the drones were intercepted, according to the air force, but apartment buildings and critical infrastructure such as the national power grid were damaged. No casualties were immediately reported in the 17 targeted regions.

Russia has been hammering civilian areas of Ukraine with in-

creasingly heavy drone, missile and glide bomb attacks since the middle of the year.

At the same time, Russia's army has largely held the battlefield initiative for the past year and has been pushing hard in the eastern Donetsk region where it is making significant tactical advances, according to Western military analysts.

Ukraine faces a difficult winter, with worries about the reliability of the electricity supply amid Russia's attacks and how much U.S. support it can count on next year after President-elect Donald Trump takes of-

fice in January.

The air raid alert in the Kyiv region overnight lasted more than seven hours. Russia is trying to unnerve civilians and wear down their appetite for the almost 3-year-old war.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Tuesday its forces destroyed 39 Ukrainian drones overnight over Russian regions near the border with Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's General Staff said Tuesday that over the past 24 hours roughly half of the clashes along the about 1,000-kilometer (600 mile) front line occurred near Pokrovsk and Kurakhove in the Donetsk region.

Ukraine has a critical manpower problem on the front line, and though the Russian army's gains have been incremental its momentum is adding up as the Ukrainians yield ground.

The Russian advance is threatening important supply routes in Donetsk, the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War said late Monday.

Ukrainian defenses in Donetsk are not in danger of being overrun, however, the think tank said. It also noted that Russia would need to capture more than 8,000 square kilometers (3,000 square miles) of territory to achieve the Kremlin's goal of seizing the whole of Donetsk.



In this photo taken from video released by the Russian Defense Ministry Press Service on Nov 26, a Russian T-80 tank rolls in Donetsk region in Ukraine.

Scuffles, fistfights in Serbian parliament

BELGRADE, Serbia, Nov 26, (AP) — Scuffles and fistfights broke out between ruling party and opposition lawmakers in Serbia's parliament on Monday, weeks after a deadly rail station roof collapse that ignited tensions in the Balkan state.

The opposition wanted to discuss who is responsible for the crash that killed 15 people in the northern city of Novi Sad on Nov 1, while governing officials, who have a majority in Serbia's legislature, sought to adopt a bill on next year's state budget.

The opposition displayed a banner showing a red hand print reading "blood is on your hands." The ruling party responded with a banner accusing the opposition of wanting "war while Serbia wants to work."

Scuffles erupted when the two sides tried to grab each other's banner.

The rail station, a major hub, was recently renovated as part of a Serbian-Chinese partnership. Critics allege that corruption, poor oversight and inadequate construction work contributed to the tragedy.



Ruling party lawmakers, opposition members, and some ministers fight during Serbia's parliament session, which was scheduled to debate the 2025 budget, in Belgrade, Serbia on Nov 25. (AP)



Floodwater covers parts of the Billing Aquadrome in Northamptonshire, England on Nov 25, after Storm Bert caused 'devastating' flooding over the weekend.

Storm Bert leaves two dead in Britain

Britain remained Monday on high alert after the second major storm of the season battered the country over the weekend, leaving at least two people dead and disrupting road and rail travel.

Hundreds of homes in England and Wales battled the floodwaters on Monday and several rail operators canceled services after Storm Bert lashed Britain with heavy rains and wind gusts up to 80 mph over the weekend. As much as 130 millimeters (5.1 inches) of rain fell in some areas, causing some rivers to overflow their banks and turning roads into waterways.

A man in his 80s died after his car entered the water at a ford in Lancashire in northwest England on Saturday, and a body believed to be that of a missing dog walker was found the same day near the Afon Conwy river in North Wales.

"Further flooding is sadly likely over the next few days as water levels rise in slower flowing rivers such as the Severn and the Ouse," Environment Secretary Steve Reed told the House of Commons. "The Environment Agency anticipates that any impacts should be less severe than we've seen in recent days."

More than 130 flood alerts re-

mained in effect across England, Wales and Scotland late Monday.

A severe flood warning, meaning there is danger to life, was issued for the River Nene in Northampton as water levels continued to rise. Hoping to escape, people holding shopping bags filled with necessities waded through deep water Monday.

Stan Brown, 67, who has lived in the region for 25 years, said he had no choice but to go.

"I've got somewhere else to go but I'm one of the few," he said. "Other people have spent their life savings to buy a place there, and now they've got nowhere else to go." (AP)

Zourabichvili rejects results

Georgian lawmakers to pick new prez on Dec 14

TBILISI, Georgia, Nov 26, (AP) — Georgia's parliament set a date Tuesday for national and local lawmakers to pick a new president, paving the way for the ruling Georgian Dream party to choose an ally following its victory in a controversial election.

The announcement comes just a month after Georgian Dream won an Oct 26 general election that the opposition insists was rigged. Current president Salome Zourabichvili rejected the results.

European election observers said the balloting took place in a "divisive" atmosphere marked by instances of bribery, double voting and physical violence.

Many Georgians viewed the election as a referendum on the country's bid to join the European Union.

A 300-seat electoral college consisting of members of parliament, municipal councils and regional legislatures



A woman holds an EU flag in front of police blocking the entrance of the Parliament's building during a rally to demand new parliamentary elections in the country, in Tbilisi, Georgia on Nov 25. (AP)

will elect a new president for the South Caucasus nation on Dec. 14. It's a new procedure, which will be used for the first time since a 2017 constitutional reform eliminated direct elections for the presidency.

Georgian Dream has a majority in the electoral college and is expected to choose an ally to replace Zourabichvili.

The outgoing president was elected by popular vote in 2018, and her six-year term will end in December. The new president will be elected for five years.

Critics have accused Georgian Dream — established by Bidzina Ivanishvili, a shadowy billionaire who made his fortune in Russia — of becoming increasingly authoritarian and tilted toward Moscow. The party recently pushed through laws similar to those used by the Kremlin to crack down on freedom of speech.

President and vice president clash in feud that's testing Asian democracy

Philippine investigators summon Duterte over public threats against Marcos

MANILA, Philippines, Nov 26, (AP) — Philippine authorities handed a subpoena to Vice President Sara Duterte's office Tuesday, inviting her to answer investigators' questions after she publicly threatened to have the president, his wife and the House of Representatives speaker assassinated if she were killed in an unspecified plot herself.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr on Monday described her threat as a criminal plot and vowed to fight it and uphold the rule of law in the country in a looming showdown between the country's two top leaders.

The national police and the military expressed alarm and immediately boosted Marcos' security. National Security Adviser Eduardo Ano said the threats were a national security concern.

Duterte, a 46-year-old lawyer, said her remarks were not an actual threat but an expression of concern over her own safety due to unspecified danger to her life. The Marcos administration's statements against her were "a farce" and part of efforts to persecute critics like her, Duterte said.

The subpoena ordered Duterte to appear before the National Bureau of Investigation on Friday to "shed light on the investigation for alleged grave threats."

Duterte said Monday she was willing to face an investigation but demanded the Marcos administration also respond to her questions, including alleged irregularities in government.

Under Philippine law, such public remarks may constitute a crime of threatening to inflict a wrong on a person or their family and are punishable by a prison term and fine.

Marcos ran with Duterte as his vice-presidential running mate in 2022 elections and both won landslide victories on a campaign call of national unity. In the Philippines, the two positions are elected separately.

The two leaders and their camps, however, soon had a bitter falling out over key differences, including in their approaches to China's aggressive territorial claims in the disputed South China Sea.

Duterte resigned from the Marcos



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. (center right), and Vice President Sara Duterte, daughter of former Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte, raise hands during the inauguration ceremony at National Museum on June 30, 2022 in Manila, Philippines. (AP)

Cabinet in June as education secretary and head of an anti-insurgency body and became one of the most vocal critics of the president, his wife and his

cousin Martin Romualdez, who heads the House of Representatives.

The House has been investigating alleged misuse of confidential govern-

ment funds by Duterte as vice president and when she headed the Department of Education.

A major political storm set off by a bitter feud between the Philippine president and the vice president is testing an Asian democracy that has long been troubled by rowdy politics, poor law enforcement and bareface impunity.

Just two years ago, Marcos Jr. and Duterte won in landslide electoral victories on a campaign battle cry of national unity.

But their fragile alliance rapidly floundered over major differences, including their leanings toward either the United States or China, and Marcos' rejection of the bloody crackdown on illegal drugs launched by his predecessor and Duterte's father, Rodrigo Duterte.

The hostilities came to a head over the weekend when Sara Duterte told reporters she had arranged for Marcos, his wife and his cousin and speaker of the House of Representatives, to be assassinated if she were fatally attacked herself. Marcos went on TV and declared he was ready to fight back.

Like her father, ex-President Rodrigo Duterte, the 46-year-old lawyer is a populist politician known for profanity-laced outbursts and temper that often clashed with official decorum. She made the political elites wary but endeared herself to ordinary people in a nation where name recall, political patronage and star-studded campaigns matter more than policy and governance platforms. As a provincial city mayor, Duterte successfully ran as Marcos' running mate in the 2022 race. But soon rifts appeared, including Duterte's opposition to congressional inquiries led by Marcos' allies into the thousands of deaths in the crackdown on drugs during Rodrigo Duterte's presidency 2016-2022. Also being investigated is her alleged misuse of funds while she served as education secretary.

When Duterte's chief of staff was temporarily detained by legislators after refusing to cooperate with the inquiry, Duterte made the threats in an online news conference against Marcos, his wife and House Speaker Romualdez.

10 kids killed by security forces in Mozambique election protests, Human Rights Watch says



A barricade burns in Mozambique's capital, Maputo on Nov 5 in protests that have engulfed the country after the opposition rejected the results of the country's polls which saw the Frelimo party extend its 58-year rule. (AP)

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Nov 26, (AP) — Mozambique security forces killed at least 10 children and injured dozens of others while trying to suppress weeks of protests following a disputed presidential election, Human Rights Watch said Monday.

Hundreds of other minors were detained by security forces, some of them for days in violation of international law, since election results were announced a month ago, the rights group said.

The southern African country has been beset by unrest after the ruling party's candidate was declared the winner of the Oct. 9 election despite claims of fraud by the opposition and criticism of the vote by international observers, including a team from the European Union.

Mozambican authorities have not given out details on how many people have been killed or detained in the protests, but said some of the demonstrations turned violent and had to be quelled by security forces.

Daniel Chapo was announced the winner of the election on Oct. 24, extending the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique party's unbroken half-century rule since independence from Portugal in 1975. Chapo is set to succeed President Filipe Nyusi, who has served the maximum two terms.

The leftist party, known as Frelimo, has often been accused of rigging elections to remain in power. There

were violent protests after last year's local elections, but these demonstrations have been the biggest challenge to Frelimo's long rule.

The protests spilled into the streets in the capital, Maputo, and other major cities after two senior opposition figures were killed by unknown gunmen in a late-night shooting on Oct. 18 that their party called a political assassination.

Since then, thousands have responded to regular calls for protests on social media from independent presidential candidate Venancio Mondlane, who lost to Chapo. Mondlane has left the country over fears for his safety, he said, after his lawyer was one of the two opposition members killed when the car they were in was ambushed and riddled with bullets on a street in Maputo. No arrests have been made in those killings.

International rights groups say at least 30 people have been killed by security forces firing live bullets at protesters, while Mozambique groups say the death toll is around 50. The Mozambique Bar Association said earlier this month that it had secured the release of more than 2,700 people who had been detained by security forces, many of them teenagers.

The protests have forced schools and businesses to close and led many Mozambicans to stay home. The army has been deployed to keep order.

Africa

300 migrants detained: Libyan military officials said Monday they apprehended hundreds of migrants traversing the country's vast desert hoping to ultimately cross the Mediterranean Sea in pursuit of a better life in Europe.

The 444 Brigade, a powerful militia group that operates under the auspices of the Libyan army, said in a statement that its patrolling commanders detained more than 300 migrants and referred them to authorities.

The group in a post on Facebook condemned smuggling and human trafficking and said its patrols would continue efforts to block smuggling routes. It posted satellite images of the desert and pictures of what appeared to be migrants sitting in rows in front of armed and masked militants. (AP)

'Participate peacefully': Namibia's President Nangolo Mbumba on Monday called on citizens to participate peacefully in the 8th Presidential and National Assembly elections set for Nov. 27, 2024.

In a message to the nation, Mbumba highlighted the importance of the upcoming vote, which will determine the 5th President and members of the 8th National Assembly and appealed to all Namibians to turn out in large numbers to vote.

"Your participation is a patriotic contribution to the consolidation of our democracy and the development of our motherland. I appeal to you to do so in a calm manner that is peaceful and respectful of one another, the relevant authorities and the laws of our Republic," Mbumba said. (Xinhua)



Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, meets with Deputy Prime Minister of Luxembourg Xavier Bettel in Beijing, capital of China on Nov 25. (Xinhua)

China FM, Luxembourg deputy PM hold talks

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Luxembourg Xavier Bettel in Beijing on Monday.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said that the bilateral relations have achieved long-term and steady development since the establishment of diplomatic ties more than 50 years ago.

China speaks highly of Luxembourg's positive and practical policy toward China, and stands ready to work with Luxembourg to consolidate political mutual trust, enhance complementarity, create new growth points for green development cooperation, increase

people-to-people exchanges and push for further progress in bilateral relations, he said.

Wang noted that next year marks the 50th anniversary of China-EU diplomatic relations. China and the EU are partners not rivals, he said, expressing the hope that the EU side will uphold its strategic autonomy. China is willing to work with Luxembourg to promote the sustained and sound development of China-EU relations, Wang said.

Bettel said that Luxembourg firmly adheres to the one-China principle and looks forward to closer cooperation with China. As one of the founding members of the EU, Luxembourg is willing to enhance EU-China mutual trust and promote EU-China partnership. (Xinhua)

6 killed in violence

Protesters demand release of imprisoned Khan

ISLAMABAD, Nov 26, (AP) — Supporters seeking the release of imprisoned Pakistani former Prime Minister Imran Khan broke through a ring of shipping containers blocking off the capital on Tuesday, and battled security forces despite a government threat to respond with gunfire. Six people have died in the violence.

Thousands of security forces have poured into central Islamabad in an attempt to quell protests in support of Khan that have gripped the capital and its surrounding areas since Sunday. The popular politician has been in jail for over a year and faces more than 150 criminal cases that his party says are politically motivated.

Authorities say only courts can order the release of Khan, who was ousted in 2022 through a no-confidence vote in Parliament. He has been imprisoned since his first conviction in a graft case, in August 2023.

On Tuesday, Pakistan's army took control of D-Chowk, a large square in downtown Islamabad's Red Zone, which houses key government buildings and is where visiting Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko is staying. Paramili-



Supporters of imprisoned former premier Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, aim to throw stones with slingshot following police fire tear gas shell to disperse them during clashes, in Islamabad, Pakistan on Nov 26. (AP)

tary rangers and police were also out in force and some fired warning shots into the air.

Still, Khan's wife, Bushra Bibi, who is leading the protests, made slow progress toward the square in a heavily guarded convoy, surrounded by well-wishers.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi threatened that security forces would respond with live fire if protesters fired weapons at them.

"We have now allowed police to take any decision according to the situation," Naqvi said later while visiting the square.

Protester Shahzori Ali said people were on the streets because Khan had called for them to be there. "We will stay here until Khan is among us. He will decide what to do next," Ali said.

"If they again fire bullets, the bullet will be responded with the bullet," he said.

Police so far have used tear gas in an attempt to disperse the crowds. The dead include four members of the security services and one civilian who were killed when a vehicle rammed them on a street overnight into Tuesday.

Rescuers recover 20 bodies from flash floods and landslides on Indonesia's Sumatra island

KARO, Indonesia, Nov 26, (AP) — Indonesian rescuers have recovered 20 bodies and are looking for two villagers who remain missing after flash floods on Sumatra island caused mud and rocks to tumble down mountainsides, officials said Tuesday.

Torrential rains over the weekend caused rivers to burst their banks in four hilly districts in North Sumatra province, washing away houses and destroying farms.

Four more bodies were recovered Monday evening in Karo Regency, bringing the total there to 10, National Disaster Management Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said in a statement Tuesday.

Flash floods also left four people dead in Deli Serdang district, and rescue workers were still searching for two people who were swept away.

Earlier, rescuers recovered two bodies in villages in South Tapanuli district, and four members of a family, including two children, in Harang Julu, a mountainside village in Padang Lawas district.

Seasonal rain from about October to March frequently causes flooding and landslides in Indonesia, an archipelago of 17,000 islands where millions of people live in mountainous areas or near fertile flood plains.

A landslide hit several houses in Harang Julu, a mountainside village in Padang Lawas district, said Mustari, the chief of the local search and rescue agency, who like many Indonesians goes by a single name.

Rescuers late Saturday pulled out the bodies of a four-member family, including two children, and rescued at least



Rescuers carry the body of a victim of the landslide in Karo, North Sumatra, Indonesia on Nov 25. (AP)

three injured people from the devastated village, he said.

Television reports showed relatives wailing as they watched rescuers pull mud-caked bodies from a room at a buried house in Harang Julu village.

Seasonal rain from about October to March frequently causes flooding and landslides in Indonesia, an archipelago of 17,000 islands where millions of people live in mountainous areas or near fertile flood plains.



Former Brazil president Jair Bolsonaro arrives to speak with the press after being formally charged by the federal police with attempted coup, at the airport in Brasilia, Brazil on Nov 25. (AP)

Audios reveal Brazilian officers pressured Bolsonaro to stage coup

SAO PAULO, Nov 26, (AP) — A trove of leaked audio recordings from late 2022 reveal high-ranking members of Brazil's army discussing efforts to pressure then-President Jair Bolsonaro to carry out a coup and remain in power.

The 53 audios, obtained by the Federal Police and accessed by The Associated Press on Monday, provide a rare chance to hear military members expressing in their own voices their desire to keep leftist Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva from taking office.

Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who oversees the police's sprawling investigation, quoted some of those audios in his ruling last week ordering the arrest of five people for

plotting the assassination of then-President-elect Lula in 2022 and then attempting to oust him from power on Jan. 8, 2023, when Bolsonaro supporters destroyed government buildings in capital Brasilia.

Audios from one former army officer - who was not among those de Moraes ordered arrested last week - are particularly supportive of a coup, and weren't referenced in de Moraes' order.

Col. Roberto Raimundo Crisculo, a former subcommander of the army's special forces, told retired Brig. Gen. Mario Fernandes, who was then second in command at the general secretary of the presidency, that the far-right leader had a clear choice after Lula won his third, non-consecutive term.

Lat/Am

Haiti politician slams Macron:

A member of Haiti's transitional presidential council has publicly criticized remarks by French President Emmanuel Macron, who was caught on camera calling the Caribbean country's leaders "total morons."

The council's former president, Edgard Leblanc Fils, said in a statement late Sunday that Macron had insulted an entire nation "living through dark times."

Macron was filmed making the remarks on the sidelines of the G20 meeting in Brazil earlier this month as he criticized the council's decision to abruptly oust Prime Minister Garry Conille after only six months.

"They're total morons," Macron had said, referring to the council. "They never should have dismissed him." (AP)

'Over 18K register to run':

Over 18,000 people have registered online to run for Supreme Court seats and federal judgeships in Mexico's contentious new selection process, officials said Monday. But a random drawing in the end will determine who gets on the ballot.

The ruling party pushed through a constitutional reform in September to make all federal judges stand for election, replacing the system where court employees and lawyers mainly move up through the ranks.

Current court employees and their supporters have staged dozens of demonstrations against the reforms, calling them part of a ruling-party campaign to weaken checks and balances and eliminate independent regulatory and oversight bodies. (AP)

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts				
JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225	+0.58	48,258.73	SAUDI	-	TASI	-0.44	11,736.07
DUBAI	-	DFMGI	+1.27	4,828.83	PHILIPPINES	-	PSEI	-0.63	6,806.86
EGYPT	-	EGX 30	+0.05	30,284.35	PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	-3.19	94,901.81

Business

Total loans hit 56.37 bln dinars, with strong growth in non-resident loans

Kuwait credit facilities rise by 15% amid stock market gains

By Mahmoud Shandi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Kuwaiti banks saw a notable rise in credit facilities for securities in October 2024, aligning with the strong performance of the stock exchange, which reported gains of approximately 2 billion dinars since the start of the year.

The credit facilities increased by 26.6 million dinars or 15 percent, reaching a total of 195 million dinars in October up from 168.4 million dinars in September.

On an annual basis, credit facilities for securities grew by

6.5 percent, rising by 12 million dinars from 183 million dinars in October 2023.

However, the total credit facilities for securities granted to both residents and non-residents saw a slight decline in October, dropping by 8 million dinars to 3.664 billion dinars, compared to 3.672 billion dinars in September.

Nevertheless, the figure showed a 10 percent increase from 3.332 billion dinars recorded in October 2023. Among companies and institutions, credit facilities decreased slightly by 18 million dinars, falling to 2.339 billion dinars in October.

In terms of overall loan growth, the credit facilities pro-

vided by Kuwaiti banks to both residents and non-residents increased significantly, amounting to 56.37 billion dinars by the end of October 2024, a rise of 5.2 percent from 53.55 billion dinars at the end of December 2023.

Of this, loans granted to residents rose by 2.9 percent, reaching 49.06 billion dinars, while loans to non-residents surged by 24.3 percent, totaling 7.31 billion dinars.

Sector-specific loans also saw notable growth. Housing loans, aimed at purchasing, building, or renovating private residences, increased by 2.66 percent, amounting to 16.44 billion dinars by the end of October.

The consumer loans grew by 4.8 percent, reaching a total

of 2.06 billion dinars, while personal loans rose by 2.4 percent, totaling 19.22 billion dinars.

Simultaneously, the Kuwait Stock Exchange experienced a dip in its main indices, with a market value loss of 264 million dinars following the MSCI index review.

The liquidity of the stock market surged by 75 percent during the session, with total liquidity reaching 107 million dinars, driven largely by foreign investors targeting stocks in the MSCI index components.

Despite the uptick in liquidity, the Premier and Main Market indices fell by 0.62 percent, while the General Index and Main Index both experienced declines of around 0.6 percent.

CBK fixes rates based on KWD's currency basket, not USD alone

'Kuwait's Dinar unique peg gives rate flexibility'

By Marwa Al-Bahawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: A recent study confirmed that the Central Bank of Kuwait's decision to fix interest rates, independent of the interest rate cuts of the US Federal Reserve, is due to the Kuwaiti Dinar not being fully linked to the US Dollar; as it is rather linked to a basket of currencies, with the US Dollar constituting the highest percentage.

The study was conducted by Chairman of the Scientific Committee at the Real Estate Brokers Union Ali Kamal. Entitled, "The US Federal Reserve Cuts Interest Rates and the Central Bank of Kuwait Fixes Rates," the study explains the rationale behind the Central Bank of Kuwait's decision not to mirror the US Federal Reserve measures.

It pointed out that fully pegging the local currencies of Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain to the US Dollar limits their monetary policy flexibility, especially in terms of adjusting interest rates.

Kamal explained that if the interest rate on the currency to which a country's currency is pegged increases, the central banks of countries linked to that currency typically follow suit, with few exceptions.

However, in Kuwait, the situation is different, because the Kuwaiti Dinar is not entirely pegged to the US Dollar, but to a basket of currencies, with the US Dollar having the highest share. This structure gives the Central Bank of Kuwait certain flexibility to avoid strictly following the US Federal Reserve's rate changes. The goal of linking a currency to another currency -- either fully or partially -- is to maintain the stability of the local currency's exchange rate, prevent speculation, and ensure its stability.

Value and Exchange Rate

Kamal touched on the concept of currency value, exchange rates, and how exchange rates are determined. He said the value of a currency reflects its strength and purchasing power within the local economy or globally, while the exchange rate is the price at which one currency is exchanged for another. Specifically, the exchange rate is the number of units of the local currency required to obtain one unit of a foreign currency. For example, in Kuwait, KD1 equals \$3.2, and in Saudi Arabia, 3.75 Saudi riyals equals \$1.

Major currencies

He also revealed that oil constitutes the largest share of exports in the Gulf countries and it is priced in US Dollar. A significant portion of imports is also transacted in US Dollar. For this reason, linking local currencies to the US Dollar is ideal for the Gulf countries.

This linkage ensures the stability of import prices; given the stability of the exchange rate, and also stabilizes the value of oil sale revenues, he elaborated.

He was quick to clarify though that if a currency is allowed to float and its value decreases, the cost of imports will rise; even if the price of the imported goods remains stable. This is due to the depreciation of the local currency, he stated.

He presented an example; that is, if an American product worth \$30,000 is imported (equivalent to KD9,230 at an exchange rate of KD 1 = \$3.25), and the exchange rate of the Kuwaiti Dinar drops to KD1 = \$2.8; the value of the product would increase to KD 10,714. This would result in an additional cost of KD1,484; even though the price of the



Kuwait Integrated Digital Field.

Optimizing operations through innovation

KwIDF major leap in oil industry

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26, (KUNA): Kuwait Integrated Digital Field (KwIDF) is touted as a transformative leap in the country's oil industry via the use of the latest in digital means to administrate oil field projects, which leads to rapid production, high efficiency, and lowering costs.

KwIDF, a Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) project, operates at the highest levels to save time, effort, and finances, boosting reservoirs' production of oil and natural gas and preventing possible accidents from occurring.

KwIDF uses direct data from machines installed in oil refineries' and projects to optimize direct decision-making without necessarily needing to refer to human components to boost production and optimize work.

Speaking to KUNA, the Technology Innovation Manager at KOC, Hamad Al-Zaabi stressed that KwIDF was one of the most important strategic projects for the company due to it providing multifaceted means to follow up on production using the latest technologies.

Al-Zaabi added that KwIDF was one of the most advance projects on a global scale in terms of technology and application, which contributed immensely to oil production and income exceeding KD 200 million (USD 614 million) annually.

KwIDF, indicated Al-Zaabi, operated on several levels including analyzing data from oil wells from various sources around the clock. The technology provides reports on oil wells' performances, pipeline networks, and production to em-

ployees wherever they were, which saves time and effort, he said.

Al-Zaabi affirmed that KwIDF sped up the process of extracting data and reports for employees and enhanced communication amongst them and coordinated efforts between various departments no matter the distance.

KwIDF comprises several KOC sectors and employees, which reflected the company's ethos in bolstering collaboration and shared goals, Al-Zaabi pointed out.

On his part, KOC Team Leader for Integration and Excellence Eng. Hamad Al-Rashidi said that through KwIDF, the company managed to "revolutionize" the way work was being monitored to achieve optimization for projects and activities.

He pointed out that the challenge was to cover operations at several oil fields in addition to the overflow of data around the clock, which required making the right decision for some 95 percent of KOC's oil wells.

He added that the project helped in decreasing obstacles facing wells and pipeline networks at oil and natural gas fields due to the fact of having an adequate database, which was easy to reach and assess.

He deemed the project a success for it lowered expenses, improved quality and brought in income, noting that KwIDF was unique in that it organized drilling operations in a manner that saved operational costs, boosted capacity number of wells, and enhanced monitoring of production sites around the clock.



Hamad Al-Zaabi, Technology Innovation Manager at KOC.



Eng. Hamad Al-Rashidi, KOC Team Leader for Integration and Excellence.



Basil Al-Otaibi, KOC Team Reservoir Research and Technology.

KFH promotes secure savings and investment awareness

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: In support of the Diraya campaign, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) actively promotes financial literacy awareness through various community segments. Through its social media channels and website, KFH emphasizes the benefits of secure investment and saving. Additionally, it provides information about banking services offered, ensuring they are easily accessible, convenient for customers, and maintain high standards of quality and safety.

KFH is dedicated to sharing thoughtful media content that fosters financial literacy and educates customers on the key difference between saving and investment. The bank explained that saving involves setting aside a portion of funds for future use, while investment entails allocating funds towards a product or service with the aim of generating profit.

Kuwaiti banks provide a range of secure investment services and products, designed to assist customers in managing their investments and maximizing

their returns. These services include different investment deposit options, where customers deposit money into an account at the bank to be invested in and generate returns over a set period of time. Customers are able to withdraw the deposited amount after the elapse of the specified contract period.

Investment funds are regarded as one of the services offered by banks. They serve as a combined investment tool that enables participants to invest their funds to realize profits. These funds are managed by a specialized manager against certain fees. The investment options within these funds may include stocks, bonds, merchandise, money markets, and other assets. It is important to note that investment funds offered by banks are regulated and licensed by the Capital Markets Authority.

The investment savings account is a type of account in which customers can deposit funds they wish to save. The bank will then invest these funds and deposit any returns realized into

Kuwait oil down to \$74.57 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26, (KUNA): The price of Kuwait oil went down by 57 cents to USD 74.57 per barrel on Monday as opposed to USD 75.11 pb last Friday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday.

At the global level, the Brent crude went down by USD 2.16 to USD 73.01 per barrel, the same occurred to the West Texas Intermediate, which went down by USD 2.30 to USD 68.94 pb.

Transactions down by 12.5%

Real estate sales plummet in November's third week

By Marwa Al-Bahawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Statistics from the Real Estate Registration and Documentation Department at the Ministry of Justice revealed a notable decline in real estate transactions during the third week of November (Nov 17-21).

Within the above mentioned period, the number of transactions decreased by 12.5 percent, with a total of 89 transactions; compared to 112 transactions in the previous week.

Similarly, the value of these transactions dropped by 44.8 percent, amounting to KD32 million; down from KD 58 million the week before.

The decline was observed across all types of real estate. Private real estate transactions witnessed an 8.1 percent decrease in the number of transactions, totaling 79; and a significant 47.59 percent drop in value, which amounted to KD20.7 million compared to the previous week's KD39.5 million.

Investment real estate also experienced a decrease, with the number of transactions falling by 21.7 percent

(18 properties) and the value dropping by 30.3 percent, totaling KD11 million, compared to 23 properties worth KD15.79 million in the previous week. Commercial real estate witnessed the sale of a single property for KD 310,000. No transactions were recorded in the coastal strip, exhibitions, warehouses or industrial areas during this period.

Geographically, the data showed varying activity across different governorates. In the Capital Governorate, there were seven contracts for private real estate, one for investment real estate, and one for commercial real estate. In Hawalli Governorate, nine private real estate contracts and five investment real estate contracts were traded. Farwaniya Governorate witnessed the highest volume, with 10 private real estate transactions. Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate had three contracts in private real estate, while Ahmadi Governorate experienced the most significant trading activity, with 46 private real estate transactions and 12 investment real estate contracts. Jahra Governorate had the lowest volume, with only four private real estate transactions recorded.



Minister Eng. Noura Suleiman Al-Fassam with Lord Alastair King, together with Sheikh Saoud Salem Al-Sabah and Ambassador Belinda Lewis.

Kuwait, London seek to expand stronger economic partnerships

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Her Excellency the Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, and Chairwoman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Investment Authority, Eng. Noura Suleiman Al-Fassam, met with the Lord Mayor of the City of London, Lord Alastair King, and his accompanying economic delegation. The meeting aimed to strengthen and enhance the

economic, financial, and investment relations between the two friendly countries.

During the meeting, ways to boost bilateral cooperation between the two countries were discussed, as well as potential future collaboration in the financial and investment sectors, in light of the strategic and historical partnership between the two nations.

ABK announces official closure for Summit of Supreme Council of GCC

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announces the closure of its branches on Sunday, 1 December, 2024 for the Summit of the Supreme Council of the GCC, to resume operations on Monday, 2 December, 2024. During this time, ABK's branch in Al Khiran Mall will be functional to service customers from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The Bank has also confirmed its full operational readiness to serve customers 24/7 via its various digital platforms throughout the holiday. This includes Online Banking



ABK logo

via eahli.com, Mobile Banking through the ABK app, as well as the Bank's call center Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899.



Diraya logo

the same account on a periodical basis. This type of account differs from a traditional deposit account as it allows for withdrawals and additional deposits to be made at any time.

KFH affirmed the significance of customers' investment plans, which serve as means of preparing for future necessities like children's education expenses, starting a personal project, retirement, etc. These plans assist in regularly saving money in a bank account and generating returns. The real-

ized returns together with the customer's deposited amounts are available at the end of the saving plan period.

Different investments carry varying risk levels. High-risk investments often lack regulatory oversight that ensures investor protection. For instance, virtual currencies are considered as one of the high-risk investments as they don't fall under the supervision of the Central Bank of Kuwait or any other local or international institutions. These digital assets are decentralized and difficult to control, therefore transactions made can't be monitored or tracked.

On this basis, the Central Bank of Kuwait urges investors to be cautious, highlighting the significance of being well-informed and avoiding unknown parties to prevent falling victims of financial scams.

As part of its CSR program, KFH persistently engages in shedding light on the rights of customers and providing education regarding their obligations when they interact with banks.

NBK Wealth hosts exclusive forum featuring global investment leaders



Mr. Isam Al-Sager delivers his speech.



Mr. Faisal Al-Hamad, as a speaker.

Bringing together top experts and CEOs from leading asset management firms worldwide to explore the evolving global investment landscape

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: NBK Wealth, the region's premier wealth management group, recently held an exclusive client insight forum titled "Strategies for a New Era". The event featured lectures and panel discussions that offered critical investment insights and strategic guidance, shedding light on key trends shaping the global investment landscape.

The conference, was attended by NBK Group's Executive Management, spearheaded by Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait, alongside Mr. Salah Al-Fulaij, CEO of NBK Kuwait, Mr. Faisal Al-Hamad, CEO of NBK Wealth Group, Mr. Nabil Maroof, Chief Executive Officer - Global Asset Management at NBK Wealth, and Mr. Malek Khalife, CEO- Global Private Banking and Switzerland at NBK Wealth.

The conference kicked off with a speech delivered by Al-Sager, who highlighted the event's significance in shaping the future of wealth management. In his address, Al-Sager emphasized the bank's commitment to strategic partnerships aimed at navigating the challenges and opportunities within the global market. The speech underscored NBK's goal of providing customers with access to high-quality global financial services and products, reinforcing the bank's leadership in wealth management.

The forum also brought together the strategic partners of NBK Wealth, JPMorgan Asset Management, InterVest Capital Partners, and private equity specialist Revcap. This exclusive event convened industry experts who engaged in in-depth discussions on prevailing market trends and untapped investment opportunities.

This was followed by a lecture by Patrick Thompson, CEO, EMEA, J.P. Morgan Asset Management, titled 'Collaboration and Innovation: Key to Achieving Superior Customer Outcomes'. In his notes, Thompson explored the strategic partnership between NBK Wealth and JPMorgan Asset Management, highlighting its role in delivering exceptional value to customers by combining global expertise with local insights and introducing innovative investment solutions.

The agenda also featured a lecture on private credit and the US commercial real estate market, where Mike Gontar, CEO of InterVest Capital Partners, discussed the growing appeal of private credit as an alternative asset class, and provided insights into the current state of the US commercial real estate sector.

Meanwhile, Andrew Pettit, Founding Partner of private equity firm Revcap, analyzed the recovery trajectory of European property markets, with a special focus on UK real estate. His insights highlighted growth drivers amidst shifting economic dynamics and evolving property demand, for both commercial and residential properties.

Another highlight of the conference was the panel discussion which delved into the evolving private markets and their significant growth potential. The conversation explored the increasing diversity of opportunities in private equity and venture capital, emphasizing long-term prospects for investors.

The panel discussion featured Patrick Thompson, CEO of J. P. Morgan

Al-Hamad:

- Hosting this key event is a testament to NBK Wealth's reliability as a trusted partner in navigating market complexities
- The forum reflects the Group's commitment to equipping clients with insights on the latest trends and opportunities
- We brought together experts to analyze global investment prospects and innovative strategies
- The panel discussions focused on key wealth strategies tailored for dynamic and evolving market environments



Faisal Al-Hamad, alongside Salah Al-Fulaij and Nabil Maroof.



Mr. Patrick Thompson



Mr. Mike Gontar



A discussion panel on the sidelines of the conference.



Isam Al-Sager, Salah Al-Fulaij, Faisal Al-Hamad, Nabil Maroof, and Malek Khalife.



Abdulmohsen Al-Mudhaf from the National Team for Resources.

Asset Management EMEA; Vincent Giovinco, Managing Director at J. P. Morgan Asset Management; Mike

Gontar, CEO of InterVest Capital Partners; and Andrew Pettit, Founding Partner of Revcap, with Fares

Hammami, Head of Strategy at NBK Wealth, moderating the discussion. NBK Wealth brought together in-

dustry experts and thought leaders to equip its clients with the knowledge and resources needed to make

informed investment decisions. The event served as a platform for meaningful discussions, fostering valuable connections, and exploring innovative strategies for navigating the investment landscape.

Commenting on the event, Faisal Al-Hamad, CEO, NBK Wealth, emphasized that hosting this major event reflects NBK Wealth Group's unwavering commitment to equipping its clients with cutting-edge insights and innovative strategies to navigate the complexities of the global investment landscape.

He noted, "Through events like these, we aim to empower our clients to capitalize on emerging opportunities, mitigate risks, and achieve their long-term financial objectives as their trusted partner in an ever-changing market."

Al-Hamad further underscored the significance of fostering direct engagement with clients and collaborating with global leaders in asset and wealth management. These efforts, he explained, highlight NBK Wealth Group's extensive market expertise, global reach, and relentless pursuit of innovation to deliver unparalleled value to clients.

NBK Wealth Group has strengthened its standing as a market leader, offering an array of bespoke services that go beyond traditional investment solutions. Supported by a team of over 115 investment experts, brokers, and 70 relationship managers, the group delivers tailored wealth management solutions, including asset management, financial advisory, and exclusive services for high-net-worth clients.

In line with its commitment to innovation, NBK Wealth recently unveiled a strategic partnership with J. P. Morgan Asset Management, one of the world's largest asset management firms. This collaboration aims to offer diversified and cutting-edge investment portfolios designed to deliver superior performance and cater to the long-term objectives of its clients; giving them access to integrated investment portfolios designed to operate efficiently under various market fluctuations and promote sustainable growth over the long term.

About NBK Wealth
NBK Wealth, a cornerstone of the NBK Group, stands as one of the premier wealth management firms in the Middle East. As of the end of 2023, the company's Assets Under Management (AUM) exceeded \$20 billion. With a strong presence across nine cities in five countries, NBK Wealth offers a comprehensive suite of services, including private banking, financial planning, asset management, and advisory services. The group adopts a client-centric, solutions-driven approach tailored to meet the distinct financial objectives of high-net-worth individuals and institutions. For more information, please visit: www.nbkwealth.com

NBK Wealth is a registered brand under National Bank of Kuwait S.A.K.P. ("NBK"), representing the Asset Management business of NBK, including its affiliated entities such as Watani Investment Company K.S.C.C. ("NBKW"), a leading investment firm, alongside the Private Banking services offered worldwide by NBK, one of the largest and oldest financial institutions in the region.



Mr. Andrew Pettit, as a lecturer.



One of the panel discussions during the conference.

Event aligns with the bank's commitment to empowering its marketing team

Gulf Bank hosts renowned marketing expert Kolster for an inspiring lecture on building iconic brands

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Gulf Bank proudly hosted Thomas Kolster, a globally renowned expert in marketing and sustainability, for a compelling lecture titled "How to Build an Iconic Brand." This event aligns with the bank's commitment to empowering its marketing team with innovative tools and strategies to succeed in a rapidly evolving market.

As the founder of the Goodvertising Agency and the global Goodvertising movement, Kolster is celebrated for advancing purpose-driven branding that integrates social and environmental values. With over 18 years of experience advising Fortune 500

companies, startups, and non-profits, Kolster has authored the influential books Goodvertising (2012) and The Hero Trap (2020). His expertise and thought leadership have made him a sought-after speaker at major global events like TEDx, SXSW, and Cannes Lions.

In his lecture, Kolster shared the inspirations behind his books and emphasized the critical role of brand identity as a core organizational asset. He introduced modern techniques for market analysis, understanding customer needs, and crafting messages that inspire trust and deliver a competitive edge.

Kolster emphasized the impor-



Group photo of Gulf Bank's marketing team with Thomas Kolster in the middle.

tance of innovation and differentiation, explaining that successful brands resonate authentically with customer values and societal priorities while maintaining a strong focus on delivering an exceptional customer experience.

The Gulf Bank marketing team valued the session for its actionable insights and innovative strategies, expressing enthusiasm about incorporating these forward-thinking approaches into their upcoming projects.

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.

"We look forward to continuing to bring our customers world-class standard and high-quality kitchen designs"

AAW hosts Kuwait's top architects, interior designers at renovated Nolte Küchen showroom

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW) welcomed Kuwait's leading architects, interior designers, and chefs to celebrate the reopening of its Nolte Küchen showroom in Shuwaikh. The exclusive event showcased the brand's latest designs and collection, highlighting Nolte Küchen's commitment to excellence and innovation.

The event was attended by AAW Chairman and CEO, Mr. Faisal Ali Al Mutawa, Deputy CEO Mr. Khalid Faisal Al Mutawa, Nolte's Export Sales Director Mr. Markus Zimmer, Nolte's Managing Director Mr. Selva Kumar Rajulu, as well as prominent architects, interior designers, and chefs. It featured a live cooking demonstration by Chef Dannah Al Tourrah, who catered the gathering with fresh, seasonal ingredients sourced from local farms.

AAW Chairman and CEO, Mr. Faisal Al Mutawa said: "It is a pleasure to welcome you all to our new No-



Part of the celebration at Nolte exhibition.



One of the kitchens from the new Nolte Küchen showroom.



Group photo of the management team at Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. and Nolte Company.

lte Kitchens showroom for an evening that blends the art of unique designs and culinary art. We look forward to continuing to bring our customers world-class standard and high-quality kitchen designs into their home."

Nolte's Managing Director, Mr. Selva Kumar Rajulu added: "The renovation of this showroom was a

large undertaking with incredible attention to detail that took a full year. Thank you to the AAW team for their dedication to creating this modern, innovative space. Today, you can discover our latest collections, from Nolte NEO, Nolte Kitchens, Nolte Express, Nolte Eco, in addition to the Nolte Spa collection."

Nolte's Export Sales Director, Mr. Markus Zimmer said: "This new showroom is a celebration of design and innovation, brought to life by our partnership with AAW. Here, customers can explore our latest collection, consult with our experts, and bring their dream kitchen to reality. We are confident that our partnership

with AAW will continue to provide exceptional experiences and solutions that meet all our customers' needs."

Nolte Group is a German-based manufacturer of kitchens, bedrooms, wardrobes and furniture, founded in 1923. All Nolte Group products are 100% "Made in Germany," ensuring security, reliability and above all

quality. AAW is the exclusive distributor of Nolte Kitchens in Kuwait for over 10 years, offering a wide range of kitchen appliances directly to the Kuwait market. Nolte Kitchens can be found at its AAW showroom located behind Tilal complex in Shuwaikh.

Trump threatens to impose sweeping new tariffs on his first day in office

Mexico, Canada and China targeted

NEW YORK, Nov 26, (AP): President-elect Donald Trump has threatened to impose sweeping new tariffs on Mexico, Canada and China as soon as he takes office as part of his effort to crack down on illegal immigration and drugs. He said he would impose a 25% tax on all products entering the country from Canada and Mexico, and an additional 10% tariff on goods from China, as one of his first executive orders.

The tariffs, if implemented, could dramatically raise prices for American consumers on everything from gas to automobiles to agricultural products. The U.S. is the largest importer of goods in the world, with Mexico, China and Canada its top three suppliers, according to the most recent U.S. Census data.

Trump made the threats in a pair of posts on his Truth Social site in which he railed against an influx of illegal migrants, even though southern border apprehensions have been hovering near four-year lows.

"On January 20th, as one of my many first Executive Orders, I will sign all necessary documents to charge Mexico and Canada a 25% Tariff on ALL products coming into the United States, and its ridiculous Open Borders," he wrote, complaining that "thousands of people are pouring through Mexico and Canada, bringing Crime and Drugs at levels never seen before," even though violent crime is down from pandemic highs.

He said the new tariffs would remain in place "until such time as Drugs, in particular Fentanyl, and all Illegal Aliens stop this Invasion of our Country!"

"Both Mexico and Canada have the absolute right and power to easily solve this long simmering problem. We hereby demand that they use this power," he went on, "and until such time that they do, it is time for them to pay a very big price!"

A senior Canadian government official said Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Trump spoke after Trump's posts. The two spoke about the border and trade and had a good conversation, the official said. The official was not authorized to speak publicly about the matter and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Trump also turned his ire on China, saying he has "had many talks with China about the massive amounts of drugs, in particular Fentanyl, being sent into the United States - But to no avail."

"Until such time as they stop, we will be charging China an additional 10% Tariff, above any additional Tariffs, on all of their many products coming into the United States of America," he wrote.

The Chinese Embassy in Washington cautioned on Monday that there will be losers on all sides if there is a trade war.

"China-US economic and trade cooperation is mutually beneficial in nature," embassy spokesman Liu Pengyu posted on X. "No one will win a trade war or a #tariff war." He added that China had taken steps in the last year to help stem drug trafficking.

It is unclear whether Trump will actually go through with the threats or if he is using them as a negotiating tactic before he returns to the White House in the new year.

Trump's nominee for treasury secretary, Scott Bessent - who if confirmed, would be one of several officials responsible for imposing tariffs on other countries - has on several occasions said tariffs are a means of negotiation.

He wrote in a Fox News op-ed last week, before his nomination, that tariffs are "a useful tool for achieving the president's foreign policy objectives. Whether it is getting allies to spend more on their own defense, opening foreign markets to U.S. exports, securing cooperation on ending illegal immigration and interdicting fentanyl trafficking, or deterring military aggression, tariffs can play a central role."

Trump won the election in large part due to voter frustration over inflation, but his threatened tariffs pose the risk of pushing prices even higher for food, autos and other goods. If inflationary pressures increase, the Federal Reserve might need to keep its benchmark interest rates higher.

Trump's threats come as arrests for illegally crossing the border from Mexico have been falling. The most recent U.S. numbers for October show arrests remain near four-year lows, with U.S. Border Patrol making 56,530 arrests in October, less than one third of the tally from October last year.

Meanwhile, arrests for illegally crossing the border from Canada have been rising over the past two years. The Border Patrol made 23,721 arrests between October 2023 and September 2024, compared with 10,021 the previous 12 months. More than 14,000 of those arrested on the Canadian border were Indian - more than 10 times the number two years ago.

Last week, a jury convicted two men on charges related to human smuggling for their roles in an international operation that led to the deaths of a family of Indian migrants who froze while trying to cross the Canada-U.S. border during a 2022 blizzard.

Much of America's fentanyl is smuggled from Mexico. Border seizures of the drug rose sharply

under President Joe Biden, and U.S. officials tallied about 21,900 pounds (12,247 kilograms) of fentanyl seized in the 2024 government budget year, compared with 2,545 pounds (1,154 kilograms) in 2019, when Trump was president.

If Trump were to move forward with the threatened tariffs, the new taxes would pose an enormous challenge for the economies of Canada and Mexico, in particular.

The Canadian dollar weakened sharply in foreign exchange markets immediately following Trump's post.

During Trump's first term, his move to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, and reports that he was considering a 25% tariff on the Canadian auto sector were considered an existential threat in Canada. Canada is one of the most trade-dependent countries in the world, and 75% of Canada's exports go to the U.S.

The tariffs would also throw into doubt the reliability of the 2020 trade deal brokered in large part by Trump with Canada and Mexico, the USMCA, which replaced NAFTA and is up for review in 2026.

It's unclear from Trump's social media post how he would legally apply tariff hikes on those two pivotal U.S. trade partners, but the 2020 deal allows for national security exceptions.

Trump transition team officials did not immediately respond to questions about what authority he would use, what he would need to see to prevent the tariffs from being implemented and how they would impact prices in the U.S.

When Trump imposed higher tariffs during his first term in office, other countries responded with retaliatory tariffs of their own. Canada, for instance, announced billions of new duties in 2018 against the U.S. in a tit-for-tat response to new taxes on Canadian steel and aluminum.

Many of the U.S. products were chosen for their political rather than economic impact. For example, Canada imports just \$3 million worth of yogurt from the U.S. annually and most of it comes from one plant in Wisconsin, the home state of then-Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan. That product was hit with a 10% duty.

The Canadian government, in a joint statement from Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland and Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc, emphasized the close relationship between the two countries and said they will discuss the border and vast economic ties with the incoming administration.

"Canada places the highest priority on border security and the integrity of our shared border. Our relationship today is balanced and mutually beneficial, particularly for American workers," the statement read.

Digital transformation, sustainability

WIC kicks off in Riyadh, uniting leaders in investment for sustainable growth

RIYADH, Nov 26: Invest Saudi and The World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) officially launched the 28th World Investment Conference (WIC) today in Riyadh.

With an overarching theme of 'Harnessing Digital Transformation and Sustainable Growth: Scaling Investment Opportunities', the first day brought together more than 2,000 attendees from 130 countries, including 30 ministers, to explore key strategies for overcoming global investment challenges and unlocking opportunities for the future.

H.E. Khalid A. Al-Falih, Saudi Minister of Investment, opened the event with an insightful keynote address, highlighting Saudi Arabia's transformation under Vision 2030 and its emergence as a global investment hub. He identified the critical global trends shaping investment, such as the rise of green and blue economies, the impact of new technologies, the reconfiguration of global supply chains, and demographic shifts.

Showcasing Saudi Arabia's development, H.E. Khalid A. Al-Falih told the audience: "Our GDP has grown by 70% since the launch of Vision 2030 to \$1.1 trillion, with half of this attributed to non-oil economic activities. Foreign direct investment (FDI) flows have tripled compared to pre-Vision levels, and registered international investors are 10 times what they were."

Nivruti Rai, Managing Director and CEO of Invest India and WAIPA President, also addressed the audience,

highlighting the importance of collaborative global efforts to reshape economies and drive sustainable growth.

First day panels ranged from discussions on the evolving role of emerging economies to strategies for fostering global trade and investment. Topics included the increasing importance of FDI in driving economic transformation, the alignment of industrial policies with investment promotion, and transformative innovations in climate action.

H.E. Faisal F. Alibrahim, Saudi Minister of Economy and Planning, joined H.E. Eng. Hassan El-Khatib, Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade, Egypt, and H.E. Samir Abdelhafidh, Minister of Economy and Planning, Tunisia, in a panel discussing how emerging economies, such as Saudi Arabia, are redefining the role of investment promotion agencies (IPAs) and creating new opportunities for FDI amidst challenges like geopolitical shifts and sustainability goals.

"Saudi Arabia is today the global growth platform, actually the growth platform if you look at how the global economy is evolving. And we've been lucky enough to prove the power of diversification over the last few years," H.E. Alibrahim said.

The conference also featured a masterclass on 'Investor Services 2.0' by the World Bank, exploring AI-driven analytics and VR site visits, along with matchmaking sessions that connected investors with SMEs and government representatives.



Saudi Minister of Investment H. E. Khalid A. Al Falih.

Company says already seeing benefits

As Amazon expands use of warehouse robots, what will it mean for workers?

WASHINGTON, Nov 26, (AP): Amazon has introduced a handful of robots in its warehouses that the e-commerce giant says will improve efficiency and reduce employee injuries.

Two robotic arms named Robin and Cardinal can lift packages that weigh up to 50 pounds. A third, called Sparrow, picks up items from bins and puts them in other containers.

Proteus, an autonomous mobile robot that operates on the floor, can

move carts around a warehouse. The bipedal, humanoid robot Digit is being tested to help move empty totes with its hands. And there's also Sequoia, a containerized storage system that can present totes to employees in a way that allows them to avoid stretching or squatting to grab inventory.

Amazon says Robin is currently being used in dozens of warehouses. The others are in a testing stage or haven't been rolled out widely. But the com-

pany says it's already seeing benefits, such as reducing the time it takes to fulfill orders and helping employees avoid repetitive tasks. However, automation also carries drawbacks for workers, who would have to be re-trained for new positions if the robots made their roles obsolete.

In October, Amazon held an event at a Nashville, Tennessee, warehouse where the company had integrated some of the robots. The Associated Press spoke with

Julie Mitchell, the director of Amazon's robotic sortation technologies, about where the company hopes to go from here. The conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

A: This journey that we've been on has taken a couple of years. Luckily for us, we've been at this for over a decade. So we have a lot of core technology that we can build on top of. We tested these particular robots - Cardinal and Proteus - in this building in November 2022.

We came in and began playing around with what it would look like to pack and move a production order. Less than two years later, we are at scale and shipping 70% of the items in this building through that robotics system.

A: We talk about "build, test and scale" and that's about a two-year cycle for us right now.

A: As you can probably imagine, we have so many items, so it's an exceptional challenge. We rely on data

and putting our first prototype in a real building, where we expose it to all the things we need it to do. Then we drive down all the reasons that it fails. We give it a lot of sample sizes in a very short period of time. For example, a couple of years ago, we launched our Robin robotics arm - a package manipulation robot - and we're at 3 billion picks. So the ability to launch into our network, rapidly collect data, scale and iterate has enabled us to go fast.

Brandon Armstrong makes Broadway debut in 'A Wonderful World'

Armstrong's relative helps bring jazz icon to Broadway

NEW YORK, Nov 26, (AP): The new stage musical about Louis Armstrong on Broadway opens with the jazz icon in a rehearsal room alongside an anonymous piano player. Keep an eye on the guy on keys.

Audiences may not know it, but there are actually two Armstrongs onstage at that moment - the actor playing the great trumpeter and one of his real-life descendants. In an act of casting kismet, the piano player is Brandon Louis Armstrong, the music giant's great-great nephew.

"That moment always feels like I get to - as Brandon - speak to my great-great uncle from beyond," he says. "I get to just spend a moment in conversation with him and ask if he's OK and hear his voice."

The younger Armstrong is making his Broadway debut in "A Wonderful World: The Louis Armstrong Musical," playing multiple parts, including a piano player, a teacher and as an understudy for Louis Armstrong himself.

"I was cautious about how I'd be able to step into this world and connect with part of my family history and my lineage," he says. "I'm so grateful and so thankful and so happy."

"A Wonderful World" - starring

Tony Award-winner James Monroe Iglehart and sometimes James T. Lane in the title role - is a stage bio of one of jazz's most influential figures, a musician known for "Hello, Dolly," "Cheek to Cheek" and "A Wonderful World."

The musical looks behind his wide smile to dig into his rise from poverty, his four marriages and battles with racism from the Klansmen of New Orleans to the thugs of Chicago to Hollywood's bigots. He emerges from it a transcendent force, warts and all.

Messaging

"The messaging behind it is that jazz is the choices that we make in between the notes," says the younger Armstrong. "It's not about making the right choice every time. It's about making a choice and allowing yourself to be present wherever those choices may lead you."

The younger Armstrong was born and raised in Los Angeles. His home was always filled with music, but no one in his immediate family is a musician or wanted to perform.

"I grew up with a lot of jazz playing in the household, a lot of gospel, a lot of R&B, a lot of hip-hop. My mom was also really big into like



James Monroe Iglehart portrays Louis Armstrong during a performance in "A Wonderful World: The Louis Armstrong Musical" in New York. (AP)

'80s hair metal bands and stuff like that," he says. "I'd go from listening to Motown to like listening to Guns n' Roses and then Kenny Rogers. It was always a tapestry of music."

He was enchanted by his high school show choir and got invited to join - all boys got in because muscled were needed to lift the girls - and was later stunned by seeing a regional theater production of the classic mu-

sical "Ragtime."

"I was so moved by it, I just was like, 'I don't care if I'm the person sweeping the floors when it's over. I just want to be a part of whatever that is,'" he recalls.

He graduated from The American Musical and Dramatic Academy and after some local stage work - including playing Donkey in "Shrek" - landed on the third national tour

of "Hamilton," which kicked off in 2019 in Puerto Rico starring Lin-Manuel Miranda.

Armstrong didn't lean into his family name to get ahead. Press interviews when he broke out didn't even mention his famous pedigree. "I never, surprisingly, thought to ever lead with that," he says. "In this particular show, it's inescapable."

Iglehart, also a co-director, recalls Armstrong walking into the rehearsal room and stating his name. "We're like, 'How cool.' He's like, 'No, no, I'm related.'" He got the job based on his voice and acting - not his name.

Talent

"We really did it on talent," says Iglehart. "I always feel like who's ever the most talented person for the show, that should be who is in it. But then the fact that it was his lineage, we kind of felt that it was like a sign."

"A Wonderful World" has been a way to honor not only Louis Armstrong but also Brandon's grandfather, Louis Henry Armstrong, who told stories about his proud lineage and would often pick Brandon up after school blasting jazz music, much to his teenage embarrassment.

"I just think in those moments

how unbelievably proud he would be of something like this," he says. "It's like the best kind of therapy every night."

While there is an actual Armstrong in the cast, fellow actors and creatives haven't pulled Brandon aside to ask him about what Louis would think about a line or a scene. That's because Louis Armstrong left many rich writings about his thoughts.

"So much of the heartbeat of what it is that our show is beating with - and I prefer it this way - is the heartbeat that's being told through Louis' voice, as opposed to someone coming in and arbitrarily putting themselves into him," the younger Armstrong said.

In addition to the rehearsal piano player, serving in the ensemble and playing the New Orleans music teacher who recognized Louis Armstrong's talent, Brandon knows that one day he will be asked to go on as his great-great uncle.

"My biggest concern I think when it happens is just trying not to cry all the way through the show," he says, laughing. "Somehow the universe has paved out this road for me that has landed me here, getting to literally take the stage and carry that baton."

Variety

NEW YORK: A memorial tribute to Broadway star Gavin Creel is planned next Monday in the theater where he starred in "Into the Woods" and will be livestreamed online to viewers in the US and UK.

Creel died Sept. 30 at the age of 48. MCC Theater will host livestreaming access on its YouTube channel in the U.S., starting at 4 p.m. EST (9 p.m. GMT) and The Society of London Theatre at the same hour for U.K. viewers on its YouTube channel.

The event at the St. James Theatre will be open to the public. Interested fans were asked to email their name and contact information to: GavinCelebration@BespokeTheatricals.com.

The memorial will not be available to view on-demand once it has concluded.

The following day - Tuesday, Dec. 3 - all of Broadway's marquee will be dimmed at 6:45 p.m. EST in Creel's honor.

That follows an outcry by theater fans when only a partial dimming was proposed after the Tony Award-winner's death.

Creel was a Broadway musical theater veteran who won a Tony Award for "Hello, Dolly!" opposite Bette Midler and earned nominations for "Hair" and "Thoroughly Modern Millie." He won an Olivier Award for "The Book of Mormon."

Creel's death put the spotlight on the practice of dimming marquee lights after a notable theater figure has died. While giants in the field get all of Broadway theaters dark for a minute, lesser figures may only have partial dimming. (AP)

NEW YORK: Things are looking a little blue these days for the Blue Man Group.

The show - made up of nonverbal blue-painted bald men who combine intricate percussive rhythms with physical comedy - announced this week that performances are closing in Chicago and New York City, where the group first launched in 1991. The men still have shows in Las Vegas; Orlando, Florida; Boston; and Berlin, along with a tour and a show on the Norwegian Cruise Line ship.

Managing Director Jack Kenn said the final gig in New York will be Feb. 2 and the last Chicago performance will be Jan. 5. Extensions often are added after such deadlines.

"Blue Man Group is unlike anything else in the world and is undeniably one of the most recognized and successful entertainment productions because of the hardworking cast, crew and creative team. It was because of them that these shows captured millions of hearts night after night, and we give our utmost thanks," Kenn said. (AP)

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y.: A former dancer for Shen Yun Performing Arts sued the nonprofit dance company on Monday, saying it has subjected some children who perform for it to harsh conditions, including long hours for little pay.

The lawsuit brought by Chang Chun-Ko in White Plains federal court sought unspecified damages on behalf of Chang and other alleged victims of Shen Yun, which is based in Dragon Springs in Cuddebackville, New York, along with other entities named as defendants.

It said the group has adopted some of the most abusive practices of the Chinese Communist Party, including subjecting children to public humiliation as discipline, even as it faces persecution by the CCP.

The lawsuit said Shen Yun has made hundreds of millions of dollars by exploiting young dancers it recruits from abroad, forcing them to work grueling hours and scaring them into thinking they'd face harm if they quit.

Shen Yun did not immediately respond to a request for comment. (AP)

Film



Auli'i Cravalho, (left) and Dwayne Johnson pose for photographers upon arrival at the UK premiere of Moana 2 on Sunday, Nov. 24, at a central London cinema. (AP)

Film set to become Disney's next big blockbuster

'Moana 2' charts its course back to theaters

NEW YORK, Nov 26, (AP): When you look at some of the numbers, it's hard to believe "Moana 2" was ever going to be anything but a movie.

When the teaser trailer for "Moana 2" dropped in May, it was watched 178 million times in 24 hours. That's more than "Inside Out 2," more than "Frozen 2," more than any animated Disney movie before.

A veritable ocean's worth of anticipation is awaiting the sequel to 2016's "Moana," all proof that one of the more dramatic pivots in recent Walt Disney Co. history is paying off, big time. "Moana 2" was originally intended to be a streaming series. Now, it's steering toward being one of the fall's biggest blockbusters. What can you say except you're welcome?

When Bob Iger returned as chief executive of Disney in late 2022, one of his top priorities was shifting away from putting the studio's most prized assets onto streaming. He wanted to put the focus back on the big screen - and all the ancillary benefits (including merchandising and streaming) that follow after.

The series that directors David Derrick Jr. and Jason Hand had worked on for more than a year would become "Moana 2." The movie, which also added Dana Nedoux Miller as a director and co-writer, was only announced earlier this year. It's opening Wednesday.

"It became all hands on board," Derrick says. "There's a saying in Samoa: 'All together or not at all.'"

Artists

Derrick and Hand, both veteran storyboard artists at Disney, had effectively done their job too well. Their work convinced Disney executives to put the studio's full weight behind a theatrical film, even though a live-action "Moana" remained in development. (That movie, directed by Thomas Kail, is set to open in July 2026.)

"We developed the world, we developed the over-arching story that we're still telling," says Derrick. "We would screen it in our big theater the way we watch all of our projects here. There was a groundswelling, unanimous concert of everyone saying this needs to be on the big screen."

"It was always going to be big," adds Hand. "It just kept on getting bigger."

"Moana 2" was at the nexus of a major shift

for Disney and for Hollywood in calculating how to weigh theatrical and streaming. Different studios have different strategies and those are still evolving. But after rushing to throw as much content as possible on streaming services, companies like Disney began to rethink their approach.

This year, Disney has regained its box-office swagger, led by a pair of \$1 billion films in "Inside Out 2" and "Deadpool vs. Wolverine." "Moana 2" could make it three. But however well "Moana 2" does, it's not likely to hurt its appeal once it begins streaming. The most popular film on Disney+ last year? "Moana."

"We always felt that it deserved to be on the big screen" says Hand. "It's the best way to tell a story."

Heritage

But the shift for "Moana 2," which returns Auli'i Cravalho as the voice of Moana and Dwayne Johnson as the voice of Maui, wasn't easy. First of all, that meant living up to the standard of the first film - one that Miller, who is of Samoan heritage, considers groundbreaking for its Pacific Islander representation.

"I knew as a writer that movie was going to change what was possible," says Miller. "It was going to change the way when I walk into a room I was going to be able to pitch a story because people had a new understanding of what it meant to be of the Pacific."

Miller, who founded the organization PEAK (Pasifika Entertainment Advancement Komiti) as a way for Pasifika people to find community in Hollywood, is also a writer on the live-action "Moana." "My world has become all Moana all the time," she says, laughing.



This image released by Disney shows the character Moana, voiced by Auli'i Cravalho, in a scene from "Moana 2." (AP)

Both films, the directors say, developed alongside each other, with many connections and shared cultural consultants.

Set three years after the original film, "Moana 2" finds Moana again forced to head across the Pacific on an ocean adventure. But this time, she's traveling with a crew, in a new canoe, and carrying new responsibilities. That includes her younger sister, Simea (Khaliese Lambert-Tsuda).

"The way the first film connected her to her past, she's now connecting everyone to the future," says Derrick. "So we added and created all these new characters when it was in series and we got to know them in a deep way."

Hand compares the series development to a workshop for the new characters.

"Yes, it was a massive undertaking - probably more so than what we initially imagined," Hand says. "But ultimately we were telling that same story. A lot of stuff that went by the wayside just naturally helped the story be its proper fighting weight."

Characters

Now, Moana is joined by a wayfinding crew that includes the characters Loto (Rose Matafeo), an engineer; Kele (David Fane), a grumpy farmer; and Moni (Hualqlai Chung), a historian and storyteller.

"What people don't realize is that the people in the Pacific found the last discoverable land on Earth," says Derrick, who also has ancestral ties to Samoa. "They created the largest cultural ethnosphere in the world prior to westward expansion - one third of the Earth, all through the art and spirituality and science of wayfinding. So for me, it's very important that each one of these crew members display that Indigenous genius that it took."

Honoring such things tends to resonate much differently in a movie theater than it does on a television. The makers of "Moana 2" are still rushing to get their film ready for cinemas, with all the spectacle and music they can fit into it. But they know their young Polynesian protagonist will be seen big.

"When I watched the first film, I was pregnant with my first child," Miller says. "I thought to myself as I was watching it: The world will be forever different because of this movie. My child will never not know a world where they are not seen on the biggest stage."

Murder case

YSL trial ends, 2 await their fate

ATLANTA, Nov 26, (AP): Prosecutors say that the last two defendants in a long-running gang and racketeering trial committed murder on behalf of an Atlanta street gang co-founded by rapper Young Thug.

But defense attorneys said the state slapped together cherry-picked social media posts and song lyrics with unreliable witness testimony to paint a misleading narrative about young men from tough upbringings who tried to escape poverty through music.

It's now up to a jury to decide whether to convict Shannon Stillwell and Deamonte Kendrick, who raps as Yak Gotti, on gang, murder, drug and gun charges. The original indictment charged 28 people with conspiring to violate Georgia's Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act.

The trial for six of those defendants began a year ago. Four of them, including Young Thug, pleaded guilty last month. Stillwell and Kendrick rejected plea deals after weeks of negotiations, and their lawyers chose not to present evidence or witnesses.

The trial has been plagued by problems and delays. Judge Paige Reese Whitaker, who took over the case in July after the original judge was recused, often lost patience with prosecutors.

Kendrick and Stillwell were charged in the 2015 killing of Donovan Thomas Jr., also known as "Big Nut," in an Atlanta barbershop. Prosecutors say Thomas was in a rival gang. Stillwell was also charged with the 2022 murder of Shymel Drinks in retaliation for the murders of two YSL associates days earlier, prosecutors said.

Prosecutors alleged that Young Thug, whose real name is Jeffery Williams, co-founded a criminal street gang in 2012 called Young Slime Life, or YSL, which they said was associated with the national Bloods gang. Young Thug's record label is also known as YSL, for Young Stoner Life. Kendrick was featured on two popular songs from the label's compilation album Slime Language 2, "Take It to Trial" and "Slatty," and another Young Thug song that prosecutors played during their closing.

Doug Weinstein, Kendrick's defense attorney, said it was wrong for prosecutors to target the defendants - all Black - for their music and lyrics.

Prosecutor Simone Hylton said the case was about "real bodies," not a "song over a beat."

"We are targeting gang members who decided to wreak havoc on communities in Fulton County," Hylton said. "And those communities that they violated, those communities were communities of color."

Prosecutor Christian Adkins said YSL was a violent gang that operated through "deception, intimidation, destruction and death."

He pointed to social media posts in which he said showed members admittedly killed people in rival gangs and said their clothes and tattoos were "walking billboards" for YSL.

Weinstein and Stillwell's defense attorney, Max Schardt, said prosecutors threw a bunch of separate alleged crimes, many from around a decade ago, into an indictment without showing that they were connected to a criminal enterprise.

"The state has spent the past year with a hammer in their hand banging on a square peg that they call evidence," Schardt said.



Thug

Artifacts



The Kuwaiti delegation, headed by Sheikha Al-Anoud Al-Sabah.



KUNA photos

Some of the Islamic artifacts on display.

'Cultural exchange'

Kuwait unveils 57 rare Islamic artifacts at Saudi arts expo

RIYADH, Nov 26, (KUNA): Kuwait is putting on display some 57 rare and historic artifacts at a Saudi Arabia-hosted arts exhibition, all of which depict the "beauty" of Islamic craft, said an official on Monday. Such events would ratchet up "cultural exchange" while pushing forward Kuwait's 2035 development vision, Assistant Director General for Islamic Artifacts at Dar Al Athar Al Islamiyyah Sheikha Dr. Al-Anoud Al-Sabah told KUNA. She noted the Al-

Sabah Collection was marveled at the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture, which is hosting the second Islamic Art Conference in Dhahran.

Praising the "cultural cooperation" with larger neighbor Saudi Arabia, Kuwaiti National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters' communications and media chief Youssef Al-Jamaan said the gathering would be instrumental in "shining the spotlight" on Kuwaiti heritage.

Lamar disc track row

Drake alleges UMG inflated popularity of 'Not Like Us'

LOS ANGELES, Nov 26, (AP): Drake alleged in a court filing Monday that Universal Music Group (UMG) falsely pumped up the popularity on Spotify and other streaming services of Kendrick Lamar's "Not Like Us," a song that viciously attacked Drake amid a bitter feud between the two hip-hop superstars.

The petition in a New York court by the rapper's company Frozen Moments LLC demands the preservation and divulgence of information that might be evidence in a potential lawsuit against UMG, which is the distributor for the record labels of both Drake and Lamar.

In allegations that UMG calls "offensive and untrue," the filing says the record company "launched a campaign to manipulate and saturate the streaming services and airwaves with a song, 'Not Like Us,' in order to make that song go viral, including by using 'bots' and pay-to-play agreements." It said the company and Spotify "have a long-standing, symbiotic business relationship" and alleges that UMG offered special licensing rates to Spotify for the song.

The petition also says UMG has fired employees seen as loyal to Drake

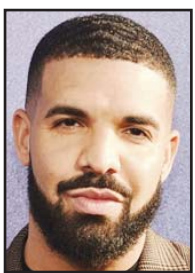
"in an apparent effort to conceal its schemes."

Universal Music Group said in a statement in response that the "suggestion that UMG would do anything to undermine any of its artists is offensive and untrue. We employ the highest ethical practices in our marketing and promotional campaigns. No amount of contrived and absurd legal arguments in this pre-action submission can mask the fact that fans choose the music they want to hear."

"Not Like Us," the wildly popular Lamar single released in May as part of a flurry of dueling tracks by the two artists, includes the lyrics, "Say, Drake, I hear you like 'em young, You better not ever go to cell block one." It has gotten more than 900 million plays, according to figures listed on Spotify.

Spotify representatives declined immediate comment, but in a statement on a previous case, the company said it "invests heavily in automated and manual reviews to prevent, detect, and mitigate the impact of artificial streaming on our platform," and in broader public statements has said it has gone to great lengths to mitigate the effects of bad actors on streaming numbers and royalties.

The feud between Drake, a 38-year-old Canadian rapper and singer and five-time Grammy winner, and Lamar, a 37-year-old Pulitzer Prize winner who is set to headline the next Super Bowl halftime, is among the biggest in hip-hop in recent years, with two of the genre's biggest stars at its center.



Drake

Obituary

Iconic author of 'A Woman of Substance'

Bestselling novelist Barbara Bradford dies at 91

NEW YORK, Nov 26, (AP): Barbara Taylor Bradford, a British journalist who became a publishing sensation in her 40s with the saga "A Woman of Substance" and wrote more than a dozen other novels that sold tens of millions of copies, has died. She was 91.

Bradford died Sunday at her home in New York City, a spokesperson said Monday.

Starting with "A Woman of Substance," published in 1979, Bradford averaged nearly a book a year as one of the world's most popular and wealthiest writers, her net worth estimated at more than \$200 million and her fame so high that her image appeared on a postage stamp in 1999. In 2007, Queen Elizabeth II awarded her an OBE (The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire).

Her books were published in 40 languages and sold more than 90 million copies around the world.

With titles like "Breaking the Rules" and "Act of Will," she specialized in stories of women fighting for love and power in a man's world. Her favorite among her books was "The Women In His Life," inspired by her husband's escape from the Nazis.

Bradford was married for 56 years to German-born film producer Robert Bradford, who died in 2019.

A native of Leeds, West Yorkshire, she was an only child in a working class family who loved



Author Barbara Taylor Bradford after she received her Most Excellent Order of the British Empire from Britain's Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace, London, Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2007. (AP)

books early. As a girl, she had a story published in a local magazine. By age 16, she left school against her parents' wishes to become a reporter for the Yorkshire Evening Post. Over the next 30 years, she would work as fashion editor of Woman's Own Magazine, cover a variety of beats for the London Evening News and, in the United States, write a syndicated column about interior design.

Although she wrote children's stories and advice books, novels were her dream. "A Woman of Substance" was a multi-generational chronicle of the trials and triumphs of retail baron Emma Harte, who would be featured in several other Bradford novels. The book has sold more than 30 million copies and was the basis of a 1984 television miniseries starring Jenny Seagrove as a young Emma and Deborah Kerr as Emma late in life.

"And if you want to meet the real Emma, meet me," Bradford told the Telegraph of London in 2009. "Emma had to be tough and ruthless at times: but then so am I. I have to be, as a businesswoman. And I'm a bloody good businesswoman."

Bradford and Emma Harte were linked by more than money: both had family secrets. As a young woman, Emma became pregnant by a man who refused to marry her and gave birth to a daughter. Years later, Bradford learned through her biographer that her own mother had been born out of wedlock. It is now believed that Bradford's maternal grandfather was Frederick Oliver Robinson, the second Marquess of Ripon and owner of the Studley Royal estate in Yorkshire, which is now a World Heritage Site.

Seagrove, who became friends with Bradford after starring in the miniseries, described her as a "powerhouse of glamour and warmth" and a "force of nature" who stayed true to her roots.

Variety

LONDON: Rod Stewart will play the "legends" slot at Britain's Glastonbury Festival next year, more than two decades after he headlined the music festival, the organizers said Tuesday.

Stewart, 79, said on social media that he was "proud and ready and more than able to take the stage again to pleasure and titillate my friends at Glastonbury in June."

The rock star, who headlined Glastonbury in 2002, was the first musical act announced for the June 2025 festival at Worthy Farm in the southwest of England. (AP)

LONDON: If life imitates art, a vandal in the English countryside may be haunted by The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come.

Police in the town of Shrewsbury are investigating how a tombstone that marked the fictional grave of Ebenezer Scrooge was destroyed. The movie prop used in the 1984 adaptation of "A Christmas Carol" was kept in place and became a tourist attraction.

Town Clerk Helen Ball said the town is discussing what should be done to fix or replace the stone that is "hugely popular" with residents and visitors. This time of year, organized tours of locations used in the movie visit the grounds of St. Chad's Church to see the marker. (AP)

MEXICO CITY: Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum said Monday she has a plan to reduce the popularity of "narco corridos," a musical genre often linked to drug cartel violence.

Sheinbaum vowed to launch a campaign to promote other, less violent musical styles that aren't as linked to drug traffickers in an effort to stop glorifying them.

The campaign includes "a competition among corrido bands that have some other kind of lyrics, that glorify other behaviors, other cultural visions," Sheinbaum said, noting that "prohibiting them is not an option." Instead, she said, "it's about promoting another vision." (AP)

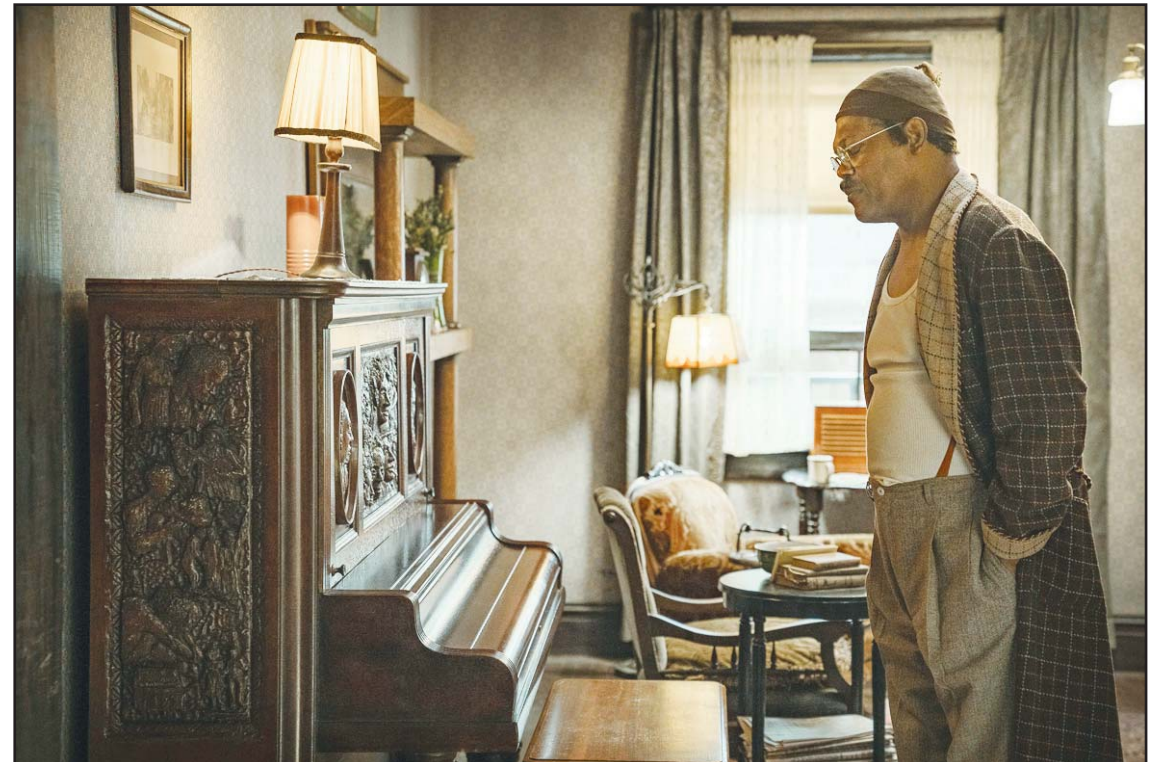
NEW YORK: The National Broadcasting Company (NBC), which has had the broadcast rights of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City since 1953, is trying to hammer down a pricey deal with the retail chain to keep the event on the network and its Peacock streaming service for the next decade, reported The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) on Monday.

"Under the terms being discussed, a new deal would kick in next year with an average annual fee of more than 60 million US dollars, up from around 20 million dollars in the current contract," it said.

The price increase is indicative of the value of live programming to media companies as viewers flee traditional television for streaming services, noted the report. (Xinhua)



Angelina Jolie poses with the Star of the Mole award, in Turin, Italy, Sunday, Nov. 24. (AP)



This image released by Netflix shows Samuel L. Jackson in a scene from 'The Piano Lesson.' (AP)



Denzel Washington, (right), producer of 'The Piano Lesson,' poses with cast member Erykah Badu, (center), and his son Malcolm, the film's director and co-writer, at the premiere of the film on Tuesday, Nov. 19, at The Egyptian Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

New Wilson film a family collaboration

Wrestling with 'Piano Lesson's' ghosts

LOS ANGELES, Nov 26, (AP): The piano on the set of "The Piano Lesson" was not a mere prop. It could be played and the cast members often did. It was adorned with pictures of the Washington family and their ancestors. It was, John David Washington jokes, "No. 1 on the call sheet."

"We tried to haunt the piano itself, to charge it with that kind of spirit," says Malcolm Washington, the film's director and John David's brother.

In "The Piano Lesson," August Wilson's 1987 play, the piano is a central symbol of heritage, the past and survival. In 1930s Pittsburgh, it sits, unplayed, in the home of Berniece Charles (Danielle Deadwyler), having been passed down as a family heirloom from the days of slavery. But Berniece's visiting brother, Boy Willie (John David Washington), wants to sell it to buy the Mississippi land upon which their ancestors once toiled as slaves.

"The Piano Lesson," which is currently playing in theaters and streaming on Netflix, is an impassioned family drama but it is also a profound ghost story. For the Charles family, wrangling over the piano is a reckoning with their family's past, and the legacy of slavery. At its bone-rattling crescendo, it's an exorcism.

"It's an exorcism and a possession," says Deadwyler. "You're releasing the thing that never worked and inviting in the thing that was always present but you might not have known."

Adapting "The Piano Lesson," a play about ancestors and heritage, was fittingly a work of family. It's the third

in a sterling string of Wilson adaptations produced by Denzel Washington, following "Fences" and "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom." But it's the first Washington mostly left to his family to make.

"Costanza, August's widow, came to me I don't know how many years ago and asked me to shepherd these plays. I said, 'I'm the man for the job,'" Washington said an interview alongside producer Todd Black. "So I've been more of an administrator. I read the play a couple times to think about how can we get this made, is this a movie? In this case, a week or so into shooting, I was like, 'There's nothing for me to do. This kid knows what he's doing. He's done his homework. I'm just hanging around.'"

Legacy

If Denzel Washington has been moved to carry on the tradition of Wilson by a sense of legacy, it's something he passes down in "The Piano Lesson." The film marks the directorial debut of Malcolm, 33, who also cowrote the script with Virgil Williams.

John David Washington, the "BlackKkKlansman" and "Tenet" star, made his Wilson debut in a 2022 Broadway production of "The Piano Lesson," playing Boy Willie. That production also featured Samuel L. Jackson, who originated the role of Boy Willie in 1987 at the Yale Repertory Theatre, playing Berniece and Boy Willie's uncle, Doaker Charles, a role he carries over in the film.

"You have all these great artists playing these notes — you have the

OGs, the Wilsonians, playing it," says John David. "Then you have the newcomers playing it. You start jamming together and you find it together."

In Wilson, there's no greater musicality than the language, the blues poetry of Wilson's slang-drenched rhythms. The brash, fast-talking Boy Willie, in particular, is a verbal force — one that John David was enthralled by.

"It feels freaking so good when the truth is coming out and you know the truth is coming out and you're discovering new meanings in these monologues that you go over and over in your head," says John David. "When it's happening, it's a beautiful feeling. I live for those moments."

For the actors, finding the music of "The Piano Lesson" meant channeling generations worth of pain and perseverance in Black American life. Much of it they understood instinctually. Some of it they found together.

"Berniece has a massive amount of weight and put on top of that is grief and loss and longing," says Deadwyler, the "Till" star. "Those are things that have been with me and in women I've witnessed all my life. You think about the lives these women have lived and you carry it and you bear it."

The cast and filmmakers were also mindful of a legacy of performance they were working in. When Harry Belafonte died during the shoot, Malcolm played a song of his on set. The day before "The Piano Lesson" played at the Toronto International Film Festival, James Earl Jones, who starred in the original production of "Fences," died.

1 in 4 adults worldwide suffer from knee problems

Knee pain worsens with age: Expert shares treatments

By Angie Brown
Quinnipiac University

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

Knee injuries are common in athletes, accounting for 41% of all athletic injuries. But knee injuries aren't limited to competitive athletes. In our everyday lives, an accident or a quick movement in the wrong direction can injure the knee and require medical treatment. A quarter of the adult population worldwide experiences knee pain each year.

As a physical therapist and board-certified orthopedic specialist, I help patients of all ages with knee injuries and degenerative conditions.

Your knees have a huge impact on your mobility and overall quality of life, so it's important to prevent knee problems whenever possible and address pain in these joints with appropriate treatments.

The knee joint bones consist of the femur, tibia and patella. As in all healthy joints, smooth cartilage covers the surfaces of the bones, forming the joints and allowing for controlled movement.

Muscles, ligaments and tendons further support the knee joint. The anterior cruciate ligament, commonly known as the ACL, and posterior cruciate ligament, or PCL, provide internal stability to the knee. In addition, two tough pieces of fibrocartilage, called menisci, lie inside the joint, providing further stability and shock absorption.

All these structures work together to enable the knee to move smoothly and painlessly throughout everyday movement, whether bending to pick up the family cat or going for a run.

Two major causes of knee pain are acute injury and osteoarthritis.

Ligaments such as the ACL and PCL can be stressed and torn when a shear force occurs between the femur and tibia. ACL injuries often occur when athletes land awkwardly on the knee or quickly pivot on a planted foot. Depending on the severity of the injury, these patients may undergo physical therapy, or they may require surgery for repair or replacement.

PCL injuries are less common. They occur when the tibia experiences a posterior or backward force. This type of injury is common in car accidents when the knee hits the dashboard, or when patients fall forward when walking up stairs.

The menisci can also experience degeneration and tearing from shear and rotary forces, especially during weight-bearing activities. These types of injuries often require rehabilitation through physical therapy or surgery.

Knee pain can also result from injury or overuse of the muscles and tendons surrounding the knee, including the quadriceps, hamstrings and patella tendon.

Both injuries to and overuse of the knee can lead to degenerative changes in the joint surfaces, known as osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis is a progressive disease that can lead to pain, swelling and stiffness. This disease affects the knees of over 300 million people worldwide, most often those 50 years of age and up. American adults have a 40% chance of developing osteoarthritis that affects their daily lives, with the knee being the most commonly affected joint.

Age is also a factor in knee pain. The structure and function of your joints change as you age. Cartilage starts to break down, your body produces less synovial fluid to lubricate your joints, and muscle strength and flexibility decrease. This can lead to painful, restricted movement in the joint.

There are some risk factors for knee osteoarthritis that you cannot control, such as genetics, age, sex and your history of prior injuries.

Fortunately, there are several risk factors you can control that can predispose you to knee pain and osteoarthritis specifically. The first is excessive weight. Based on studies between 2017 and 2020, nearly 42% of all adult Americans are obese. This obesity is a significant risk factor for diabetes and osteoarthritis and can also play a role in other knee injuries.

A lack of physical activity is another risk, with 1 in 5 US adults reporting that they're inactive outside of work duties. This can result in less muscular support for the knee and more pressure on the joint itself.

An inflammatory diet also adds to the risk of knee pain from osteoarthritis. Research shows that the average American diet, often high in sugar and fat and low in fiber, can lead to changes to the gut microbiome that contribute to osteoarthritis pain and inflammation.

Increasing physical activity is one of the key elements to preventing knee pain. Often physical therapy intervention for patients with knee osteoarthritis focuses on strengthening the knee to decrease pain and support the joint during movement.

The US Department of Health and Human Services recommends that adults spend at least 150 to 300 minutes per week on moderate-intensity, or 75 to 150 minutes per week on vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity. These guidelines do not change for adults who already have osteoarthritis, although their exercise may require less weight-bearing activities, such as swimming, biking or walking.

The agency also recommends that all adults do some form of resistance training at least two or more days a week. Adults with knee osteoarthritis particularly benefit from quadriceps-strengthening exercises, such as straight leg raises.

Conservative treatment of knee pain includes anti-inflammatory and pain medications and physical therapy. (AP)



A teenager uses his mobile phone to access social media, Sydney, Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2024. (AP)

Robot performs cancer surgery

Study highlights online harm for young children

WELLINGTON, Nov. 26, (Xinhua): More than a quarter of New Zealand kids at eight have experienced at least one type of online content that worried or upset them, like bullying, peer pressure, or adult content, showed a study published on Tuesday.

The survey of almost 5,000 New Zealand eight-year-olds produced the self-reported data from children, alongside their parents' assessments of their emotions, behavior, and access to digital devices and media.

Children with behavioral difficulties or more personal devices were at higher risk of online harm and experiencing online harm was linked with depressive symptoms and lower self-worth, according to the researchers from the University of Canterbury.

As young children are spending an increasing amount of their time online, there is a risk that children come across content or experiences that are upsetting or distressing, including inappropriate or adult content, cyberbullying, and interactions with strangers, said Megan Gath, senior lecturer at the Child Well Being Institute, University of Canterbury.

Gaming devices had the greatest impact on increasing the risk of online harm, followed by computers or laptops, and TVs. Children who own personal devices may be at greater risk of online harm if they are using these away from adult supervision, said Gath, also an author of the study.

The study recommended that parents limit access to personal devices and use collaborative, rather than controlling, strategies to manage children's digital media use.

Robot surgery: Using a Chinese-made robot, a French surgeon has made a significant medical advancement by performing a remote prostate cancer surgery for a patient in Morocco, who was 12,000 kilometers away.

This stunning procedure was made possible by Toumai Robot, which allowed for real-time, high-definition imaging and precise control of the machine from a great distance.

This intercontinental operation, with a two-way transmission distance exceeding 30,000 kilometers, set a new record as the longest remote human surgery. It came after an October renal cyst minimally invasive surgery completed with the aid of Toumai Robot between Shanghai and the port of Cotonou in Benin with a round-trip transmission distance of 27,000 kilometers.

On Nov. 16, French doctor Youness Ahallal took less than two hours to complete the surgery, with a one-way latency of just over 100 milliseconds. The robotic arm in Morocco reproduced every command from the surgeon's console in Shanghai, removing the prostate tumor and completing the suturing process while preserving the vascular-nerve bundle and maximum length of the urethra.

Dairy recall

US detects bird flu in raw milk

SACRAMENTO, Calif., Nov. 26, (Agencies): The bird flu virus was detected in a retail sample of raw milk from a dairy in Fresno, California, state health officials said.

The sample obtained at a store tested positive Nov. 21 during routine screening by Santa Clara County health officers, the state Department of Public Health said Sunday.

The dairy, Raw Farm, issued a voluntary recall for one batch of cream top, whole raw milk with a best buy date of Nov. 27.

"Consumers should immediately return any remaining product to the store where it was purchased," the state health department said in a statement.

Pasteurized milk remains safe to drink, the department said.

On Friday, health officials confirmed bird flu in a California child - the first reported case in a U.S. minor.

The child had mild symptoms, was treated with antiviral medication and is recovering, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

There have been at least 55 US bird flu cases this year, including 29 in California, the CDC said. Most were farmworkers who tested positive with mild symptoms. H5N1 bird flu has been spreading widely in the US among wild birds, poultry and a number of other animals over the last few years.

It began spreading in US dairy cattle in March. California has become the center of that outbreak, with 402 infected herds detected there since August.

Gut health: Christopher J. Cifelli, senior vice president of nutrition research at the US National Dairy Council, has stressed the role of dairy foods for supporting healthy and sustainable eating patterns, reported USA Today on Monday.

"Most people, when they think of milk and dairy foods, think of calcium and vitamin D for strong bones. But dairy is so much more than that," said Cifelli, who has researched the topic for over a decade. In fact, dairy foods, such as milk, yogurt and kefir, can help promote gut health.

Fermented dairy foods, such as yogurt and kefir, have live microbes that help maintain a healthy gut microbiota. These beneficial bacteria support digestion and immunity, which keep the body healthy and strong, according to the doctor.

1 in 5 patients may struggle

Why blockbuster obesity drugs don't work for everyone: study

NEW YORK, Nov. 26, (AP): Unlike scores of people who scrambled for the blockbuster drugs Ozempic and Wegovy to lose weight in recent years, Danielle Griffin had no trouble getting them.

The 38-year-old information technology worker from New Mexico had a prescription. Her pharmacy had the drugs in stock. And her health insurance covered all but \$25 to \$50 of the monthly cost.

For Griffin, the hardest part of using the new drugs wasn't access. It was finding out that the much-hyped medications didn't really work for her.

"I have been on Wegovy for a year and a half and have only lost 13 pounds," said Griffin, who watches her diet, drinks plenty of water and exercises regularly. "I've done everything right with no success. It's discouraging."

In clinical trials, most participants taking Wegovy or Mounjaro to treat obesity lost an average of 15% to 22% of their body weight - up to 50 pounds or more in many cases. But roughly 10% to 15% of patients in those trials were "nonresponders" who lost less than 5% of their body weight.

Now that millions of people have used the drugs, several obesity experts told The Associated Press that perhaps 20% of patients - as many as 1 in 5 -



Donna Cooper holds up a dosage of Wegovy, a drug used for weight loss, at her home, March 1, 2024, in Front Royal, Va. (AP)

may not respond well to the medications. It's a little-known consequence of the obesity drug boom, according to doctors who caution eager patients not to expect one-size-fits-all results.

"It's all about explaining that different people have different responses," said Dr. Fatima Cody Stanford, an obesity expert at Massachusetts General Hospital.

The drugs are known as GLP-1 re-

ceptor agonists because they mimic a hormone in the body known as glucagon-like peptide 1. Genetics, hormones and variability in how the brain regulates energy can all influence weight - and a person's response to the drugs, Stanford said. Medical conditions such as sleep apnea can prevent weight loss, as can certain common medications, such as antidepressants, steroids and contraceptives.

Agency confronts political changes

CDC chief urges focus on health threats

NEW YORK, Nov. 26, (AP): The outgoing head of the nation's top public health agency urged the next administration to maintain its focus and funding to keep Americans safe from emerging health threats.

"We need to continue to do our global work at CDC to make sure we are stopping outbreaks at their source," Dr. Mandy Cohen, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said in an interview Monday with The Associated Press. "We need to keep that funding up. We need to keep the expertise up. We need to keep the diplomacy up."

Cohen, 46, will be leaving office in January after about 18 months in the job. President-elect Donald Trump on Friday night said he picked Dave Weldon, a former Congressman from Florida, to be the agency's next chief.

Cohen said she hasn't met Weldon and doesn't know him. She previously voiced concern about Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the anti-vaccine advocate and CDC critic nominated to oversee all federal public health agencies.

The CDC, with a \$9.2 billion core budget, is charged with protecting Americans from disease outbreaks and

other public health threats. The staff is heavy with scientists - 60% have master's degrees or doctorates.

The last eight years have been perhaps the most difficult in the agency's history. The CDC once enjoyed a sterling international reputation for its expertise on infectious diseases and other causes of illness and death. But trust in the agency fell because of missteps during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, political attacks and resistance to infection-prevention measures like wearing masks and getting vaccinated.

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'Women's sports have become a tangible reality in Kuwait'

Kuwait Women's Sports Committee focuses on advancing athletes in regional competitions

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Women's Sports Committee of the Kuwait Olympic Committee held its regular meeting with the bodies and federations at the committee's headquarters in Hawalli, in the presence of the head of the Women's Sports Committee, Fatima Hayat, and members of the committee, Sheikha Bibi Al-Salem and Rabaa Al-Hajri, and the heads of the women's committees in all federations.

The attendees discussed the achievements and activities of women's sports in Kuwait during the past four years, and the report of the Women's Sports Committee on the most important obstacles to women's activity and the proposed solutions, in addition to the reports of the women's committees on the 2023-2024 sports season and the next season.

Hayat said, "Women's sports have become a tangible reality in Kuwait. It came after years of work, during which many achievements were achieved, which puts us in front of new challenges, perhaps the most important of which is taking women's sports to an advanced stage of development, and this requires more cooperation and work from various parties, to reach the competition for advanced positions regionally and Asia."

Secretary of the Squash Federation and Head of the Women's Committee, Hamed Al-Omran, said, "We discussed the necessity of approving partial professionalism for female players in accordance with the laws and regulations of the General Sports Authority, and we received reassuring promises in this regard. We demanded the necessity of including women's com-



Members pose for a group photo after the meeting.

petitions in the General Excellence Cup, and providing an independent budget for the technical teams for

women's sports. We hope that all the proposals will be translated into a tangible reality in the coming pe-

riod; to develop women's sports." In addition, Head of the Women's Sports Committee at the Handball

Federation, Dr. Al-Jazzy Al-Munes, confirmed that the most prominent obstacles hindering the progress of

women's sports are the lack of sufficient sports facilities for the player to practice her favorite sport.

Davis rescues point for Udinese as Lecce 'steals' win at Venezia



Udinese's Keinan Davis scores during the Serie A soccer match between Empoli and Udinese at the Carlo Castellani Stadium in Empoli, Italy. (AP)

Napoli club and fans pay tribute to Maradona

EMPOLI, Italy, Nov 26, (AP): Englishman Keinan Davis scored with 14 minutes remaining for Udinese to draw at Empoli 1-1 in Serie A and snap the visitor's three-game losing streak.

The former Watford and Aston Villa striker rose to head home a near-post corner with 76 minutes gone.

Pietro Pellegri put Empoli ahead midway through the first half with his third goal in three games.

The on-loan Torino striker has endured a lean season but a goal in the 1-0 win over Como was followed by another in the 1-1 draw with Lecce before the international break.

The result was the first point in four games for Udinese, after consecutive defeats to Atalanta, Juventus and Venezia, and meant that both sides retained their mid-table positions.

Udinese was ninth and Empoli 10th.

Later, Venezia missed a chance to move off the foot of the table when it went down at home to Lecce 1-0.

Venezia was dominant for most of the game, with Gaetano Oristanio and Jay Idzes hitting the woodwork and Wladimiro Falcone outstanding in the Lecce goal.

But the home side paid for its profligacy after 70 minutes.

Antonino Gallo's sublime cross from the left was met by Patrick Dorgu at the far post and he steered the ball into the far corner to give Lecce all three points.

Lecce, which started the night only two places above bottom side Venezia, jumped into 15th place.

Meanwhile, Napoli fans and club officials paid tribute to Diego Maradona on the fourth anniversary of his death, flocking to murals of the Argentine great around the city.

Napoli coach Antonio Conte, captain Giovanni Di Lorenzo and president Aurelio De Laurentiis laid flowers at two of the murals, while fans gathered below the huge mural of Maradona in the Quartieri Spagnoli that acts as an unofficial museum to Maradona.

Fans chanted Maradona's name and lit smoke in the blue color of the shirt Maradona wore both with Napoli and Argentina.

Maradona died at 60 on Nov. 25, 2020 of a heart attack, two weeks after being released from a hospital in Buenos Aires following brain surgery.

He led Napoli to its first two Serie A titles in 1987 and 1990 and the club's stadium was renamed Stadio Diego Armando Maradona upon his death.

Napoli won its third Italian league title in 2023 and again leads Serie A this season.

Al-Qadsia heavily favored vs Al-Yarmouk

Kuwait Club targets back-to-back victories in the basketball league

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The basketball league resumes today after a two-week pause due to the international break and the Super Cup match, where Kuwait Club defeated Al-Qadsia last Sunday to claim the title.

Two matches are scheduled in the third round of the competition, both to be held at the Union Hall in Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Halls Complex. The first game kicks off at 5:00 pm with Kuwait Club facing Al-Sulaibikhat, followed by a clash between Al-Qadsia and Al-Yarmouk at 7:00 pm.

In the opening match, Kuwait Club, buoyed by its recent Super Cup triumph, aims to build on its momentum and secure a second league victory after defeating Al-Tadamon in its opener. Meanwhile, Al-Sulaibikhat, also with two points, looks to make a statement this season. After an impressive win over Kazma, it aspires to pull off another upset against the defending champion.

Under the leadership of German coach Peter Schommers, Kuwait Club will rely on their star-studded lineup, including American players Weber, Augustine, and Sampson, alongside local talents Turki Hamoud, Alexander Al-Ghais,



Al-Qadsia and Kuwait Club return to the basketball league action.

Hamad Adnan, and Abdulaziz Ramadan. Al-Sulaibikhat, guided by national coach Fahad Barjas, will counter with American professionals Dixon, Isaiah, and newcomer Alingah Minnie, who is set to make his debut.

In the second match, Al-Qadsia, fresh off a win against Al-Tadamon, takes on Al-Yarmouk, who has one point following a loss to Al-Arabi. Al-Qadsia is heavily favored, given its technical superiority and professional depth, compared to an Al-Yarmouk squad devoid of foreign players. Al-Qadsia will aim to capitalize on its advantages and secure a vital win to climb the standings.

Southgate pondering where his future lies

LONDON, Nov 26, (AP): Five months after leaving his job as England coach, Gareth Southgate is still pondering where his future lies.

It might be outside soccer.

In a long post on social media platform LinkedIn, Southgate said he is searching for his next "purpose" in life after his time as the coach of the England men's national team from 2016-2024 - a high-pressure role in which any comment, about soccer or beyond, was heavily scrutinized.

"This higher purpose kept me on track, gave me structure, made my life more fulfilling and is going to be extremely difficult to replicate," Southgate wrote Tuesday.

"It's why I'm not limiting my future options to remaining as a football coach."

Southgate, who left the England job after losing the European Championship final in July, was linked with becoming Manchester United manager because of his connections with some members of the

club's board, but the team chose to hire Ruben Amorim after firing Erik ten Hag last month.

Otherwise, Southgate has slipped out of the limelight, with England having moved on - initially with an interim coach in Lee Carsley and, from Jan. 1, with a full-time replacement in Thomas Tuchel.

Southgate said much of his focus has been on his chosen charities.

"After eight years serving in one of the highest-profile roles in world football, I'm consciously taking time to reflect on what I lived through and thinking deeply about what comes next," he wrote.

"I'm comfortable," he added, "with this period of 'exploration' and not having all the answers. I'm following the advice I would give to any young person, without a clear career vision. Keep learning, build or explore your network, seek different life experiences and when you decide what's next, there will be no right or wrong, just one path or another."

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Iceland coach resigns ahead of 2026 World Cup qualifying games

REYKJAVIK, Iceland, Nov 26, (AP): Veteran coach Áge Hareide has resigned from the Iceland national team ahead of the start of World Cup qualifying, and said he plans to retire.

The Icelandic soccer federation announced the 71-year-old Hareide's decision to leave in a statement late Monday.

"I have enjoyed my time with the Icelandic national team, but I believe that now is the right time to retire," Hareide

was quoted as saying in the federation statement.

He added that there are "exciting times ahead" for a team with emerging young leaders.

The next coach's first games are against Kosovo in March in a promotion-relegation playoff in the Nations League where the winner advances to the second tier in the next edition of the tournament.

Iceland will be in the pot of third-seed-

ed teams when FIFA makes the draw for World Cup qualifying groups for Europe on Dec. 13. Only group winners advance directly to the 2026 tournament being co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Iceland has played at one World Cup, in 2018 in Russia, becoming the smallest nation ever to qualify.

An international defender for Norway, Hareide coached the Norwegian national

team for five years through 2008. He later took Denmark to the 2018 World Cup - losing to eventual finalist Croatia in a penalty shootout in the round of 16 - and helped it qualify for the European Championship played in 2021.

Hareide joined Iceland for the Euro 2024 qualifying program and the team was one game from the tournament, losing a playoff final against Ukraine in March.

Al-Qadsiya eyes redemption in Bahrain

Kuwait Club clings to Champions League 2 qualification hopes

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Al-Qadsiya and Kuwait Club are aiming for their first victories in their respective international campaigns. The "Yellow" faces Bahrain's Al-Riffa at 6:00 pm at Khalifa Sports City Stadium in Isa Town, in the third round of Group Two in the Gulf Club Champions League. Meanwhile, Kuwait Club will visit Uzbekistan's Nasaf Qarshi at 5:00 pm at Markazi Stadium in the fifth round of Group Four in the AFC.

For Al-Qadsiya, the mission is to overcome the challenges that have plagued its earlier matches, including a 1-1 draw against Qatar's Al-Arabi and a narrow 1-0 loss to Saudi Arabia's Al-Ettifaq. Luck and refereeing decisions have so far eluded them, but they are determined to "break the jinx" this time around. Al-Arabi will also play Al-Ettifaq tonight at 8:00 pm at Al-Thumama Stadium in the same group.

Currently, Al-Qadsiya sits in third place with one point, trailing Al-Riffa in second with three points. Al-Ettifaq leads the group with six



Al-Qadsiya and Kuwait Club looking for their first away wins.

points, while Al-Arabi is at the bottom with one point.

In the AFC Champions League 2, Kuwait Club approaches its match against Nasaf Qarshi with a "glimmer of hope" to stay in contention for a spot in the next round. Al-Hussein Irbid and Shabab Al-Ahli will also clash today at 7:00 pm at Amman International Stadium in the same group.

Kuwait Club is last in Group Four with two points, behind leader Al-Hussein Irbid (9 points), Shabab Al-Ahli (7), and Nasaf (4). To advance, they must win both its remaining matches — against Nasaf and Al-Hussein Irbid on December 5 — while hoping for Shabab Al-Ahli to lose its final two games.

Montenegrin coach Nebojsa Jovic emphasizes that victory is essential to reignite the team's momentum. Despite leading the local league undefeated, Kuwait Club has struggled in international play, failing to secure a win in its past four matches. A win today would not only restore confidence but also keep its slim qualification hopes alive.

Vicario says he played for hour against City with fractured right ankle

West Ham halts Newcastle's momentum

NEWCASTLE, England, Nov 26, (AP): Newcastle's winning run in the English Premier League came to an abrupt end when goals from Thomas Soucek and Aaron Wan-Bissaka gave West Ham a surprise 2-0 win at St. James' Park.

The Hammers rose into 14th place and the pressure on coach Julen Lopetegui was eased.

The London club has been inconsistent all season and Monday's win was just its fourth in 12 league games.

West Ham was worth it in the end but the three points came courtesy of slack defending by the home side. Emerson whipped in an out-swinging corner after 10 minutes and, with Newcastle defenders rooted to the spot, Soucek stole in to nod home the opener.

Then eight minutes into the second half, captain Jarrod Bowen found Wan-Bissaka in the penalty box and he was left unchallenged and had time to fire an angled drive past Nick Pope.

"The second goal if you settle on a lead it can come back to haunt you," Bowen said.

Newcastle brought on Harvey Barnes, and then Callum Wilson returned from a long-term back injury to make his first appearance of the season, but to no avail.

"I said we needed a performance and we did that," Bowen said. "Newcastle always score at home so to keep them to a clean sheet and score twice ... it's a tough place to come to. We did that perfectly."

The defeat ended a three-game winning streak for Newcastle and left the Saudi Arabia-owned club in ninth place, four points outside the top four.

Meanwhile, Tottenham goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario says he played for an hour against Manchester City with a fractured right ankle that has since required surgery.



West Ham United's Michail Antonio, right, and Newcastle United's Joelinton, left, challenge for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Newcastle United and West Ham United in Newcastle, England. (AP)

Vicario pulled off a series of saves and managed to keep a clean sheet in Tottenham's stunning 4-0 win at Etihad Stadium on Saturday, despite needing treatment on his ankle during the first half. He played the full game.

"Sometimes football gives you its

highs, and sometimes it challenges you in ways you don't expect," the Italy international wrote on Instagram late Monday. "I played 60 minutes at the Etihad with a broken bone in my ankle, giving absolutely everything I had for the team. Unfortunately there was no way around

this one. I needed surgery."

Tottenham confirmed the 28-year-old Vicario had an operation on Monday.

Fraser Forster, 36, is likely to come into the team as cover.

"The operation went well, and from tomorrow I'll be working hard to come

back stronger, fitter, and ready to give my all for you again," Vicario wrote.

Vicario's injury revived memories of the late Man City goalkeeper Bert Trautmann continuing to play to the end of the FA Cup final in 1956 after breaking his neck in the 73rd minute.

Ayub smashes maiden ODI hundred in Pakistan thumping win over Zimbabwe

Tourists make amends for stunning loss

BULAWAYO, Zimbabwe, Nov 26, (AP): Saim Ayub smashed a maiden ODI hundred off 53 balls as Pakistan romped to a 10-wicket win over Zimbabwe in the second one-day international on Tuesday.

Ayub, the left-handed opening batter, hit 17 fours and three sixes in his unbeaten 113 off 62 balls and sped Pakistan to 148-0 in 18.2 overs. It was the third-fastest century for Pakistan in ODIs.

Pakistan leveled the three-match series and made amends for its stunning 80-run loss on the DLS method in the rain-affected first match on Sunday.

Leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed had earlier snared 4-33 in his debut ODI and off-spinner Salman Ali Agha chipped in with 3-26 to dismiss Zimbabwe for 145 in 32.3 overs after the home team won the toss and elected to bat.

"The way the guys started with the ball, they performed very well and gave us the foundation," Pakistan captain Mohammad Rizwan said. "After that, Saim Ayub's innings was exceptional."

Dion Myers showed flashes of brilliance in his 30-ball knock of 33 with six fours, but the rest of the Zimbabwe batters struggled against both spinners on a wicket conducive for slow bowlers.

Abrar, who bowled alongside new ball bowler Aamer Jamal, struck in his second over when he clean bowled Joylord Gumbie (5) with a sharp turning delivery. Gumbie had earlier been involved in the second successive run-out of the series when Tadiwanashe Marumani fell short of his crease while going for a tight single.



Zimbabwe's Craig Ervine, left, at the wicket as Pakistan's wicket keeper Mohammad Rizwan catches the ball, during the second ODI cricket match between Zimbabwe and Pakistan, at Queens Sports Club, in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. (AP)

The Zimbabwe batters couldn't gauge the off-spin of Salman with Myers dismissed lbw on the back-foot and captain Craig Ervine (18) smartly caught by wicketkeeper Rizwan as the batter tried to cut the off-spinner.

Sikandar Raza smashed two sixes in his brief knock of 17 before getting holed out at mid-off as Zimbabwe slumped to 5-97. Sean Williams (31) tried to rebuild the innings but his dismissal saw Zimbabwe losing its last five wickets for 24 runs with Abrar mopping up the tail quickly.

Williams could read the length of Ayub's off-spin and was out plumb leg before wicket while going for an extravagant reverse

sweep that opened the tail.

"We did not apply ourselves for long enough and did not build any substantial partnerships," Ervine said. "Guys need to take a hard look at themselves, including myself and be a little hard on each other. In hindsight, we might have bowled first, (but) now we have to regroup and put up a good performance on Thursday."

Ayub hurried the run-chase with some exquisite drives on both sides of the wicket and raised his half century off 32 balls with his signature pulled shot over fine leg for a six to Trevor Gwandu.

Ayub's opening partner Abdullah Shafique (32 not out) escaped an earlier dropped catch of Bless-

ing Muzarabani before he watched his partner smashing boundaries at will. Ayub reached his century off 53 balls when he hit Brandon Mavuta for a boundary over mid-wicket as the leg-spinner conceded 47 runs off his four wicketless overs.

Flamboyant former international batter Shahid Afridi still holds the record of fastest ODI hundred for Pakistan. He made 102 off 37 balls against Sri Lanka at Nairobi in 1996 and then scored 102 off 45 balls against India at Kanpur in 2005.

The third and final ODI will be played at the same venue on Thursday before the teams will meet in a three-match T20 series.

Al-Arabi takes top spot, Al-Salmiya slips to third

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Al-Arabi achieved a significant victory over Al-Salmiya, winning 26-22 in the ninth round of the preliminary phase of the Handball League. This win propelled Al-Arabi to the top of the standings with 12 points, while Al-Salmiya, also with 12 points, slipped to third place due to the defeat.

In other matches, Burqan narrowly edged past Al-Qadisiya with a 27-26 win, and Khaitan secured a high-scoring 38-36 victory over Al-Qurain.

Burqan now sits in second place with 13 points, while Al-Qadisiya remains in eighth with 8 points, jeopardizing its chances of securing one of the six Premier League qualification spots. The team's record of 4 wins and 5 losses has left its position precarious.

Burqan's performance continues to showcase its strength as a contender for the top positions, while Khaitan climbed to ninth place with 6 points. Al-Qurain, despite



Al-Arabi attacks Salmiya defense.

its close match, remains in seventh with 8 points.

Looking ahead, two matches are scheduled for today at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Halls Complex. Kuwait Club faces Al-Nasr at 5:00 pm, and Kazma takes on Al-Sulaibikhat at 6:30 pm. Both Kuwait Club and Kazma are unbeaten in the tournament so far, each holding 8 points from four matches.

Sanchez receives a big boost

MADRID, Nov 26, (Xinhua): Girona coach Michel Sanchez has received a big boost as his side prepares for a vital UEFA Champions League visit to Austria on Wednesday after he was named Manager of the Month for November in La Liga.

Wins against Leganes, Getafe and Espanyol have lifted Girona to seventh place in La Liga after a difficult start to the campaign as they struggled to combine the demands of domestic and European football for the first time in the club's history.

As well as losing key players such as top-scorer Artem Dovbyk, Yan Couto and Savinho over the summer, Girona's season has been hit by a continued stream of injuries, with Michel at times forced to put out a team with half of his first-team squad

on the sidelines.

The injuries are at last clearing up, while new arrivals Bryan Gil and Bojan Miovski look to be forming an understanding in attack, as Girona has scored nine goals in its last three league outings.

Now it has to transform the domestic upturn to Europe, with Wednesday's visit to play Sturm Graz giving it the chance to move towards a playoff place.

Girona is 29th out of the 36 teams with three points from its opening four games, while Sturm Graz is 33rd after losing all four of its matches to date, scoring just one goal.

A win does look vital as Girona's next rival is Liverpool, who has a 100 percent record ahead of its match against Real Madrid.

Best of the Rest

Naeher quits US: U.S. women's national team goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher is retiring from international soccer.

Naeher is on the team's roster for a pair of upcoming matches in Europe but those games will be her last after a full 11 years playing for the United States.

Over the course of her career, Naeher was on the U.S. team that won the Women's World Cup in 2019 and the gold medal at the Olympics this summer in France. She's the only U.S. goalkeeper to earn a shutout in both a World Cup and an Olympic final.

She made a key one-handed save in stoppage time to preserve the Americans' 1-0 victory over Brazil in the Olympic final. Mallory Swanson, who scored the only goal, ran down the length of the field to embrace Naeher at the final whistle.

Naeher announced her retirement on social media Monday. (AP)

Whitecaps fire coach: Coach Vanni Sartini was fired by the Vancouver Whitecaps on Monday, 2 1/2 weeks after the team's elimination in the MLS playoffs.

Sartini became the 10th MLS coach to depart since the start of the 2024 season. He took over from Marc Dos Santos in August 2021 at first as an interim coach and then was given the job that November.

Vancouver had 13 wins, 13 losses and eight draws in MLS this season, beat Portland 5-0 in the play-in round of the postseason and lost to Los Angeles FC in a three-game, first-round series that ended Nov. 8.

"The desperation on my side is absolutely there," CEO and sporting director Axel Schuster said. "I had to make a professional decision (for) how we can get the biggest impact to make this step forward and to get to a progression." (AP)



Al-Kuwari with Al-Musallam after the renewal of the agreement.

Sports

Asian Olympic Council headquarters remains in Kuwait for another five years

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: The Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs, represented by Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, and the Olympic Council of Asia, represented by First Vice President Timothy Focke, along with Second Vice President Dr. Thani Al-Kuwari and Director General Hussein Al-Musallam, signed the renewal agreement to host the headquarters of the Olympic Council of Asia in Kuwait.

Al-Kuwari expressed his joy at the five-year renewal of the agreement, which is automatically renewable, and noted, "The headquarters was origi-

nally in India, and since 1982, it has been moved to Kuwait."

He extended his sincere thanks to all those who contributed to the renewal, particularly His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, a steadfast supporter of Asian sports, and Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya. He also thanked the Kuwaiti government and people for their trust in hosting the council, emphasizing the positive impact this would have on the Asian sports movement.

Al-Musallam, speaking on behalf of the Asian sports community, ex-

pressed gratitude to His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, and the Kuwaiti government for renewing the agreement. He highlighted that Kuwait has been hosting the Olympic Council of Asia since 1982, contributing significantly to the continent's development in both technical and organizational aspects, as well as to the success of its champions on the international stage. He added, "The renewal is based on Law No. 6 of 2006, and this agreement, which had been suspended since 2015, has now been reinstated."

Kuwait soccer team concludes local training

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Kuwait's national team will conclude its local training today at 8:00 pm at the Health Institute in Bayan, ahead of its departure tomorrow for a training camp in Doha, which will run until mid-December.

This camp is part of Kuwait's preparations for the upcoming "Khaleeji Zain 26" tournament, set to take place in Kuwait from December 21 to January 3. During the Doha camp, Kuwait will play

three friendly matches against Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon.

The draw for the "Khaleeji Zain 26" placed Kuwait in Group A alongside Qatar, the UAE, and Oman, while Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Yemen were drawn into Group B.

Several key players will miss Kuwait's local training sessions, including Al-Qadsia players Khalid Ibrahim, Khalid Al-Rashidi, Eid Al-Rashidi, Rashed Al-Dosari, Mubarak Al-Fanini, and Moaz

Al-Dhafiri, as well as Kuwait players Fahad Al-Hajri, Sami Al-Sanea, Abdulrahman Kamil, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, Reda Hani, Mishari Ghannam, Faisal Zayed, Mohammed Daham, Yousef Nasser, and Khaled Al-Kharqawi.

These players are committed to their respective clubs in the Gulf Clubs Championship and the AFC Champions League.

They are expected to join the national team on December 5, after their club duties conclude.

Kuwait Club maintains perfect record as Burgan edges Al-Arabi in 5-set nail-biter

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 26: Kuwait Club secured its fourth consecutive victory in the Federation Volleyball Championship, defeating Yarmouk 3-0 in their fourth-round match. The round also saw Burgan claim a hard-fought 3-2 win over Al-Arabi.

With this victory, Kuwait Club increased its tally to 12 points, keeping Yarmouk scoreless. Burgan's win brought its total to 10 points, while Al-Arabi remains at 3 points.

Kuwait Club dominated Yarmouk, easily taking all three sets with scores of 25-11, 25-12, and 25-13.

The second match provided intense competition as Al-Arabi initially appeared headed for a comfortable win after claiming the first two sets 25-21 and 25-18. However, Burgan staged a remarkable comeback, winning the next two sets 25-19 each to force a tie-breaker. Burgan narrowly clinched the final set 15-13, sealing its victory.

In the championship, teams earning a 3-0 or 3-1 win receive the full three points, while losers earn none. A 3-2 win awards two points to the victor and one point to the defeated team. The tournament follows a single-round league format, with the top four teams advancing to the semi-finals. The first-place team faces the fourth, and the second takes on the third, with the winners moving on to the final match.



Kuwaiti players work out in the gym.



Kuwait Club player goes for spike as Yarmouk defends.

Ronaldo puts Al-Nassr on 'brink' of Asian CL playoffs, Al-Ahli advances

Toney scores twice in four minutes

AL RAYYAN, Qatar, Nov 26, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice as Al-Nassr of Saudi Arabia defeated Al-Gharafa of Qatar 3-1 in the AFC Champions League Elite group stage.

Al-Nassr is virtually assured of a place in the knockout stages.

Ronaldo had two early shots well saved by goalkeeper Sergio Ricom, and half an hour in he placed the ball on the penalty spot. Sadio Mane went down in the area under a challenge from Matias Nani and the referee awarded a penalty. But the VAR overturned the decision.

Ronaldo then missed the best opportunity of the first 45 minutes, heading a free kick just wide from close range.

He made amends in the new half, heading home powerfully from an Angelo cross. Angelo then went around the goalkeeper for 2-0 in the 58th.

Ronaldo sealed the victory six minutes later, shooting home from inside the area.

Former Real Madrid striker Joselu pulled a goal back for Al-Gharafa.

Earlier, Ivan Toney scored twice as Al-Ahli of Saudi Arabia won at defending champion Al-Ain of the United Arab Emirates 2-1 to become the first team to book a place in the knockout stages with three group games to spare.

The England striker, who arrived in Jeddah from English Premier League team Brentford in August, came off the bench in the second half and scored twice in four minutes.

Both came from Riyad Mahrez crosses; Toney headed home the first and stretched to guide in the second.

"Coach (Matthias) Jaissle told me to come on and make a difference," Toney said. "It was challenging because I've missed many games, but I stepped in and delivered a good performance."

It was a fifth win in five by Al-Ahli, which moved into first place in its 12-team group. The tournament is divided into two groups, with the top eight from each progressing to a round of 16.

Porzingis scores 16 in season debut

Nets rally from 18-point deficit to defeat Warriors

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov 26, (AP): Dennis Schroder scored 31 points, Cam Thomas added 23 and the undermanned Brooklyn Nets rallied to beat Stephen Curry and the Golden State Warriors 128-120 on Monday night.

Curry made a 3-pointer with 3:26 left and pulled the Warriors within three, but Golden State couldn't make the crucial stops and squandered an 18-point lead. Curry scored 28, and Andrew Wiggins added 18 points.

Schroder's 3 with 11:10 remaining tied the game at 92, and he put his team ahead with another at the 9:43 mark.

Celtics 126, Clippers 94

In Boston, Jayson Tatum scored 20 points and the Boston Celtics made 22 3-pointers in a win over the Los Angeles Clippers.

Payton Pritchard added with 20 points for Boston, which extended its season-high win streak to six games.

Kristaps Porzingis finished with 16 points on 6 of 12 shooting, to go along with six rebounds and two blocks in his season debut following offseason ankle surgery. He made the start and played 23 minutes with Al Horford (illness) and Luke Kornet (hamstring) out.

Thunder 130, Kings 109

In Sacramento, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 37 points and the Oklahoma City Thunder's bench players combined for 40 points in win over Sacramento that extended the Kings' losing streak to four.

Jalen Williams scored 28 points and Isaiah Hartenstein returned from a stint on the injured list with 17 points for the Thunder.

Knicks 145, Nuggets 118

In Denver, OG Anunoby scored a career-high 40 points, Jalen Brunson had 17 of New York's team recording 45 assists and the Knicks rode a torrid start to a rout of the Denver Nuggets.

Brunson had 23 points to go with his career-best assist performance. The Knicks' 45 assists matched the single-game team record set against Cleveland on Nov. 24, 1979.

Mavericks 129, Hawks 119

In Atlanta, Kyrie Irving had 32 points, six assists and seven rebounds, and the Dallas Mavericks beat the Atlanta Hawks without star Luka Doncic.

Jaden Hardy had a season-high 23 points in his first start of the season for



New York Knicks guard Jalen Brunson, right, drives the lane past Denver Nuggets forward Peyton Watson in the first half of an NBA basketball game in Denver. (AP)

Dallas, which has won five of six. Naji Marshall and Spencer Dinwiddie had 22 points each.

Grizzlies 123, Trail Blazers 98

In Memphis, Ja Morant had 22 points and 11 assists in his return to the lineup after missing eight games with a hip injury, leading the Memphis Grizzlies to victory over the Portland Trail Blazers.

Morant shot 6 of 12 from the field, including 2 for 3 from 3-point range. Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 21 points, and Santi Aldama finished with 13 points and a career-high 17 rebounds.

Pistons 102, Raptors 100

In Detroit, Jaden Ivey hit a jumper as time expired to give the Detroit Pistons a victory over the Toronto Raptors.

The Raptors took a 98-96 lead on RJ Barrett's 3-pointer with 1:47 left, but Ivey's driving layup tied it with 1:07 to go.

Pacers 114, Pelicans 110

In Indianapolis, Tyrese Haliburton finished with 34 points and 13 assists and made a season best nine 3-pointers, leading the Indiana Pacers past the short-handed New Orleans Pelicans.

Haliburton's tiebreaking 3 with 3:06 to go and Bennedit Mathurin's alley-oop dunk off Haliburton's pass with a minute left finally secured the win.



Portland Trail Blazers guard Shaedon Sharpe, left, and Memphis Grizzlies guard Ja Morant (12) struggle for control of the ball in the first half of an NBA basketball game in Memphis, Tenn. (AP)