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Pages 14-16

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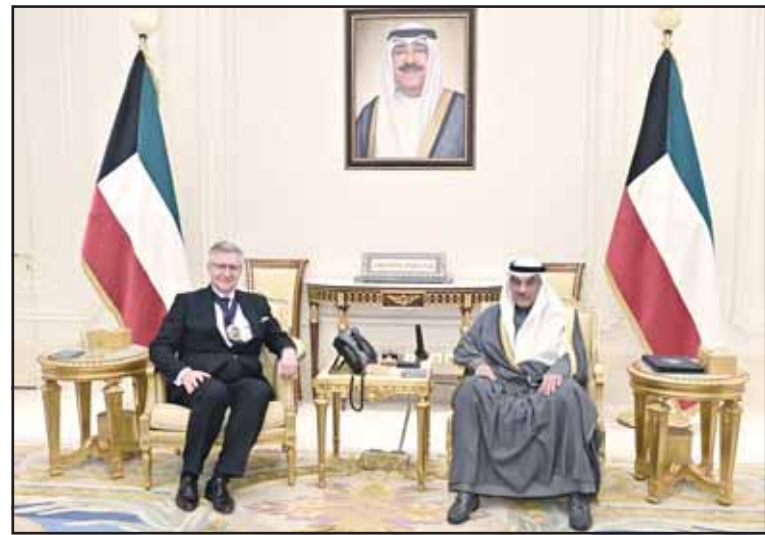
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Crown Prince Diwan photo
His Highness the Crown Prince receives Lord Mayor of London Alastair King.

Crown Prince receives Lord Mayor of London

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Wednesday at Bayan Palace the Lord Mayor of London, Alderman Alastair King on the occasion of his visit to the country.

The meeting was attended by Finance Minister and Minister of State

for Economic and Investment Affairs Nora Al-Fassam, His Highness the Crown Prince's Office Director retired Lieutenant General Jamal Al-Theyab, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs at the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince Mazen Al-Issa and UK Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis. (KUNA)

Mandoobs allowed to handle corporate traffic transactions

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: Director General of the General Traffic Department Brigadier Jamal Al-Foudari has issued an administrative order to allow traffic transactions for companies or institutions to be completed by the company owner or their legal representative (mandoob), provided there is a power of attorney designating a specific individual to handle the transactions.

The administrative order explained that there is no longer a requirement for the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry to attest or approve transactions for companies or institutions in order to complete their requests and services.

Any circulars contradicting these procedures would be canceled. It also instructed deputies to the general directors to inform all department directors under their supervision about the new procedures.

The deputies to the general directors and the department heads must implement the order and monitor its execution from the effective date. Failure to comply with the order may result in legal accountability.

This administrative order reflects the General Traffic Department's commitment to ensuring efficient operations, organizational improvements, and continued development in all its departments.

The General Traffic Department reported a significant enforcement effort last week, issuing 42,000 traffic citations and impounding 88 vehicles as part of its ongoing campaign to enhance road safety. Among those cited, 31 minors were referred to the Public Prosecution for driving without licenses.

Fire Force on high alert

Emergency teams mobilized as Kuwait combats rainfall effects

By Mohamed Ghanem and Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: According to informed sources from the Ministry of Public Works, emergency teams have been deployed in all six governorates to

address the impact of the current rainfall, in coordination with the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART).

They explained that there were no significant water accumulations or flooding on any internal roads or expressways that could disrupt traffic. The rainfall amounts

Continued on Page 5



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq
A police car assists motorists in navigating around waterlogging during Wednesday's rainfall, ensuring safety and smooth traffic flow amid adverse weather conditions.



8 KfH emphasizes role in economic development and fostering relations with British financial community



9 Zain welcomes Kuwait Airways as the official carrier of Khaleeji Zain 26



10 NBK receives Lord Mayor of London and his accompanying delegation



11 'Moana 2' is more dull than so shiny

No automatic naturalization for foreign wives of Kuwaitis

Kuwait intensifies efforts to preserve national identity

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: The issue of preserving Kuwaiti national identity continues to be a top priority, with authorities taking rigorous measures to address cases of citizenship forgery.

Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, who also chairs the Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Nationality, confirmed during an appearance on the "60 Minutes" program on Al-Akhar Channel that citizenship withdrawal and revocation files are being reviewed with meticulous precision.

The committee holds weekly meetings (every Thursday) to evaluate these cases, following a detailed study conducted by the Nationality Department and a preliminary review by the Council of Ministers.

The following are the key developments:

Rigorous Investigations — Colonel Abdulaziz Al-Amiri, Director of the Nationality Investigations Department, highlighted the complexity of uncovering forgery cases, especially those involving documents that are decades old.

External and internal correspondences are often required to verify claims, particularly when the forgery involves foreign entities.

Impact of Loopholes — Loopholes in the Nationality Law, such as those allowing the naturalization of Kuwaiti wives under Article 8, have been exploited. Al-Amiri revealed statistics showing that women from 66 different nationalities were naturalized under this article.

Cases of forgery related to "unknown parentage" and fraudulent birth registrations outside Kuwait were also identified.

Technological Advancements — The adoption of biometric fingerprinting has significantly enhanced the ability to detect

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait gov't greenlights tougher traffic penalties



PM Diwan photo
Acting Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Cabinet discussed during its weekly meeting on Wednesday, the preparations for the upcoming 45th GCC Summit in Kuwait on December 1 as well as issues of prominence including amendments to Law 67/1976 concerning traffic violations and fines.

After the meeting -- chaired by Acting Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah -- Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Al-Maousherji said that the State of Kuwait would like to welcome leaders of the GCC to the country during the summit.

He expressed the Cabinet's wishes for the success of the upcoming grand event, which hopefully meets the expectations and dreams of the people in the region.

Meanwhile, the Minister indicated that upon the desire of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait would be joining the Global Water Organization headquartered in Saudi Arabia and launched upon the initiative of the Saudi leadership.

Continued on Page 5

Mural in Kuwait honors 50 years of Australia relations

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27, (KUNA): Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) unveiled on Wednesday a mural commemorating some 50 years since diplomatic relations with Australia began in earnest, hailing the artwork as a significant cultural initiative.

The artwork, a collaboration between famed Australian muralist Sophie Odling and Kuwaiti artist Sheikh Al-Abaidli, aims to provide a platform for the local arts scene to flourish, said NCCAL chief Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar, highlighting such "cultural exchanges" as part of a broader national program.

The artwork encapsulates the upward trajectory in relations between Kuwait and Australia, in addition to depicting

the vibrant art scenes in both nations that have grown in significance, said Australian ambassador to Kuwait Melissa Kelly.

The mural, situated at the entrance of Kuwait's Al-Mubarakiya heritage market, is an effort to "celebrate" Kuwaiti and Australian culture alike, according to NCAAL's acting chief for antiquities and museums Mohammad bin Ridha, saying such artworks help add color and flair to streets nationwide.

Kuwait and Australia are marking this year the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, while trade and investment ties have seen major headway in recent years as shown in a myriad of activities the Australian embassy has organized to bring light to the matter.



KUNA photo
The artwork, situated at the entrance of Kuwait's Al-Mubarakiya heritage market, is a collaboration between famed Australian muralist Sophie Odling and Kuwaiti artist Sheikh Al-Abaidli.

GHB use sparks warning

Kuwait police nab duo in huge Captagon drug bust

Newswatch

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: In a significant operation that came as a painful blow to drug dealers, officers from the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) successfully dismantled a drug

Continued on Page 5

Day by Day

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Defense, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, thank you for your principled stance on the issue of residency renewal of expatriates over 60 years old which you rightly described as a blemish on Kuwait's history.

This decision unfairly targeted some of the most experienced workers and since its enforcement, we have continuously questioned who was responsible for its issuance and who supported it.

I have previously criticized this policy, urging a thorough investigation to determine whether it truly served the interests of Kuwait. The disruption it caused within the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) is undeniable.

This decision undermined numerous professions and created unnecessary hardship. It is imperative that an investigation be conducted to uncover the motivations behind its issuance and who issued it and why.

Yet, tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

'Threads of Steadfastness' opens

Palestinian envoy welcomes ceasefire accord in Lebanon

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: The Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub affirmed his country's longstanding call for a ceasefire in response to the ongoing Israeli aggression in Gaza and the Palestinian territories.

He expressed appreciation for efforts to spare Lebanese lives, but emphasized that the ultimate goal is the end of the brutal Israeli war on Palestine.

In a press statement issued on

the sidelines of the opening of the "Threads of Steadfastness" exhibition, which was organized by the Palestinian embassy at the Women's Social and Cultural Society and attended by several ambassadors and diplomats, Tahboub highlighted the significance of the event, as it coincided with the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

He also referenced the recent ruling by the International Court, calling for the arrest of Israel's Prime Minister and former minister of Defense.

Continued on Page 5



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq
A ceremonial ribbon cutting marks the opening of the "Threads of Steadfastness" exhibition, organized by the Palestinian embassy.

Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:58 Asr 14:30
 Sunrise .. 06:21 Maghrib .. 16:50
 Zohr 11:36 Isha 18:11

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Rather cold with light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-45 km/h.
By Night: Cold with light to moderate freshening at times

Weather

| Station | Max Exp | Min Rec | Weather | | |
|----------------|---------|---------|---|----------------|----|
| Kuwait City | 22 | 21 | over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-42 km/h. | Bubyan | 23 |
| Kuwait Airport | 22 | 17 | | Jahra | 22 |
| Abdaly | 21 | 18 | | Failaka Island | 24 |
| | | | | Salmiyah | 23 |
| | | | | Ahmadi | 21 |
| | | | | Jal Aliyah | 24 |
| | | | | Nuwaisib | 23 |
| | | | | | 19 |

Leadership, talent nurtured in institution

Kuwait University: 58 years of genuine investment in human resources

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27, (KUNA): Kuwait University commemorates its 58th anniversary on Wednesday, recognizing its pivotal role since 1966 in advancing Kuwait's development plans by investing in human resources, encouraging scientific research and innovation, and preparing a qualified workforce.



Dr. Al-Saeed

In a press statement marking the occasion, Acting President of Kuwait University, Dr. Osama Al-Saeed regarded November 27, 1966 as a transformative day in Kuwait's scientific and educational journey, and emphasized that the university's establishment represented a significant milestone in Kuwait's history.

He added that Kuwait University has become a cornerstone for nurturing national talent and leadership across various disciplines, contribut-

ing to the nation's development, and with the support by Kuwait's leadership, the university has expanded to include 16 colleges in both scientific and humanities fields at the Sabah Al-Salem University City, a landmark academic campus.

Dr. Al-Saeed expressed aspirations for a brighter academic future by enhancing educational processes and building national capabilities, aligning with Kuwait's Vision 2035.

On his part, Acting Secretary-General of Kuwait University, Dr. Mieshari Al-Eifan highlighted the scientific and academic accomplishments of Kuwait University, and said that its establishment marked the beginning of an important journey that continues to contribute to the society.

Dr. Al-Eifan added that Kuwait University remains a beacon of knowledge, and that the university's mission has always focused on cultivating educated and aware individuals who can tackle modern challenges.

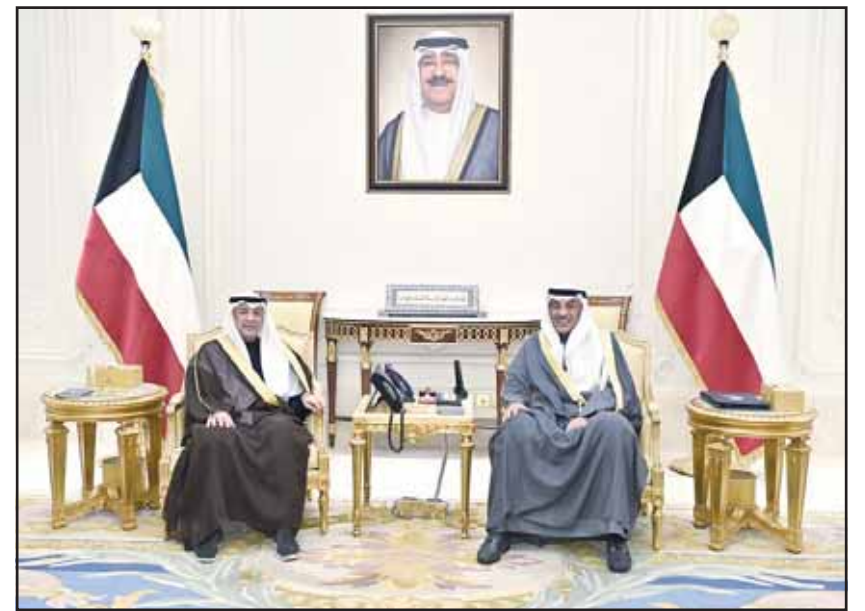
He said that Kuwait University recognizes the importance of keeping pace with the rapid

advancements of the modern age, and this is achieved by providing an educational environment that fosters creativity and innovation.

The modern facilities at Kuwait University align with all the elements of modernity and progress, reflecting Kuwait's commitment to advancing scientific development and supporting the ambitions of the Kuwaiti youth to tackle new scientific challenges.

Kuwait University is the first public research university in Kuwait, the issuance of Law No. 29 of 1966, concerning the regulation of higher education, marked the establishment of Kuwait University with the founding of the Colleges of Science, Arts, Education, and Women's College under the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

The opening of the Sabah Al-Salem University City campus in Al-Shadadiya, which spans approximately six million square meters and was designed to accommodate more than 40,000 students, has further enhanced Kuwait University's ability to fulfill its critical national, scientific, and humanitarian responsibilities.



Crown Prince Diwan photo
 His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives the GCC Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi in his office.

HH Crown Prince receives GCC chief

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Wednesday Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi at Bayan Palace on

Wednesday.
 His Highness the Crown Prince was briefed on the most important topics on the agenda of the 45th summit of the GCC Supreme Council, which will be held in Kuwait on December 1.

Kuwait devises foolproof security plan for Summit

Host of vital economic, political issues on agenda



Kuwaiti and Pakistani military delegations during the talks. KUNA photo

Kuwait-Pakistan to up military ties

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense announced on Wednesday the conclusion of the third Kuwait-Pakistan military cooperation committee meeting, held in Kuwait on November 25-27.

In a press release, the ministry stated

that the two-day meeting was attended by Rear Admiral Salah Al-Salal and Director General of Pakistan's Joint Staff, Major General Munir Ud Din discussed Kuwait-Pakistan military matters and ways to enhance cooperation between the two sides.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27, (KUNA): The 45th GCC Summit in Kuwait on December first will highlight prominent political and economic issues, said Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya on Wednesday.

Speaking to KUNA, Minister Al-Yahya revealed that the summit would touch on strategic partnerships amongst member countries, cybersecurity, in addition to completing the GCC electrical grid and railway projects.

On Thursday, the 162nd Foreign Ministers preparatory meeting would be held ahead of the Sunday's summit.

Post meeting, the GCC ministers would be led on a tour to the Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center to witness an exhibition highlighting decades of GCC cooperation.

Kuwait has devised a foolproof security plan as it prepares to host the 45th edition of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit, the interior ministry said on Wednesday, citing preparations in place for the annual gathering.

Monitoring the planned security measures for the summit, Interior Undersecretary Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said he was proud of the "diligent efforts" on the part of state bodies to ensure that the gathering proceeds in a smooth and seamless manner, he was quoted as saying in a statement.

The interior ministry official said that he was informed of the minutiae of the security measures that are set to be enforced for the summit, calling for maximum "alert and preparedness" as Gulf Arab leaders assemble in Kuwait on Sunday.

The 162nd Foreign Ministers preparatory meeting ahead of Kuwait's 45th GCC Summit, December first, would address important issues of cooperation and collaboration amongst member countries, said GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi on Wednesday.

In a statement, the GCC chief revealed that the preparatory meeting would follow up on the decisions made in the 44th GCC Summit in Doha in addition to discussing memorandums and topics pertaining to strategic relations amongst Gulf countries as well as regional and international developments.

He affirmed that the meeting was part of the events aimed at making the upcoming summit on Sunday a success.

Three MoE officials resign, protest reshuffle decisions

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: Three senior officials of the Ministry of Education have resigned following the recent reshuffling decisions issued by the Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaei. The transfers were part of the ministry's administrative reform plan.

The resignations were submitted by:
 - Mohammad Kartash, the Primary Education Supervisor in the Capital Educational Zone, who was transferred to the same position in the Farwaniya Educational Zone.

■ Dalal Al-Mutairi, the Director of the Educational Affairs Department in the Hawally Educational Zone, who was reassigned to the same position in the Ahmadi Educational Zone.

■ Huda Al-Mutairi, the Director of the Information Systems Department, who was moved to the Educational Activities Department in the Jahra Educational Zone.

According to informed sources, the resignations were submitted to express dissatisfaction with the recent transfer decisions.

The officials said the decisions did not take into consideration their professional and personal circumstances.

However, the Ministry of Education stressed that these transfers were part of a comprehensive plan aimed at improving administrative efficiency and ensuring a more balanced distribution of responsibilities to better serve the public interest.

The ministry reiterated its commitment to implementing the changes in accordance with established regulations.

The sources said the resignations have sparked mixed reactions within the ministry. Some employees view the transfers as essential for driving forward the reform process, while others believe that a review of certain transfers may be necessary to achieve

DDI, KISR sign agreement to share knowledge, expertise

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI) has signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) to facilitate the exchange of research expertise and resources between the two organizations.

Acting Director General of Dasman Diabetes Institute Dr. Faisal Al-Rifai explained that this cooperation agreement will have a positive impact on both parties, and enable the exchange of knowledge and expertise in key research areas. These include food production and its impact on obesity and non-communicable diseases, particularly diabetes.

The collaboration will also involve conducting research studies, surveys, and sharing knowledge in technology and science. Both institutions will organize seminars, lectures, practical training sessions, and publish research findings in peer-reviewed scientific journals, among other forms of joint cooperation.

The research partnership between the two institutions is aligned with the public interest of the State of Kuwait and supports the objectives of New Kuwait 2035 vision.

Dr. Al-Rifai stressed the importance of in-depth scientific research conducted by KISR, which will serve Kuwait and contribute to advancing its capabilities and human resources.

He explained that the joint research includes a study aimed at understanding the development of body composition assessments of Arab children in the Middle East and North Africa region.

A new approach has been developed that uses height and weight to estimate body fat in children. The validity of this method has been tested across more than 20 countries, and contributes to a more accurate understanding and assessment of obesity rates in Kuwait and other countries in the region, as obesity is strongly linked to diabetes.

Meanwhile, Acting Director General of KISR Dr. Faisal Al-Humaidan ex-

pressed KISR's pride in its collaboration with Dasman Diabetes Institute and the signing of the memorandum of understanding that formalizes this partnership.

He highlighted that KISR has successfully implemented many reference studies aimed at improving the health of the Kuwaiti population.

He stressed that this success is due to the advanced technologies and laboratories available at KISR, which have enabled the execution of important applied research in food sciences, nutrition, and health.

He added that KISR also provides scientifically-based evidence to the Ministry of Health, medical sectors, and health specialists.

Al-Humaidan affirmed the commitment of KISR to conducting scientific interventional studies aimed at improving the nutritional habits, enhancing physical activity levels, and reducing sedentary behavior among the Kuwaiti population, particularly schoolchildren.

He said these efforts are crucial in addressing the high rates of obesity, diabetes, and other chronic diseases, which pose significant challenges to the country's development plans, adding that these health issues not only place a heavy burden on the state's financial resources but also affect the quality of health services.

Al-Humaidan indicated that joint research will be conducted with Dasman Diabetes Institute in line with the signed memorandum of understanding, and both institutes will exchange experiences and information to further their shared goals, adding that seminars, workshops, and training courses will be organized to equip Kuwaiti youth and future scientists with scientific, analytical, and research skills.

He commended the Dasman Diabetes Institute for its pivotal role in combating diabetes in Kuwait, improving prevention methods, and contributing to training, education, and awareness. He also highlighted the institute's innovative clinical research programs.

Dr. Al-Humaidan expressed optimism about achieving impactful preventive initiatives and programs aimed at reducing the high rates of obesity and diabetes in the country.

Loans of those with revoked citizenship values KD 12 mn

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: According to sources from the banking sector, the total value of loans held by individuals whose citizenship has been revoked is approximately KD 12 million, reports Al-Rai daily.

They explained that these loans include personal loans, consumer loans, and installment financing, with the amount varying for different banks, as the loan distribution reflects each bank's market share in individual loans.

This figure does not include loans from the most recent two batches of individuals whose nationalities were revoked, totaling around 3,200 people. As a result, the total value of loans for this group is expected to increase in the near future.

The sources affirmed that lending banks have the right to freeze customer deposits and assets, if applicable, and to deduct part of the loan installments,

adding that banks may also continue to seize remaining balances if instructions to block accounts and transactions of individuals whose nationalities have been revoked are in place.

They went on to explain that the classification of clients whose nationalities have been revoked varies between "VIP" clients, distinguished clients, and ordinary clients. The majority of this group, however, primarily rely on their salaries.

The lists of clients whose nationalities have been revoked include some divorced individuals and others who receive bonuses from the Ministry of Social Affairs. However, the proportion of these clients is very small, making up less than one percent of the total borrowers whose nationalities have been withdrawn.

Other Voices

Standards and metrics in a sustainability report

Dr. Jaber Eid Al-Wandah

International Consultant, Sustainable Development, Deputy General Manager - Al-Najat Charity

In the journey toward achieving sustainability in the humanitarian sector, it is impossible to overlook the necessity of having standards and metrics to measure how close or far we are from reaching the goals we have set for ourselves to achieve sustainability. These standards enable us to align the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the nature of our work, culture, and customs, as we mentioned earlier.

These standards and metrics are one of the main pillars upon which a sustainability report is built. This report is presented to stakeholders and specialists, and financial metrics are no longer the most important in the context of sustainability or in terms of relevance to stakeholders. The scope of these standards has expanded to include non-financial dimensions. Hence, the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reports and sustainability reports has emerged, as they incorporate and adhere to various standards.

At this point, dear reader, we understand that every entity issuing a sustainability report specific to its work and targeting its stakeholders and experts should include standards and metrics beyond financial ones. But what are the standards for building this report in the first place? How do we assess whether it meets the established construction standards, enabling us to compare it

with other reports from similar institutions? Are there indeed standards for building these reports? Are there entities that issue these standards, taking into account the nature of different institutions to make it easier for them to issue such reports? And is the charitable sector included among these institutions? These are the questions this article aims to address as we continue our discussion on sustainability in the charitable sector...

To begin, it is important to note that CSR and sustainability reports, along with their standards, were initially created to serve businesses. Over time, efforts have been made to adapt these standards for application in the charitable field. However, there are no specific standards that apply perfectly to the performance of charitable institutions, considering the nature of their work. So, on what basis are the reports of charitable institutions issued?

I would say: the published reports of charitable institutions are based on the fact that they are "institutions" subject to the same principles as other organizations, whether they are companies or establishments. These institutions share the same motivations as companies for issuing reports, such as benefiting from the advantages these reports provide, including aligning with modern trends that support the institution, paving the way for transparency, governance, and control, improving its reputation by demonstrating its commitment to international norms, laws, human rights, and other standards, enhancing operational performance and reducing costs, increasing the loyalty and satisfaction of stakeholders and employees, and helping to scientifically understand and analyze the institution's environment. Most importantly, these reports help achieve the organization's goals by presenting a clear picture of how close or far it is from reaching these objectives.

To be continued



Dr. Al-Wandah

diwaniya

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Why does bid to balance public, private sectors stay ineffective?

"THE labor market in Kuwait remains a hot topic of analysis and debate, with numerous studies offering recommendations and solutions. Yet, these often end up as mere discussions with minimal implementation. The core question persists: why do efforts to balance the public and private sectors remain ineffective?" **Dr. Nada Suleiman Al-Mutawa**, wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"Over the years, numerous advisory teams have engaged with Kuwait's decision-makers, but they frequently encounter a tangle of laws, conflicting views and tensions between public and private sector employment. Key challenges include:



Dr. Al-Mutawa

"Public Sector Attractiveness and Salary Inflation -- The government sector continues to appeal to Kuwaiti workers due to generous benefits, limited productivity requirements and attractive salaries. This has inflated the public wage bill and overshadowed private sector opportunities.

"The Role of Educational Institutions -- A decline in technical and technological skill development has disrupted the labor market. Educational institutions increasingly prioritize theoretical content over practical skills, resulting in a mismatch between job market needs and available talent.

"Early Retirement and Fingerprint Systems -- Debates surround early retirement policies and strict biometric attendance systems. While some advocate for reduced wages and stricter controls, others emphasize enhancing productivity, revising salary scales and hiring qualified professionals.

"Need for a Restructured Job Pyramid -- To address these imbalances, the labor market must embrace a restructured job pyramid that values both technical skills and academic qualifications' productivity-driven policies that ensure social justice and encourage private sector employment.

Support for commercial colleges and technical institutes to foster a workforce skilled in technology, artificial intelligence and other market-driven competencies.

"By integrating these measures, Kuwait can build a labor market that balances economic efficiency with equitable opportunities, paving the way for sustainable growth and national development."

Also:

"In the journey of life, from the moment your intellect begins to mature, you face constant challenges -- demanding, tiring and offering only glimpses of rest and joy," **Dr. Abdulhadi Al-Saleh** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"Didn't our Creator, the Almighty, say: 'We have certainly created man into hardship' (Quran, 90:4) and 'By time, indeed, mankind is in loss' (Quran, 103:1-2)?"

"Yet, this struggle becomes fulfilling, even delightful, bringing peace and inner contentment when you connect your life to divine will and surrender your affairs to Allah: 'Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience' (Quran, 103:3).

"However, translating this concept into tangible results requires effort, practice and training. You must discipline yourself, leading it toward excellence by overcoming personal desires, the temptations of Satan and his army.

"This also involves navigating the challenges posed by those around you -- your family, friends, colleagues, or even members of social media groups. It extends further to breaking free from the prison of ego to serve your brothers in faith and the broader humanity.

"For everything has its due and the due of knowledge is teaching and training others. As the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: 'It is an act of charity to learn knowledge and teach it to others'.

"However, imparting knowledge and training requires skill and the art of leadership to achieve noble goals effectively.

"Although I am not a professional

trainer, reading the book 'You Are the Trainer' inspired me. This book, crafted to guide trainers on how to engage with trainees in academic settings and professional workshops, revealed how much potential lies dormant within us, waiting for the right approach to bring it out.

"'You Are the Trainer' provides valuable insights into mastering the art of planning and delivering training based on scientific theories that ensure excellence in the field.

"I extend my gratitude to the author, Dr. Adnan Al-Hasan, a training expert and certified trainer in the GCC and the Arab Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions, as well as the Director of Internal Audit at Kuwait's Audit Bureau.

"The 47th Kuwait International Book Fair is ongoing and this book is a testament to the treasures it offers. Don't miss it!"

"If Kuwaiti citizenship had been sold at the famous 'Ali Pasha' café in Marjeh Square in the heart of Damascus, the number of people who fraudulently acquired Kuwaiti nationality through Syrian citizenship would not have reached such alarming figures," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"These numbers are staggering and huge. Entire families, numbering in the hundreds, with no connection to each other, either by blood or otherwise, are involved in this massive web of forgery.

"What stands out is that all of them share the same nationality. At the time when these large sums were being paid for the fraudulent citizenship, the average Kuwaiti citizen didn't have such amounts. Even expatriates, regardless of their work or position, could not afford them. So, the question remains - where did those large sums come from, which the forgers paid to the owner of the citizenship file in exchange for giving them the Kuwaiti nationality? This issue requires deep reflection.

"Another important point is that many of the forgers work in positions that the average Kuwaiti dreams of holding but cannot attain. So, was the trend in those past years to sell citizenship to a 'Syrian,' or did some forgers encourage others to falsely claim affiliation with families they had no connection to, in exchange for large sums of money? These sums were paid to vulnerable individuals who lacked loyalty, a sense of belonging, and any concern for the welfare of their homeland.



Al-Saeed

"It is also certain that there were officials within the Nationality Department who facilitated the forgery process, or allowed names to be added to official files, thereby enabling the issuance of a citizenship that appeared legitimate on the surface, but was fraudulent beneath.

"We are facing a serious crime that threatens the security of our country. The overwhelming evidence is the large number of forgeries involving a single nationality that has been uncovered so far. And it seems that there is more to be revealed, as investigations are ongoing. Soon, we will likely hear even more shocking developments. The situation is far bigger than we initially imagined, and the series of withdrawals is far from over.

"What is crucial is that the sheer number of individuals from this nationality is not a coincidence. Anyone who believes this is not a carefully planned operation is someone who should be quarantined.

"The matter is extremely dangerous, especially with the penetration of these forgers into key state sectors. They undoubtedly have a network, a code by which they operate, and they recognize each other. The proof lies in the fact that when one falls, many others follow.

"It is essential that we take this issue seriously, act quickly, and make strong decisions to dismantle this network as soon as possible. This is not just a matter of 'letting people make a living'; it is a national security threat that demands immediate attention."

— **Compiled by PFX Fernandes/ Mahmoud Attiyeh**



KUNA photo
Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah holds talks with the Algerian army Chief-of-Staff Lt Gen Saeed Chengriha.

Nat'l Guard Chief receives Algerian army head

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27, (KUNA): Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Wednesday the visiting Algerian army Chief-of-Staff Lt Gen Saeed Chengriha.

The KNG said in a statement that Chengriha congratulated Sheikh Mubarak Al-Humoud on attaining his position as chief of the National Guard. Undersecretary at KNG Lieut-General Eng. Hashem Al-Refaei was present at the meeting.

Ex-minister absolved in KD 4m fraud case

Lawyer jailed for 3 years

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Bassam Al-Ghuwainem, ruled that the lawsuit filed against a former minister is inadmissible after receiving his file, which included accusations of embezzling more than KD 4 million from a company in which the government holds a stake.

The court dismissed the case based on a previous ruling regarding the lawsuit.

Earlier, the Criminal Court's Grievances Department cancelled the decision of the Public Prosecution to dismiss the case, in which the former minister and a businessman were accused of harming public funds and illegally seizing more than KD 4 million from a holding company in which the State owns more than 25 percent of shares. The court ordered that both defendants be brought to trial.

The court also had asked the prosecution to refer the defendants for criminal trial; stating that one of the defendants, who served as vice chairman of the company's Board of Directors and in his capacity as a public sector employee assigned to protect the interests of the entity, collaborated with the other defendant (the former minister) to harm the company's interests. The court found that, by signing a new employment contract for the former minister as CEO of the company, the other defendant enabled him to secure additional financial and job benefits. This was in violation of the terms previously agreed upon by the company's Board of Directors.

The former minister, who was also chairman of the Board of Directors and former CEO of the holding company, was charged with illegally seizing more

than KD 4 million with the intent to personally benefit from it. This was done by using a document -- an employment contract dated March 1, 2014 -- that was approved and signed by the other defendant; hence, violating the Board of Directors' decision.

Lawyer gets 3 years: The Criminal Court sentenced a lawyer to three years in prison with hard labor for forgery, as he was found to have forged documents related to the Public Prosecution, with the intent of profiting from such action.

According to the case file, the prosecution filed charges against the lawyer for forging an official document; intending to use it in a manner that would make it appear legitimate, which ultimately led to his conviction.

In another case, the Court of Cassation scheduled a session for Jan 6, 2025 to rule on the case of the murder of Abdulaziz Al-Zaatari, who was killed by a member of the ruling family.

It is worth mentioning that both the Criminal and Appeal courts have handed down two death sentences for the accused in this case.

The crime occurred on the evening of April 10 in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate, where Al-Zaatari was shot and killed by an individual who fired 12 bullets at him in front of his house before fleeing to an unknown location. Investigations later revealed the identity of the accused.

Fire wrecks Wafra farm

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: Firefighting teams from the Al-Wafra and Al-Nuwaisseeb centers controlled a fire that broke out on a farm in the Wafra area, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The teams began battling the fire immediately upon arrival and were able to bring it under control without causing any injuries.

Kuwaiti duo in soup for cheating vehicle buyer

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: The Civil Court has ordered two Kuwaiti owners of a well-known car company to cancel a contract for the sale of a luxury German vehicle, and ordered the company to return the sum of KD 39,000 to the plaintiff as well as pay compensation of KD 500.

The lawsuit was filed by Lawyer Ali Al-Ali on behalf of his client, who had agreed to pay the company owners KD 39,000 for the import of cars from abroad. However, she eventually discovered that she had been deceived and defrauded.

After the Criminal Court convicted the defendants and sentenced them to prison, Lawyer Al-Ali filed a civil lawsuit seeking the return of the money, compensation for the crime, and the reimbursement of the financial losses incurred by his client.

The Civil Court ruled that the defendants must return the KD 39,000 and pay KD 500 in compensation for both financial and moral damages. Lawyer Al-Ali said, "While the court awarded compensation, we still believe that the material and moral damages suffered by my client exceed the amount granted. Therefore, we have appealed to the civil division of the Court of Appeal to increase the compensation amount."

B'deshi run over, loses life

By **Munaf Nayef**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: A Bangladeshi expatriate tragically lost his life after being run over by a vehicle on the Coastal Road in Mahboula. His body has been transferred to the Forensic Medicine Department for further examination.

According to security sources, when the Operations Room of the Ministry of Interior received information about the run-over accident, security personnel and paramedics were immediately dispatched to the location. Upon arrival, they confirmed that the victim, a Bangladeshi resident, had succumbed to his injuries.

The motorist involved in the accident has been detained, and a case has been opened to investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident.

KFF all geared up for Summit

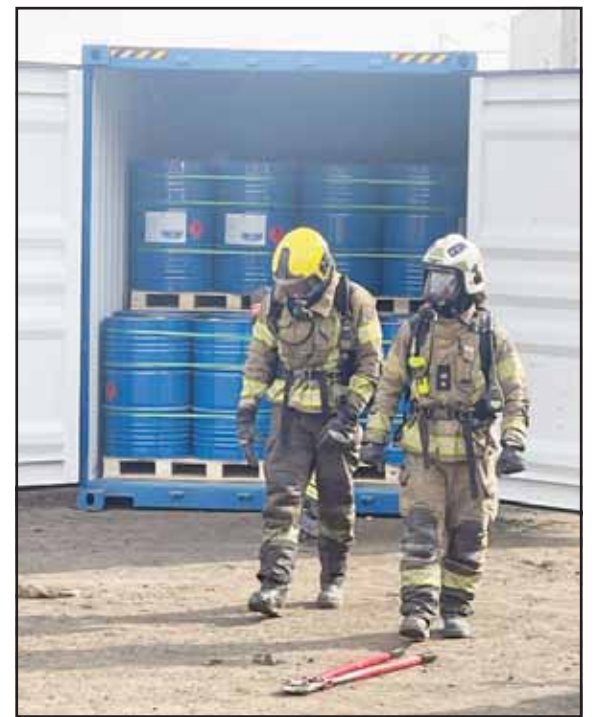
KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: The Kuwait Fire Force has announced the completion of all necessary preparations to ensure the safety and security of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit, scheduled to be held on Sunday, Dec 1, in Kuwait, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Brigadier Mohammad Ibrahim, Director of the Public Relations and Media Department, stated that the KFF has implemented comprehensive precautionary measures in coordination with relevant authorities across the country.

Key measures include the deployment of specialized fire brigade units at the accommodations of participating diplomatic delegations and media teams from GCC countries.

These units are equipped with advanced mechanisms and staffed with skilled personnel to provide rapid intervention throughout the summit.

The preparations underline Kuwait's commitment to ensuring a safe and smooth summit, reflecting the importance of hosting this significant regional event.



KFF photo
Fire-fighters at the site of ethanol leakage.

Ethanol leak at Shuwaikh Port draws KFF response

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: Firefighting teams from the Shuwaikh Industrial and Hazardous Materials Centers responded to an ethanol leak from a container at Shuwaikh Port Tuesday afternoon. The situation was swiftly managed, and the site was safely handed over to the relevant authorities. Fortunately, no injuries were reported.

Major General Talal Mohammad Al-Roumi, Chief of the General Fire Force, held a meeting Tuesday morning, with the directors of the firefighting and prevention sectors. During the session, he emphasized the importance of coordination and collaboration to enhance preventive inspection campaigns and conduct regular tours. The focus is on identifying and addressing violations in investment and commercial buildings, as well as industrial facilities across all governorates.

Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) participated as an observer in the reclassification of search and rescue teams in Qatar, under the auspices of the United Nations International Search and Rescue Advisory Group.

According to a press release issued by KFF, this participation is part of ongoing efforts aimed to enhance the capabilities of international search and rescue teams, and ensure the highest standards of efficiency, development, and professionalism in responding to natural disasters both locally and globally.

E-cuff to be available soon: Brig Al-Obaid

1,000 expats await deportation

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: Director of the General Department of Correctional Institutions Brigadier Fahd Al-Obaid revealed that there are currently 6,500 inmates in Kuwaiti prisons, including 1,000 expatriates in the deportation prison awaiting repatriation, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

He indicated that around 200 inmates will benefit from the electronic cuff project as soon as it is implemented.

Brigadier Al-Obaid explained that the General Department of Correctional Institutions is preparing for the electronic cuff program, which will be applied to select inmates in coordination with the Aftercare Department.

This initiative is part of the Minister of Justice's project to release certain inmates under specific terms and conditions.

The department is awaiting approval from the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, and Minister of Defense Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef to proceed with the implementation of the project.

Brigadier Al-Obaid said the number of beneficiaries of the electronic cuff program

was previously limited to those sentenced to three years or less, based on standards set by the Public Prosecution. However, this eligibility will now expand to include inmates with sentences of up to five years, covering both criminal and misdemeanor cases.

He indicated that individuals convicted of drug-related offenses will not be eligible for the electronic cuff.

Brigadier Al-Obaid said it is anticipated that between 150 and 200 inmates will benefit from the expanded program once the law is published in the official gazette, with the implementation set to begin a month after its publication.

He explained that the General Department of Correctional Institutions is currently preparing the files of those who qualify for the Amiri pardon, with plans to submit their names to the relevant committee. While there are approximately 6,500 inmates, only around 3,000 are expected to meet the conditions for pardon. The Amiri Pardon Committee will review each file individually, and reject those who do not meet the required criteria.

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LOCAL

Sabah Al-Ahmad City residents call for safe, stable living environment

Unresolved problems need gov't intervention: Al-Asimi

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: Sabah Al-Ahmad City Residents Committee Chairman Turki Al-Asimi has appealed to the concerned government officials to expedite solutions to the city's problems, which have become a source of concern for approximately 250,000 residents in the central, eastern and southern parts of the city.

In an interview with the newspaper, Al-Asimi acknowledged the significant government efforts that were made to establish the city between 2009 and 2020; with the aim of providing suitable housing for citizens. However, he emphasized that despite these efforts, there are still unresolved problems that require government intervention to ensure a safe and stable living environment. "Residents are now grappling with issues related to roads, flooding, sanitation, cleanliness, education, health-care and other challenges," he pointed out.

One of the most pressing problems, according to Al-Asimi, is the lack of proper drainage for rainwater. In the event of heavy rainfall, as it occurred during the 2018 floods; water accumulates in swamps and ponds both inside and around the city, including in front of residents' homes and government buildings. This stagnant water poses a pub-

lic health risk, attracting harmful insects and decomposing animals, which can lead to serious diseases, he warned.

Sewage

Al-Asimi praised Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan for connecting the sewage system to the Umm Al-Hayman station in February last year, which helped avert the threat of sewage contamination in the city. Nevertheless, he urged the minister to instruct the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) to expedite the implementation of a rainwater drainage system that will channel excess water from the city to the sea, permanently preventing the accumulation of water in the city.



Dr. Al-Mashaan

He explained that every residential city should have two separate drainage systems -- one for sewage and one for rainwater. Unfortunately, this has not been implemented; hence, the need for the support and assistance of the minister, especially since the drainage project was originally scheduled for completion six years ago, following the 2018 floods. He stressed the need for this infrastructure to avoid another disaster similar to that of the 2018 flooding.

He also highlighted another issue with the rainwater drainage system in nearby areas, such as Wafra and Khairan, which passes through Sabah Al-Ahmad City's borders. He disclosed this system is clogged with sand; hindering its ability to direct rainwater away

from the roads, so it needs immediate maintenance before the next rainy season.

"Another significant concern is the lack of road access to the city. Currently, there is only one main entrance, largely due to budget constraints, as reported by the Public Works Department. We are in dire need of alternative routes to reduce travel time between the city and the capital, especially for students and workers who face daily commuting challenges. Improved access will also help reduce traffic congestion and the risk of accidents caused by sand accumulation on the roads," he added.

He said "the population in new housing projects like Sabah Al-Ahmad, Wafra, Khairan and South Sabah Al-Ahmad, as well as the upcoming vertical housing in Sabah Al-Ahmad for 1,110 families, is growing rapidly. It is better to establish the seventh governorate to manage these areas, which should include the necessary facilities such as a security directorate, educational and health districts."

Autonomy

He also proposed that these new cities should be given greater autonomy, with their own police stations, schools and clinics, which will be under their respective directorates. "Currently, these cities are annexed to the Ahmadi Governorate, which is already burdened with the needs of its own residents. This situation is unfair and places undue pressure on the governorate's resources," he asserted.

Additionally, he called for the establishment of branches of Kuwait University and applied institutes in Sabah Al-Ahmad City to serve the growing population in southern cities. He stated that it is unreasonable for students to travel long distances every day to attend classes in the capital, and that providing educational facilities within the city will

ease this burden.

He expressed optimism about the efforts of Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad, who has demonstrated determination in addressing the challenges that citizens across the governorate are facing, including those residing in Sabah Al-Ahmad City. He pledged support for the governor's efforts, ensuring that all necessary services are provided for the citizens to enjoy a better quality of life under the wise political leadership.

Meanwhile, Al-Asimi urged Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah to appoint or elect independent boards of directors for each of the five large cooperative societies in the governorate. This, he argued, will foster competition and benefit citizens, as it is illogical for one board to manage five large cooperative societies with multiple branches.

Furthermore, Al-Asimi pointed out that the municipal departments in the city, which consists of six large areas, lack equipment and resources to clean the streets effectively. "This is evident in the presence of dry grass in the middle of roads and sidewalks; serving as a breeding ground for snakes, scorpions and other dangerous reptiles," he stressed.

Finally, he underscored the need to expedite the establishment of a medical city in Sabah Al-Ahmad. "If the process is left to follow the typical bureaucratic timeline, the project could take up to 10 years to complete," he warned.

The medical city is currently in the design tender phase, which is expected to last for three years, followed by four to five years for implementation; so Al-Asimi called for an acceleration of the tendering procedures to ensure the project is completed sooner.



KUNA photo
Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah with Sheikh Abdullah Al Hamed during the meeting.

Kuwait takes part in Global Media Congress

GCC media leaders discuss future of technology, AI in regional media

ABU DHABI, Nov 27, (KUNA): Director General of the GCC Joint Program Productions Institution Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah affirmed on Sunday the importance of keeping up to date with the latest developments in media and its future in the region.

The institution said in a statement that this came in a meeting between Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah and Chairman of the National Media Office Sheikh Abdullah Al Hamed, while participating in the Global Media Congress (GMC), hosted by Abu Dhabi, where they discussed joint cooperation and recommendations to enhance Gulf performance and efficiency.

The statement quoted Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah as stressing the importance of the GMC in reviewing the latest media developments in different fields, especially in technology, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity.

He stated that the congress conference discussed opportunities and challenges in the media field, and also brought together a distinguished group of experts, specialists, and media leaders from local, regional, and international spheres.

The third edition of the Global Media Congress 2024 (GMC) kicked off Tuesday, with an international participation including Kuwait, held under the patronage of the UAE Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister, and Chairman of the Presidential Court His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The event brings together media leaders, experts, and innovators from around the world to explore the latest trends and opportunities in the industry.

The congress aims to enhance international cooperation in the media sector, share global best practices, and establish strategic partnerships to drive its development.



KUNA photo
FM Al-Yahya receives a copy of the credentials of the Ambassador of El Salvador to the country.

FM receives credentials of new Cuban & El Salvadoran envoys

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received a copy of the credentials of Cuba's Ambassador to Kuwait Perez Torres at the Ministry on Tuesday.

Al-Yahya also received a copy of El Sal-

vador's Ambassador to Kuwait Juan Carlos credentials at the Ministry.

During the separate receptions, the minister wished the new ambassadors success in their duties and further development and prosperity.

'Kuwait Wants Your Safety'

Lebanese Embassy announces donor campaign; thanks Kuwait for support

By Paulo Francisco X. Fernandes

Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: The Charge d'Affaires of the Lebanese Embassy in Kuwait, Ahmad Arafa, announced the launch of a donation campaign for medicines and supplies for children and women under the slogan 'Kuwait Wants Your Safety'.

Talking to the local media, he explained that this slogan aligns with Kuwait's long-standing support for Lebanon, which has been demonstrated through various regional and international platforms, as well as through humanitarian airlifts that brought tons of food and supplies to Lebanon. It also reflects the deep historical relationship between the two peoples.

Arafa expressed his gratitude to the Kuwaiti authorities for facilitating the necessary permits for the embassy to launch the in-kind donation campaign, which will take place from Dec 6 to 8, 2024, from 10 am to 7 pm at the embassy's premises in the Diplomatic Area, Dahiya.

Distribute

The embassy will collect and later transfer these materials to the Lebanese government's emergency committee, which will distribute them to hospitals, health centers and the most affected groups due to the Israeli aggression. All details about the campaign can be found on the embassy's official website: www.embassykw.gov.lb, he said.

Arafa emphasized that the permission does not allow monetary donations and the donation of medical supplies and medications subsidized by the Ministry of Health in Kuwait is not permitted. Verification of this will take place during the donation period (December 6-8).

He also noted that those wishing to contribute can do so by purchasing from designated Kuwaiti companies through their online platforms, which will deliver the materials directly to the embassy during the

donation period. For more details, the embassy's website also provides contact information.

Regarding the logistics of transporting the donations to Lebanon, Arafa mentioned that alternative options are being considered, with arrangements already in place with Middle East Airlines to ensure the fastest possible delivery of medicines.

He explained that the Lebanese community in Kuwait, particularly the Lebanese Women's Council and the Lebanese Business Council, are key partners in this effort, with many Kuwaiti and Lebanese citizens, as well as other residents, offering their voluntary help.

Arafa said he is optimistic about the success of the campaign, given the active and engaged Lebanese community in Kuwait and the emotional ties many Kuwaitis have with Lebanon.

Regarding the storage of the donations, he noted that the embassy's logistical capacity is limited, so a selection of essential medicines was made in collaboration with specialists, focusing on items that do not require special storage conditions.

Medicines

On the role of Kuwaiti charitable organizations, Arafa acknowledged that while the embassy has not directly contacted them, Kuwaiti charities have launched their own initiatives.

He highlighted that the embassy's campaign specifically targets medicines and supplies for children and women, while Kuwaiti charities, with their experience and resources, are capable of addressing broader needs.

Concerning Lebanese families in Kuwait affected by the events in Lebanon, Arafa clarified that the embassy works through official channels defined by the Lebanese government, which has formed a government emergency committee to handle aid distribution and ensure transparency.

When asked about Lebanon's response to the recent Israeli aggression, Arafa mentioned that since 2006, there have been over 33,000 Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty, all of which have been documented and reported to the UN and the UN Security Council.

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Promoting and strengthening historical relations between two friendly countries

White Palace hosts Lord Mayor of London on the occasion of his visit to Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: The White Palace hosted the Lord Mayor of London, Mr. Alastair King, accompanied by high level delegation on the occasion of his visit to the state of Kuwait, with the attendance of the British Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Her Excellency Belinda Lewis. Lord Mayor and his accompanying delegation were received by Sheikh Dr. Suad Al-Sabah and Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

Lord Alastair King valued the long history of bilateral relations between the two friendly countries, praising its strength, especially in the cultural and educational aspects. He thanked Sheikh Mubarak for his great efforts and distinguished support of cultural and educational causes that contributed to enriching and supporting relations between Kuwait and Britain. Lord Mayor further praised Sheikh Mubarak for his sponsorship on the occasion of the renewal of the scholarship program provided by (Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Foundation in cooperation with the Mansion House Scholarship Scheme). The scholarship program established in 2019, providing a scholarship annually to outstanding Kuwaiti and Arab male and female students to complete and pursue their postgraduate studies at prestigious British universities in various specializations. In addition, Lord Mayor thanked Sheikh Mubarak for sponsoring an annual ceremony for the book prize awarded for the best books published in the English language on Middle Eastern studies under the auspices of the "Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Foundation."

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Abdullah welcomed the Lord Mayor and his accompanying delegation to their visit to the State of Kuwait, noting that the annual visit is an affirmation of the strength of relations between the two friendly countries in various fields, which extend for more than 125 years, stressing that there are more opportunities to strengthen and develop further economic, financial and cultural relations and education, and that the government and private sectors in Kuwait are ready to work to support the development of these relations in cooperation with the financial services sector in London.



A souvenir being exchanged.

At the end of the ceremony, souvenirs were exchanged.



The Lord Mayor of London Alastair King, British Ambassador Belinda Lewis and Sheikh Mubarak in a group photo.

'I leave Kuwait with cherished memories'

South African Envoy Dr Genge concludes his tenure in Kuwait

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: The Ambassador of South Africa to Kuwait, HE Dr. Manelisi Genge, on the occasion of concluding his successful and fruitful diplomatic mission in Kuwait said, "It is with immense gratitude that I stand before you tonight. First, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as well as the Government of Kuwait and its people, for the warm hospitality extended to me throughout my tenure.



Dr Genge

"I am deeply grateful," he said, "to my friend, Amer Huneidi, and his spouse, for their generosity in hosting this farewell reception and for their continued support.

"To all my colleagues, fellow ambassadors, and distinguished guests, thank you for your unwavering support during my time in Kuwait.

"I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Government of Kuwait, particularly the African Affairs, Legal Affairs, and Human Rights Affairs Departments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for their collaboration and assistance.

"I also want to acknowledge the support we have received from the business community, especially in the tourism sector, which has greatly contributed to strengthening South Africa-Kuwait relations. The growth in trade and tourism between our countries has been truly remarkable, with more Ku-

waiti visitors to South Africa this year and greater importation of South African products to support Kuwait's food security objectives.

"I extend my sincere appreciation to the media fraternity for promoting the South African brand in Kuwait and enhancing our diplomatic efforts.

"During my tenure," he added, "I had the honor of contributing to the establishment of a solid legal framework for South Africa-Kuwait diplomatic relations, particularly through the signing of the Joint Commission for Cooperation (JCC) Agreement and the amendment of the Double Taxation Agreement.

"We also negotiated several Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) that are now ready for signing. The 2021 visit by the South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation further strengthened our bilateral relations.

"I am immensely proud of the achievements we have made together, and I owe a great deal to the dedicated staff of the South African Embassy, without whom these milestones would not have been possible. As I prepare to depart, I feel wiser for having worked with all of you - my esteemed colleagues, friends, and the wonderful people of Kuwait.

"Your continued support for the embassy and my successor will be invaluable, and I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

"I leave Kuwait with cherished memories of a beautiful country and its equally warm and friendly people. Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to staying connected," the South African envoy said.

Prominent guests of the evening included HE Dr. Zubaydullo Zubaydzoda, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan, and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps; HE Dr. El-Anrif Said Hassane, Ambassador of the United Republic of Comoros, and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps, Ambassadors, Heads of Missions, and Chargés d'Affaires accredited to the State of Kuwait.

the visit he made to Qatar on Tuesday to head Kuwait's delegation to the 21st meeting of the GCC Defense Ministers.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, said the minister, informed the GCC meeting on Kuwait's eagerness to bolster Gulf defense cooperation during the challenges facing the region, commending at the same time the level of collaboration, which to security and stability of Gulf states.

Minister Al-Maousherji indicated that the cabinet agreed on amending law 67/1976 regarding traffic law violations and fines.

The meeting approved amendments, which increased fines and penalties to those violating traffic regulations including crossing red traffic lights, reckless driving, illegal racing on public roads, exceeding speed limits, and driving wrong side of roads.

A draft law of the amendment would be sent to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for approval.

The minister indicated that Minister Noura Al-Fassam informed the Cabinet regarding the monthly report of the national committee to counter money laundering and financing of terror, which included detailed plans for the committee's meetings in the 2024-25 and 2025-26 fiscal years. Minister Al-Fassam also informed the meeting on the committee's report on amending law 106/2013 and its statute.

The Cabinet approved the minutes of the supreme committee looking into Kuwaiti citizenship, which had therein a number of cases of withdrawing citizenship according to law 15/1959 of the Kuwaiti citizenship and its amendments.

Kuwait gov't

Continued from Page 1

He affirmed that the cabinet expressed approval of joining the organization as a founding member.

Back to the 45th GCC Summit, he indicated that the Cabinet was briefed about Kuwait official delegation to the grand event, which would include:

1- His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

2- First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

3- Minister of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

4- Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sher-eeda Al-Maousherji.

5- Minister of Information and Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.

6- Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya.

7- Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan.

8- Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Askar

9- Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economy and Investment Noura Al-Fassam

10- Minister of Oil Tareq Al-Roumi.

The delegation also includes a number of senior officials from the Amiri and Crown Prince Diwans, in addition to Foreign Ministry.

Meanwhile, Minister Al-Maousherji indicated that Sheikh Fahad Al-Yusef informed the meeting on the results of

MoE sets Feb 1 deadline to submit employee performance evaluations

'Delay could result in loss of promotion opportunities'

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: The Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Affairs at the Ministry of Education Matrouk Al-Mutairi has set February 1 as the deadline for the submission of employee performance evaluations for the specified years, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a letter addressed to Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education Affairs Mansour Al-

Dhafiri, Al-Mutairi highlighted the administrative sector's keenness to ensure employees' rights are protected.

He urged all work centers to submit the evaluation reports on time, stressing that any delay in recording the performance evaluations could result in the loss of promotion opportunities for employees through selection.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education has requested the Ministry of Finance to increase the percentage of job grades allocated for promotion by selection in the general, technical, and support job categories, from 10

percent to 30 percent.

According to sources from the educational sector, this request is driven by the large number of employees, which currently totals approximately 143,000 male and female employees.

They said, "Despite many employees meeting the necessary requirements, the number of individuals included in promotions each year does not exceed 14,000.

The Ministry of Education is one of the government's largest employers, and therefore, the percentage allocated for promotions should be increased accordingly."

However, the Ministry of Finance

rejected the Ministry of Education's request to increase the percentage of job grades allocated for promotion by selection, citing concerns over the state's budget deficit.

In a letter addressed to the Chair of the Civil Service Commission Dr. Issam Al-Rubaian, Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance Saad Al-Alaati explained that raising the promotion percentage would place additional financial burdens on the state's general treasury. Such a decision could set a precedent, leading other government agencies to request similar increases in their promotion allocations.

ABK announces Fahad Alaradi as Alfouz monthly draw winner

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to announce Fahad Hussain Alaradi as the winner of the Alfouz KD 20,000 monthly draw on Monday, 25 November, 2024. The draw took place in the presence of a Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative, ensuring transparency.

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

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



Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait flier

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

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account or increase their balance to participate in the upcoming draw, which is scheduled to take place on Monday, 9 December 2024.

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

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

At the end of the meeting, the Cabinet expressed sorrow over the death of firefighter Warrant Officer Abdullah Al-Farsi while on duty, wishing solace to the family members of the deceased.

No automatic

Continued from Page 1

forges and duplication. For instance, discrepancies in fingerprints uncovered cases of dual identities and forged citizenship.

Widespread Forgery Cases — A single individual was found to have facilitated citizenship for 132 people, with 56 of them fraudulently employed, costing the state over KD 400,000 annually.

One woman obtained citizenship under two separate articles using dual identities, allowing her to access additional social welfare benefits.

Statistics and Future Measures — Colonel Turki Al-Sabah, Assistant Director of the Nationality Department, disclosed that 4,447 individuals have had their citizenship withdrawn or revoked as of now, with investigations ongoing and numbers expected to rise.

Amendments to the Nationality Law have addressed previous loopholes, including suspending the automatic naturalization of Kuwaiti spouses.

Authorities stressed that reviewing nationality files is a meticulous, multi-stage process requiring extensive research and verification.

Public cooperation and the strengthening of department capabilities have been crucial in intensifying these efforts. The government remains committed to addressing all cases of forgery to safeguard Kuwait's national identity and legal integrity.

Meanwhile, Colonel Turki Mishal Al-Sabah, Assistant Director of the Nationality Department at the Ministry of Interior, has stated that foreign wives of Kuwaiti citizens are no longer automatically naturalized and any new loopholes identified in the future will be addressed, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He explained the criteria for loss or withdrawal of nationality applies to those who voluntarily acquire foreign citizenship; naturalized individuals who obtained it fraudulently, engaged in acts against public order or national interests, or were convicted of crimes compromising honor or integrity. This is in addition to dependents of these individuals may also face withdrawal.

He further detailed exclusions under Article 5, which includes natu-

ralization based on noble deeds, at the discretion of the HH the Amir; individuals born to Kuwaiti mothers; individuals registered in the 1965 census awaiting decrees for naturalization.

Colonel Al-Sabah also pointed to instances of fraud, such as divorced women remarrying their former spouses abroad to secure citizenship for their children and cases involving forged census data or illegal residency.

He stressed that negligence in registering a child's birth or obtaining their citizenship could lead to criminal investigations, child neglect charges and denial of the child's citizenship rights.

The Colonel underscored the importance of vigilance and compliance with nationality laws to uphold the integrity of citizenship records in Kuwait.

Palestinian envoy

Continued from Page 1

The ambassador described the decision as a sign that the world is increasingly aware of the fact that Israeli occupation of the Palestinian is the root cause of instability in the Middle East.

He explained that the "Threads of Steadfastness" exhibition is an annual event, and is now being held for the 60th time in the State of Kuwait. The exhibition aims to preserve Palestinian national identity and heritage, with Palestinian heritage being an essential component of the Palestinian identity.

Kuwait, with its large diplomatic community, plays a major role in spreading awareness about these issues, as informing the numerous foreign diplomatic missions in the country is vital to maintaining the Palestinian identity and heritage.

Ambassador Tahboub expressed his gratitude to the State of Kuwait, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, for granting the necessary licenses to hold the exhibition.

He highlighted that the proceeds from the exhibition will be directed towards humanitarian projects in Palestine.

Ambassador Tahboub also praised Kuwait's unwavering support for Palestine and the Palestinian people, acknowledging the country as one of the biggest supporters of the Palestinian cause.

He highlighted the huge participation of volunteers in the exhibition, not only from the Palestinian community but also from other groups.

He also highlighted the continuous support of the Women's Social and

Cultural Society, which generously provides its venue for the event.

The ambassador also acknowledged the strong presence of Kuwaiti people at the exhibition, which adds to its success each year.

Regarding the recent statement by the newly appointed National Security Advisor to President-elect Donald Trump regarding the need to de-escalate tensions in the Middle East, Ambassador Tahboub said, "There was a recent call between President Mahmoud Abbas and U.S. President-elect Donald Trump. While we are not here to preempt the actions of the next U.S. administration, we hope that it will recognize the importance of granting the Palestinian people the legitimacy they deserve to establish their independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Everyone knows that the key to both war and peace in the Middle East lies in the Palestinian issue. We hope that the incoming U.S. administration will take meaningful steps to resolve this longstanding conflict, and help in establishing a Palestinian state. This is the key to lasting security and peace in the region."

Emergency teams

Continued from Page 1

were within the capacity of the ministry's drainage network.

The ministry highlighted its ongoing collaboration with other government agencies to manage any challenges posed by rainwater. It is closely following up weather forecasts from the Meteorological Department to ensure readiness for any weather conditions.

The Ministry of Public Works has called on the public to report any water accumulation or related issues by contacting the hotline No. 150 or via WhatsApp.

In a related development, the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) is on high alert at all fire stations and is ready to respond to any emergencies that are reported to the operations room related to the rainfall.

Also, security personnel, patrol teams, and rescue teams have been deployed to help manage traffic and ensure public safety.

In addition, the Kuwait Army also announced that the Ghaith Task Force is on standby and fully prepared to provide support, assistance, and logistical and humanitarian services in response to the heavy rainfall and current weather conditions.

Meanwhile, Ahmed Al-Wahida, the spokesman for the Ministry of Educa-

tion, confirmed in a press statement that the ministry is closely monitoring weather conditions in coordination with the Civil Aviation Meteorology Department, Report Al-Seyassah daily.

Kuwait police

Continued from Page 1

trafficking ring with the arrest of two Kuwaiti citizens found in possession of 500,000 Captagon pills, valued at an estimated street value of half a million dinars. The suspects were referred, along with the seized drugs, to the relevant authorities for further legal action.

The operation was carried out based on the directives of Assistant Undersecretary for Criminal Security Affairs Major General Hamed Al-Dawwas, and under the leadership of the Director of DCGD Brigadier General Mohammed Qabazard.

The Ministry of Interior emphasized that this operation was part of its continuous efforts to combat drug trafficking and bolster public safety, with the Criminal Security Sector, through DCGD, playing a major role in curbing drug-related offenses.

It stated that this operation was launched after a thorough and strategic investigation as part of the ministry's ongoing efforts to combat the drug trade and eliminate its sources.

The ministry reiterated its unwavering commitment to confront anyone who threatens the security of the country or attempts to traffic harmful substances.

It urged the public to cooperate with security agencies and report any suspicious activities by calling the emergency hotline No. 112 or DCGD at 1884141.

In other news, Lieutenant Colonel Mohammed Manawer Al-Aridhi from the Drug Control General Directorate (DCGD) says the drug "GBL", also known as GHB, is one of the most dangerous narcotics recently detected among users.

He explained that consuming just 2.5 milliliters of this substance can lead to immediate death. It is often mixed with drinks and consumed unknowingly. The effects of GHB include loss of consciousness and complete numbness. Even a single dose can lead to addiction, and its impact is severe and criminalized both locally and internationally. Anyone found using or possessing this substance faces legal consequences under the Psychotropic Substances Law.

'We're doing everything that we can to effect orderly transition'

Trump signs agreement with Biden's White House to begin formal transition handoff

WASHINGTON, Nov 27, (AP): US President-elect Donald Trump has reached a required agreement with President Joe Biden's White House to allow his transition staff to coordinate with the existing federal workforce before taking office on Jan. 20.

The congressionally mandated agreement allows transition aides to work with federal agencies and access non-public information and gives a green light to government workers to talk to the transition team.

But Trump has declined to sign a separate agreement with the General Services Administration that would have given his team access to secure government offices and email accounts, in part because it would require that the president-elect limit contributions to \$5,000 and reveal who is donating to his transition effort.

The White House agreement was supposed to have been signed by Oct 1, according to the Presidential Transition Act, and the Biden White House had issued both public and private appeals for Trump's team to sign on.

The agreement is a critical step in ensuring an orderly transfer of power at noon on Inauguration Day, and lays the groundwork for the White House and government agencies to begin to share

details on ongoing programs, operations and threats. It limits the risk that the Trump team could find itself taking control of the massive federal government without briefings and documents from the outgoing administration.

As part of the agreement with the White House, Trump's team will have to publicly disclose its ethics plan for the transition operation and make a commitment to uphold it, the White House said. Transition aides must sign statements that they have no financial positions that could pose a conflict of interest before they receive access to non-public federal information.

Biden himself raised the agreement with Trump when they met in the Oval Office on Nov 13, according to the White House, and Trump indicated that his team was working to get it signed.

Trump chief of staff-designate Susie Wiles met with Biden's chief of staff Jeff Zients at the White House on Nov 19 and other senior officials in the Oval Office to discuss remaining holdups, while lawyers for the two sides have spoken more than a half-dozen times in recent days to finalize the agreement.

"Like President Biden said to the American people from the Rose Garden and directly to President-elect Trump, he is committed to an orderly



US President Joe Biden meets with President-elect Donald Trump in the Oval Office of the White House on Nov 13 in Washington. (AP)

transition," said White House spokesperson Saloni Sharma. "President-elect Trump and his team will be in seat on January 20 at 12 pm - and they will immediately be responsible for a range of domestic and global challenges, foreseen and unforeseen. A smooth transition is critical to the safety and security of the American people who

are counting on their leaders to be responsible and prepared."

Without the signed agreement, Biden administration officials were restricted in what they could share with the incoming team. Trump national security adviser-designate Rep. Mike Waltz met recently with Biden national security adviser Jake Sullivan, but

the outgoing team was limited in what it could discuss.

"We are doing everything that we can to effect a professional and an orderly transition," White House national security spokesman John Kirby told reporters on Monday. "And we continue to urge the incoming team to take the steps that are necessary to be able to facilitate that on their end as well."

"This engagement allows our intended Cabinet nominees to begin critical preparations, including the deployment of landing teams to every department and agency, and complete the orderly transition of power," said Wiles in a statement.

The Trump transition team says it would disclose its donors to the public and would not take foreign donations.

A separate agreement with the Department of Justice to coordinate background checks for vetting and security clearances is still being actively worked on and could be signed quickly now that the White House agreement is signed. The agency has teams of investigators standing by to process clearances for Trump aides and advisers once that document is signed.

That would clear the way for transition aides and future administration appointees and nominees to begin ac-

cessing classified information before Trump takes office. Some Trump aides may hold active clearances from his first term in office or other government roles, but others will need new clearances to access classified data.

Trump's team on Friday formally told the GSA that they would not utilize the government office space blocks from the White House reserved for their use, or government email accounts, phones and computers during the transition.

The White House said it does not agree with Trump's decision to forgo support from the GSA, but is working on alternate ways to get Trump appointees the information they need without jeopardizing national security. Federal agencies are receiving guidance on Tuesday on how to share sensitive information with the Trump team without jeopardizing national security or non-public information.

For instance, agencies may require in-person meetings and document reviews since the Trump team has declined to shift to using secure phones and computers. For unclassified information, agencies may ask Trump transition staff to attest that they are taking basic safeguards, like using two-factor authentication on their accounts.

Georgia's governing party picks ex-soccer player as its presidential candidate

TBILISI, Georgia, Nov 27, (AP): The governing party in Georgia on Wednesday picked a former soccer player as its candidate for president following a disputed victory in last month's parliamentary election that has sparked protests and led to an opposition boycott of parliament.

The Georgian Dream party nominated Mikheil Kavelashvili, a 53-year-old former national team and Premier League player, for the mostly ceremonial presidential post. He is all but certain to win the Dec. 14 vote by the electoral college controlled by the ruling party.

Georgian Dream retained control of the parliament in the Oct. 26 election that was widely seen as a referendum on the country's effort to join the European Union. The opposition said the vote was rigged under the influence of Russia seeking to keep Georgia in its orbit, and declared a boycott of parliament.

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

President Salome Zourabichvili, who has rejected the official results and refused to recognize the parliament's



Mikheil Kavelashvili, who was nominated by the governing Georgian Dream party as a candidate for president of Georgia attends a news conference in Tbilisi, Georgia, on Feb 14, 2019. (AP)

legitimacy, on Monday snubbed the parliament's opening session along with opposition parties.

Zourabichvili, whose six-year term expires next month, was elected by popular vote, but Georgia has approved constitutional changes that abolished the direct election of the president and replaced it with a vote by a 300-seat electoral college consisting of members of parliament, municipal

councils and regional legislatures.

Georgian Dream has a majority in the college, making the approval of Kavelashvili's candidacy all but certain.

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 and LGBTQ+ rights.

The EU suspended Georgia's membership application process indefinitely in June after parliament passed a law requiring organizations that receive more than 20% of their funding from abroad to register as "pursuing the interest of a foreign power," similar to a Russian law used to discredit organizations critical of the government. Kavelashvili was one of the bill's authors.

On Wednesday, Ivanishvili presented Kavelashvili's candidacy to parliament, describing him as "one of the most prominent members of our political team" and praising his "significant contribution to protecting Georgia's national interests and strengthening the country's sovereignty."

Surveillance tech advances by Biden could aid in Trump's promised crackdown on immigration

WASHINGTON, Nov 27, (AP): President-elect Donald Trump will return to power next year with a raft of technological tools at his disposal that would help deliver his campaign promise of cracking down on immigration - among them, surveillance and artificial intelligence technology that the Biden administration already uses to help make crucial decisions in tracking, detaining and ultimately deporting immigrants lacking permanent legal status.

While immigration officials have used the tech for years, an October letter from the Department of Homeland Security obtained exclusively by The Associated Press details how those tools - some of them powered by AI - help make decisions over whether an immigrant should be detained or surveilled.

One algorithm, for example, ranks immigrants with a "Hurricane Score," ranging from 1-5, to assess whether someone will "abscond" from the agency's supervision.

The letter, sent by DHS Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer Eric Hysen to the immigrant rights group Just Futures Law, revealed that the score calculates the potential risk that an immigrant - with a pending case - will fail to check in with Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers. The algorithm relies on several factors, he said, including an immigrant's number of violations and length of time in the program, and whether the person has a travel document. Hysen wrote that ICE officers consider the score, among other information, when making decisions about an immigrant's case.

"The Hurricane Score does not



Border Patrol agents talk with migrants seeking asylum as they prepare them for transportation to be processed on June 5 near Dulzura, Calif. (AP)

make decisions on detention, deportation, or surveillance; instead, it is used to inform human decision-making," Hysen wrote.

Also included in the government's tool kit is a mobile app called SmartLINK that uses facial matching and can track an immigrant's specific location.

Nearly 200,000 people without legal status who are in removal proceedings are enrolled in the Alternatives to Detention program, under which certain immigrants can live in the U.S. while their immigration cases are pending.

In exchange, SmartLINK and GPS trackers used by ICE rigorously surveil them and their movements. The phone application draws on facial matching technology and geolocation data, which has been used before to find and arrest those using the app.

Just Futures Law wrote to Hysen earlier this year, questioning the fairness of using an algorithm to assess whether someone is a flight risk and raising concerns over how much data SmartLINK collects. Such AI systems, which score or screen people, are used widely but remain largely unregulated even though some have been found to discriminate on race, gender or other protected traits.

DHS said in an email that it is committed to ensuring that its use of AI is transparent and safeguards privacy and civil rights while avoiding biases. The agency said it is working to implement the Biden administration's requirements on using AI, but Hysen said in his letter that security officials may waive those requirements for certain uses. Trump has publicly vowed to repeal Biden's AI policy when he returns to the White House in January.

Concerns over housing, immigration make for volatile campaign in Ireland's election

DUBLIN, Nov 27, (AP): From his poster, there's not much to distinguish Gerry Hinch from the slew of other independent candidates hoping discontented voters will propel them into Ireland's parliament in an election on Friday.

"We need change, and I'm your man," it says. On the streets of Dublin, some voters agree - despite the candidate's unusual CV.

Prosecutors say Gerry "the Monk" Hinch heads an international crime group involved in robbery and drug smuggling. He was acquitted last year of murdering a gangland rival. This month he was bailed in Spain's Canary Islands on money-laundering charges and allowed to return to Ireland to run for election.

"I'd love if he got in," said Derek Richardson, an unemployed Dubliner unimpressed by the big-party politicians. "There's plenty of other gangsters out there in suits."

Around the world in this record-breaking election year, voters have decided that something in their country is broken, and punished incumbent governments.

That sentiment also ripples through the campaign in Ireland, where rival center-right parties Fine Gael and Fianna Fail took turns running the



Tánaiste, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Minister for Defence, Micheál Martin, from left, and Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald and Taoiseach and Fine Gael leader Simon Harris speak during the final TV leaders' debate, at RTE studios in Donnybrook, Dublin on Nov 26 ahead of the General Election on Nov 29. (AP)

country for a century before forming a coalition administration in 2020. If some voters are turning on them, the anti-politician mood also is hitting left-of-center opposition party Sinn Féin, which not long ago appeared destined for power.

With voters set to fill all 174 seats

in the Dáil, the lower house of parliament, opinion polls suggest voters' support is split into five roughly even chunks - for Fine Gael, Fianna Fail, Sinn Féin, several smaller parties and an assortment of independents running the gamut from left-leaning to far right.

Restaurant worker Anne-Marie Kerry saw the appeal of independents - even Hinch, the alleged gangster. "They're all criminals anyway," she said.

The issue that comes up most on the campaign trail is housing. Apartments and houses are expensive - prices rose by 10% in the year to August - and there are not enough to go around. A housing commission set up by the government says Ireland has a "housing deficit" of up to 256,000 homes. Rents have soared, and many young teachers, nurses and other key workers can't afford a place of their own.

Eoin O'Malley, associate professor of political science at Dublin City University, said the cost of living squeeze means people in their 20s are "talking about emigration, even though there are plenty of jobs in Ireland."

"People are feeling that they can't settle down so they are going abroad to get their career going," he said. "So there's a fear among middle-class parents that 'My children will never come back again.'"

It's not just the young who are feeling the pinch. Carole York is 73 and has fought a five-year battle to avoid eviction from the rural home near Waterford, 100 miles (160 kilometers) south of Dublin, that she has turned into a sanctuary for rescued ponies. She says the landlord encouraged her and promised a long-term let, but then decided he wanted her out so he could sell the valuable property.

Fugitive wanted in US for bombings held in UK

LONDON, Nov 27, (AP): A suspected animal rights extremist wanted in the US for bombings in the San Francisco area was arrested in Britain after more than 20 years on the run from the law, officials said Tuesday.

Daniel Andreas San Diego, one of the FBI's most wanted fugitives, was arrested Monday in a rural area in northern Wales, the National Crime Agency said. He was ordered held in custody after appearing Tuesday in Westminster Magistrates' Court and faces extradition.

San Diego, 46, is charged in the US with planting two bombs that exploded about an hour apart in the early morning of Aug. 28, 2003, on the campus of a biotechnology company in Emeryville, California. He's also accused of setting off another bomb with nails strapped to it at a nutritional products company in Pleasanton, California, a month later.

The bombings didn't injure anyone, but authorities said the bomb at the biotechnology company was intended to harm first responders.



A photo of Daniel Andreas San Diego, top right, appears on a poster of the FBI's most wanted terrorists during a news conference announcing his addition to the most wanted terrorist list on April 21, 2009, at FBI Headquarters in Washington. (AP)



Rudy Giuliani speaks to reporters as he leaves the federal courthouse in New York on Nov 26. (AP)

Giuliani draws rebuke for outburst

In an angry outburst in a New York courtroom, Rudy Giuliani accused a judge Tuesday of making wrong assumptions about him as he tries to comply with an order requiring him to turn over most of his assets to two election poll workers who won a libel case against him.

US District Judge Lewis J. Liman responded by saying he's not going to let the former New York City mayor and onetime presidential

candidate blurt things out anymore in court unless he's a sworn witness.

The interruption to an otherwise routine pretrial hearing in Manhattan came as the judge questioned Giuliani's lawyer about why Giuliani has not yet provided the title to a car he has relinquished in his effort to satisfy a \$148 million defamation judgment won by two former Georgia election workers. (AP)



Supporters of the Albanian opposition take part in an anti-government protest in Tirana, Albania on Nov 26 over the arrests of their leader Sali Berisha and former President Ilir Meta in separate corruption cases, saying the charges are politically motivated. (AP)

Albanian opp'n supporters block capital's streets in anti-govt rally

Albanian opposition lawmakers and their supporters blocked the capital's main streets for hours Tuesday accusing the government of corruption and demanding it be replaced by a technocratic caretaker Cabinet until 2025 parliamentary elections.

Hundreds of activists blocked traffic at Tirana's main intersections accusing the Socialist Party of Prime

Minister Edi Rama of corruption, manipulating earlier elections and usurping the powers of the judiciary.

Led by lawmakers, opposition supporters - some coming from other cities - were involved in sporadic clashes with anti-riot police trying to clear the streets. Others sat down in the street or tried to push police officers away.

"Rama go away," was a call repeated by protesters in many places.

Hundreds of police officers were deployed to protect government buildings and keep streets clear for traffic and preserve order. They used water guns mounted on trucks to keep protesters away from City Hall and Wilson Square, and tear gas in at least in one case. (AP)

INTERNATIONAL

Philippine police file criminal complaints against VP Duterte and her security aides

MANILA, Philippines, Nov 27, (AP): Philippine police officials on Wednesday filed criminal complaints against Vice President Sara Duterte and her security staff for allegedly assaulting authorities and disobeying orders in a recent altercation in Congress.

The criminal complaints filed by the Quezon City police were separate from any legal action that may arise after she publicly threatened to have President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., his wife and the speaker of the House of Representatives assassinated if she were killed herself in an unspecified plot. She has not provided details of that plot.

A presidential adviser, Larry Gadon,

separately filed a Supreme Court petition on Wednesday to disbar the vice president as a lawyer, citing her assassination threats, which he said were "illegal, immoral and condemnable."

The Marcos administration's legal offensive against Duterte, her father and their allies is a critical juncture in a conflict that has seethed over the last two years between the two most powerful families in the Philippines.

The Department of Justice said it is also looking into potentially seditious remarks by Marcos's predecessor and the vice president's father, Rodrigo Duterte, who said in a news conference that the civilian government would

only listen if the military voices concerns about corruption and irregularities under the Marcos administration.

"There is a fractured governance. ... It is only the military who can correct it," the former president said Monday night. He said he was not urging the military to rise up against Marcos but only reaffirming the real situation in the Philippines.

Still, justice officials said an investigation into the former president's remarks will proceed.

The criminal complaints for assaulting, disobeying and grave coercion against police authorities were filed against the vice president and her security staff and other aides before state prosecutors, a police statement said. Such crimes are punishable by a jail term and a fine.

The complaints were set off by a chaotic squabble over the weekend in the House of Representatives, where the vice president's chief of staff, Zuleika Lopez, has been temporarily detained. Lopez has been accused by legislators of obstructing and not cooperating with a congressional inquiry into alleged misuse of confidential and intelligence funds by the offices of the vice president and the education secretary, which Sara Duterte held.

At one point, authorities were ordered to transfer Lopez to a women's prison outside Congress, causing her to become agitated. The vice president and her staff intervened to oppose the order and Lopez was eventually moved to a government hospital, where she remains confined.



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr listens during the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-US Summit in Vientiane, Laos on Oct 11. (AP)



Visitors enjoy in snow at the Gyeongbok Palace, one of South Korea's well-known landmarks, in Seoul, South Korea on Nov 27. (AP)

Biggest Nov snowstorm in half century hits Seoul, grounds flights

The biggest November snowstorm to hit South Korea's capital in more than a half century blanketed the capital on Wednesday, grounding hundreds of flights, disrupting commuter traffic and leaving at least two dead.

South Korea's weather agency said 20 to 26 centimeters (7.8 to

10 inches) of snow fell in northern areas of Seoul and nearby areas. The agency said it was the heaviest snowstorm Seoul has experienced in November in 52 years. A storm on Nov. 28, 1972, dumped 12 centimeters (4.7 inches).

South Korea's Yonhap news agency said one person died and

four others were injured in a five-vehicle accident in the eastern town of Hongcheon.

In the town of Yangju, a tent-type garage collapsed and killed a person who was removing snow, according to South Korea's Ministry of the Interior and Safety. (AP)

S.Korean leader meets Ukraine delegation, calls for response to North troops in Russia

SEOUL, South Korea, Nov 27, (AP): South Korea's president on Wednesday met a visiting Ukraine delegation and called for a joint response to the threat posed by North Korea's recent dispatch of more than 10,000 soldiers to support Russia's

war against Ukraine.

The North Korean troop deployment is threatening to expand the almost three-year war, with Ukraine and the US saying that some of the soldiers have already begun engaging in battle on the front lines. Seoul and Wash-

ington also worry that Russia might in return help North Korea build more advanced nuclear weapons targeting them. In late October, South Korea warned it could respond by supplying weapons to Ukraine.

During a meeting with the Ukrainian delegation led by Defense Minister Rustem Umerov, President Yoon Suk Yeol said he hopes that Seoul and Kiev will work out effective ways to cope with the security threat posed by the North Korean-Russian military cooperation including the North's troop dispatch, Yoon's office said in a statement.

The Ukrainian delegation later met separately with Yoon's national security adviser, Shin Wonsik, and Defense Minister Kim Yong Hyun. During the meetings, Umerov briefed the South Korean officials on the status of the Russia-Ukraine war and expressed hope that Kyiv and Seoul will strengthen cooperation, the statement said.

It said the two sides agreed to continue to share information on the North Korean troops in Russia and North Korean-Russian weapons and technology transfers while closely coordinating with the United States.



South Korean protesters stage a rally against their government's plans to supply weapons to Ukraine, in front of the Presidential Office in Seoul, South Korea on Nov 27. (AP)

Subcontinent

Pakistan ends lockdown: Authorities reopened roads linking Pakistan's capital with the rest of the country, ending a four-day lockdown, on Wednesday after using tear gas and firing into the air to disperse supporters of imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan who marched to Islamabad to demand his release from prison.

"All roads are being reopened, and the demonstrators have been dispersed," Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said. Khan's wife, Bushra Bibi, who was leading the protest, and other demonstrators fled in vehicles when police pushed back against the rallygoers following clashes in which at least seven people were killed.

The police operation came hours after thousands of Khan supporters, defying government warnings, broke through a barrier of shipping contain-

ers blocking off Islamabad and entered a high-security zone, where they clashed with security forces.

Tension has been high in Islamabad since Sunday when supporters of the former prime minister began a "long march" from the restive northwest to demand his release. Khan has been in a prison for over a year and faces more than 150 criminal cases that his party says are politically motivated.

Hundreds of demonstrators have been arrested since Sunday. Bibi and leaders of her husband's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party fled to Mansehra in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa prov-



Khan

ince, where the party still rules. (AP)

8 missing in Sri Lanka floods:

Eight people, including six children who were returning from school, have gone missing in Sri Lanka when the farm tractor they were traveling on was swept away by floods triggered by heavy rains, police said Wednesday.

Sri Lanka has experienced heavy downpours and strong winds over the past two days that have flooded homes, fields and roads and forced authorities to suspend train services in tea-growing mountain areas.

In the worst incident, a farm tractor carrying 11 school children was swept away Tuesday evening in the eastern region of the country, police said.

Five children were rescued while six children along with the driver and an adult are still missing in the incident near the town of Karaitivu. A search operation is underway, police said in a statement. (AP)



Malaysian former prime minister Najib Razak, (center), is escorted by prison officers on his arrival at the Kuala Lumpur High Court complex in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Oct 30. (AP)

Malaysian court drops one of graft cases against jailed former premier Najib Razak

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, Nov 27, (AP): A Malaysian court on Wednesday dropped charges against jailed former Prime Minister Najib Razak over criminal breach of trust linked to the multibillion-dollar looting of a state fund.

Najib had already been convicted in his first graft case tied to the 1Malaysia Development Berhad state fund, or 1MDB, scandal and began serving

time in 2022 after losing his final appeal in his first graft case.

But he faces other graft trials including Wednesday's case in which he was jointly charged with ex-treasury chief Irwan Serigar Abdullah with six counts of misappropriating 6.6 billion ringgit (\$1.5 billion) in public funds. The money was intended as 1MDB's settlement payment to Abu Dhabi's International Petroleum Investment

Company.

The Kuala Lumpur High Court discharged the pair after ruling that procedural delays and prosecutors' failure to hand over key documents were unfair to the defense, said Najib's lawyer, Muhammad Farhan.

A discharge doesn't mean an acquittal as prosecutors reserve the right to revive charges against them, he said.

ICC prosecutor requests arrest warrants for head of Myanmar's military regime

THE HAGUE, Nov 27, (AP): The International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor asked judges on Wednesday to issue an arrest warrant for the head of Myanmar's military regime for crimes committed against the country's Rohingya Muslim minority.

Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, who took power from elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi in a coup in 2021, is accused of crimes against humanity for the deportation and persecution of the Rohingya.

Nearly a million people were forced into neighboring Bangladesh to escape what has been called an ethnic cleansing campaign involving mass rapes, killings and the torching of homes.

From a refugee camp in Bangladesh, the court's top prosecutor, Karim Khan, said in a statement that he intends to request more warrants for Myanmar's leaders soon.

"In doing so, we will be demonstrating, together with all of our partners, that the Rohingya have not been forgotten. That they, like all people around the world, are entitled to the protection of the law," the British barrister said.

The allegations stem from a counterinsurgency campaign that Myanmar's military began in August 2017 in response to an insurgent attack. Hlaing, who heads the Myanmar Defense Services, is said to have directed the armed forces of Myanmar, known as the Tatmadaw, as well as national po-



Exterior view of the International Criminal Court, or ICC, in The Hague, Netherlands, on April 30. (AP)

lice to attack Rohingya civilians.

Khan was in Bangladesh where he met with members of the displaced Rohingya population.

Myanmar does not belong to the global court, but Bangladesh does. In 2018 judges at the court ruled the prosecutor could look into crimes which were "completed" on the territory of a member state, such as forcible deportation.

In 2019, Khan's predecessor, Fatou Bensouda, formally requested to open an investigation into the situation and judges gave the green light for investi-

gations into "any crime, including any future crime" committed at least partly in Bangladesh or another court member state and linked to the Rohingya.

The move paved the way for Khan to pursue crimes beyond forcing men, women and children over the border and into refugee camps.

The request comes days after a powerful rebel group seized a key trading town in northeastern Myanmar on the Chinese border, taking control of a lucrative rare earth mining hub in another setback for the military-led government.



Namibians inside a polling station vote in a presidential election in Windhoek, Namibia on Nov 27. (AP)

Election upsets have shaken region

Namibia votes and could've 1st female prez

WINDHOEK, Namibia, Nov 27, (AP): A 72-year-old woman who joined Namibia's independence movement in the 1970s is a strong contender to become its first female leader as the country votes Wednesday in a presidential election.

Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah is the current vice president and the ruling SWAPO party's candidate for president. She's already in the lead after the results of special early voting among citizens overseas and the armed forces were announced earlier this month.

But SWAPO, which has governed the southern African country and held the presidency for 34 years since independence from apartheid South Africa in 1990, faces growing frustration caused by high unemployment and economic hardship, especially among young people.

That is a common theme that has led to momentous election upsets in other countries in the region this year. Voters elsewhere in southern Africa have rejected parties that liberated their na-

tions from colonial or white minority rule in favor of era-ending change to address new problems.

In neighboring South Africa, the African National Congress that ruled for three decades since the end of the racist system of apartheid lost its majority in a landmark election result in June. Botswana's ruling party lost in a landslide last month after 58 years in power since independence from Britain, and Mauritius delivered a surprising heavy defeat for its incumbent party this month.

Mozambique's long-ruling Frelimo party was declared the winner of an election in October, prompting claims of vote rigging and sparking ongoing violent protests against the party.

About 1.4 million people - approximately half the Namibian population - are registered to vote to decide the president and the makeup of Parliament for a five-year term. The country on the southwestern coast of Africa is a former German colony that came under South African control after World War I and its Black majority was later subjected to

some of South Africa's apartheid policies. SWAPO was at the forefront of the battle for independence.

Nandi-Ndaitwah voted at an elementary school in the capital, Windhoek. She told reporters that one of her party's key focuses to fight poverty was attracting more foreign investment to a country with diamond and uranium resources, and untapped oil and gas off its coast that is being explored by international energy companies.

"There should be a balance to make sure that the Namibian people, who are the owners of these resources, benefit from them," she said.

Fourteen other candidates are also running for president, including Panduleni Itula, a former dentist who was SWAPO's closest challenger four years ago when he ran as an independent. He is representing the Independent Patriots for Change party this year. A runoff will be held if a candidate doesn't win more than 50% of the votes, which has never happened before in Namibia.

| Country | Index | Change | Closing pts |
|-------------|------------|--------|-------------|
| PAKISTAN | KSE 100 | +4.84 | 99,496.88 |
| JAPAN | Nikkei 225 | -0.80 | 38,134.97 |
| DUBAI | DFMGI | -0.49 | 4,805.07 |
| EGYPT | EGX 30 | -1.45 | 29,846.04 |
| SAUDI | TASI | -1.24 | 11,590.79 |
| PHILIPPINES | PSEi | -1.53 | 6,702.59 |

Business



Hamad Al Marzouq presenting a souvenir to the Mayor of London.



Hamad Al Marzouq presenting a souvenir to the British Ambassador.

Al Marzouq leads KFH delegation during meeting with Lord Mayor of London

KFH emphasizes role in economic development and fostering relations with British financial community

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: Led by Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Chairman, Hamad Abdulmohsen Al Marzouq, a high-level delegation from the bank met with the Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor of the City of London Alderman Alastair King, with the attendance of UK Ambassador to Kuwait, Belinda Lewis. The meeting explored opportunities to strengthen economic ties between KFH and the United Kingdom.

The meeting also highlighted KFH's global standing and its pioneering role in supporting the relationship between the two parties through its subsidiary, Ahli United Bank - UK (AUB-UK), which was successfully converted into a Sharia-compliant bank.

The KFH high-level delegation included KFH Acting Group Chief Executive Officer, Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood, KFH-Kuwait Chief Executive Officer, Khaled Yousef AlShamlan, Deputy Group CEO Private Banking, Wealth Management and Business Excellence, Alexander Liddle, AUB - UK Chief Executive Officer, Philip Crawford, KFH - Capital Chief Executive Officer, Abdulaziz Almarzooq, and KFH Deputy General Manager Public Relations and Media, Yousef Al-Kuwaieh.

During the meeting, held at the Four Seasons Hotel of Kuwait, The Lord Mayor of the City of London,



Hamad Al-Marzouq, Abdul-Wahab Al-Rashoud, Khaled Al-Shamlan, and the KFH delegation with the Mayor of London, the British Ambassador, and a number of officials.

praised KFH's prominent role in strengthening economic partnerships between Kuwait and the United Kingdom. He also highlighted KFH's commitment to providing innovative banking services to customers in the UK, advancing the financial sector, and fostering financial develop-

ment. Meanwhile, Al Marzouq emphasized KFH's commitment to supporting economic cooperation with the UK, adding that the meeting is a significant opportunity to reaffirm KFH's role in economic development and promote partnerships with

its partners in the UK. He emphasized that KFH's presence in the UK supports its strategy to strengthen its Islamic banking capabilities and broaden its global presence, as well as solidify its cooperation ties with the British financial community. This ultimately serves the shared

objectives and represents a key step towards economic cooperation and accelerating mutual growth.

He went on to say that KFH offers a wide array of Islamic financial products and services, including retail banking, corporate banking, treasury services, private banking and wealth

management, and trade finance through its presence in 12 countries, most notably Kuwait, Bahrain, Turkey, Egypt, UK, and Germany.

Demonstrating KFH's achievements, Al Marzouq noted that following its landmark cross-border acquisition of Ahli United Bank - Bahrain, one of the largest deals in the region, KFH has concluded the largest-ever merger in Kuwait's banking sector. This historic merger paved the way for the creation of a giant financial entity within the Islamic finance industry, with a reach spanning local, regional, and global markets. KFH has become the largest bank in Kuwait in terms of market capitalization and the world's second-largest Islamic bank in terms of assets, setting the stage for its goal to be listed among the top 100 banks in the world.

He pointed out that the remarkable financial performance, which resulted in the highest-ever quarterly profits in the history of the Kuwaiti banking sector, recording KD 482.9 million up to the end of Q3 2024, demonstrates the robust capabilities which KFH enjoys.

Al Marzouq concluded that KFH's leading standing is also manifested in the rolling out of innovative banking solutions, promoting customers trust and maintaining its global leadership in the Islamic finance sector.

Kuwait's corporate earnings rise 12.1% in Q3-2024

GCC profits drop 3.3% as energy struggles

By Kamco Invest

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: Aggregate net profits reported by companies listed on GCC exchanges declined by 3.3% y-o-y during Q3-2024 to reach USD 59.6 Bn as compared to USD 61.6 Bn during Q3-2023.

Net profits also declined when compared with Q2-2024 by 2.0%. The y-o-y decline was mainly due to a fall in profits for the Energy sector that registered a y-o-y fall of 18.5% to reach USD 28.5 Bn. Lower profits for the Real Estate and the F&B sectors further lowered the aggregate profits for GCC-listed corporates.

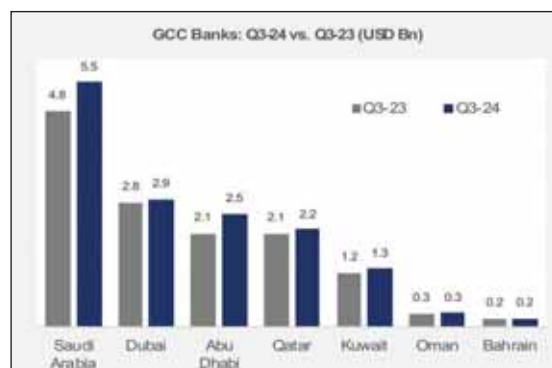
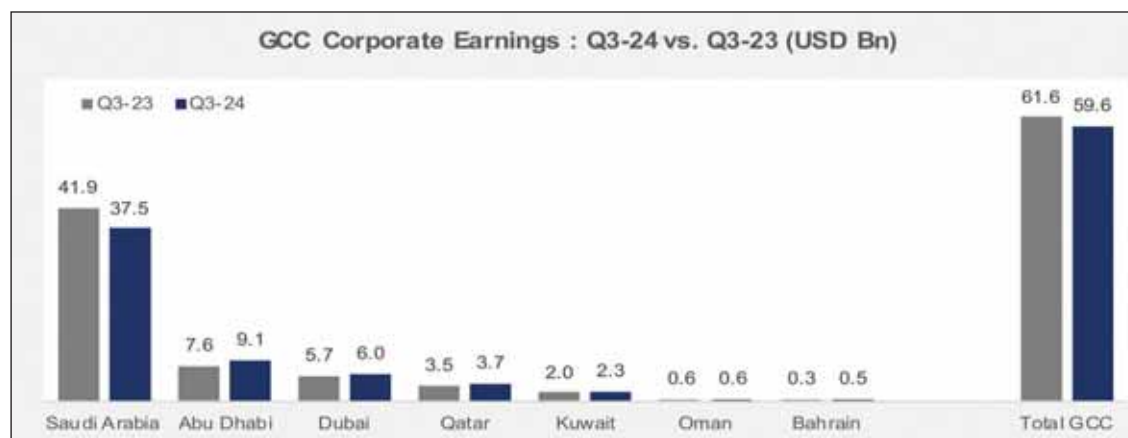
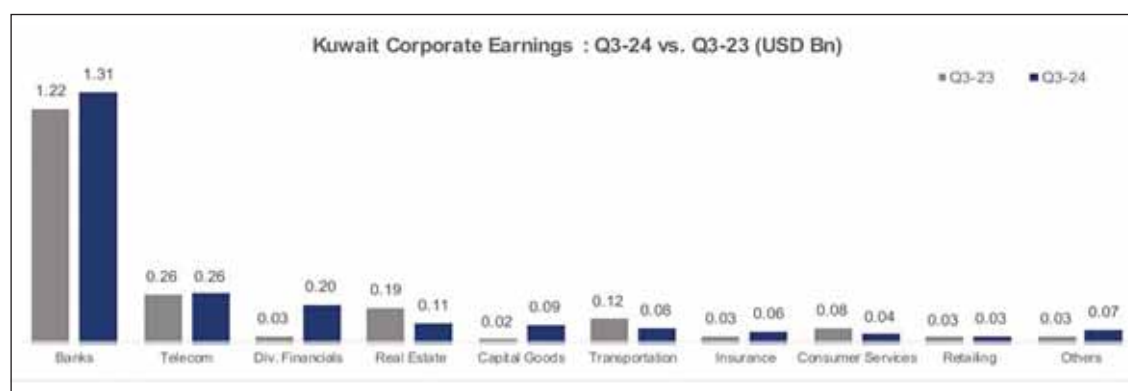
On the other hand, healthy growth in profits for Banks and the Materials sector partially offset the overall decline. Banks in the region registered a y-o-y profit growth of 10.2% to reach USD 14.9 Bn while the Materials sector recorded multifold growth in profits.

At the country level, the aggregates for six out of the seven exchanges showed growth in profits that were more than offset by a fall in profits for Saudi-listed corporates. In terms of absolute profit growth, firms listed on Abu Dhabi exchange recorded a y-o-y profit growth of USD 1.5 Bn or 9.3% to reach USD 9.1 Bn followed by Dubai-listed corporates that recorded a growth of USD 0.3 Bn or 5.4% to reach USD 6.0 Bn. Qatar and Kuwaiti companies also recorded healthy profit growth of USD 0.3 Bn and USD 0.2 Bn, respectively. On the other hand, aggregate profits for Saudi-listed companies decline by USD 4.4 Bn or 10.5% to reach USD 37.5 Bn. The decline was mainly led by a fall in profits for Saudi Aramco that recorded a profit fall of 21.0%. Excluding the profits for Saudi Aramco, the aggregate net profits for Saudi-listed companies increased by 27.9% while the GCC aggregate net profit increased by 17.1%.

Meanwhile, net profits for 9M-2024 declined marginally by 0.5% y-o-y to reach USD 176.6 Bn. The decline once again reflected a fall in profits for Saudi-listed companies (-5.5%) that was partially offset by higher profits reported by the rest of the GCC aggregates. Dubai reported the biggest absolute profit growth in 9M-2024 that increased by USD 2.3 Bn or 14.8% to reach USD 18.0 Bn followed by Abu Dhabi with a growth of USD 2.1 Bn to reach USD 25.2 Bn.

In terms of sector performance during 9M-2024, bulk of the sectors registered higher y-o-y profits. However, a decline in profits for the Energy sector by 9.8% to reach USD 89.1 Bn during 9M-2024 more than offset the overall profit growth. Net profits for the Banking sector increased by a healthy 10.7% to reach USD 44.0 Bn during 9M-2024 while the Materials sector registered a profit growth of 79.5% or USD 2.3 Bn to reach USD 5.1 Bn. Sectors like Diversified Financials and Transportation also recorded higher profits during 9M-2024 reaching USD 1.8 Bn and USD 2.7 Bn, respectively.

Within the Energy sector, net profits for Saudi Aramco declined by 21.0% to reach USD 26.0 Bn during Q3-2024 as compared to USD 32.9 Bn in Q3-2023. The decline was mainly led by lower crude oil prices and weakening refining margins. However, in the broader GCC Energy sector, 16 out of the 26 listed companies reported higher y-o-y profits



Source: Company Financials, Reuters, Bloomberg, Kamco Invest Research.

while 10 report a decline. Meanwhile, profits for the GCC Real Estate sector was almost equally split between gainers and decliners with 34 companies reporting higher profits while 28 companies reported declines. However, a steep decline in profits for large-cap names like Emaar Economic City and Jabal Omar Development more than offset the overall positive trend in the sector.

Net profits for the GCC Banking sector increased by 10.2% y-o-y to reach USD 14.9 Bn in Q3-2024 as compared to USD 13.5 Bn in Q3-2023. The increase in profits was mainly led by higher interest rates as the interest rate cuts announced by the GCC central banks came towards the end of the quarter and had minimal impact on net interest income. As a result, net interest income increased by 5.7% y-o-y to reach USD 22.1 Bn as compared to USD 20.9 Bn during

Q3-2023. In addition, non interest income also witnessed healthy growth during the quarter reaching USD 10.8 Bn as compared to USD 9.5 Bn in Q3-2023, registering a growth of 13.7%. The increase in net profits was partially offset by an increase in loan impairments that reached USD 2.5 Bn during the quarter as compared to USD 2.3 Bn in Q3-2023. Higher absolute operating expenses also partially offset the overall profit growth during the quarter.

Kuwait

Net profits reported by companies listed on Bursa Kuwait increased by 12.1% y-o-y during Q3-2024 to reach USD 2.3 Bn as compared to USD 2.0 Bn in Q3-2023. The biggest impact on aggregate earnings came from the Diversified Financials sector which showed a multifold increase in profits that reached USD 198.1 Mn in Q3-2024 from USD 31.9 Mn in Q3-2023. Banks, Capital Goods and Insurance sectors also contributed to earnings growth during the quarter. It is noteworthy that out of the eighteen sectors on Bursa Kuwait, thirteen have witnessed a y-o-y increase in profits during Q3-2024 while the remaining five sectors witnessed declines. Among the decliners, Q3-2024 profits for the Real Estate sector declined by 43.3%.

Quarterly net profits for listed banks in Kuwait increased by 5.9% y-o-y to reach USD 1.3 Bn as compared to USD 1.2 Bn in Q3-2023. NBK reported a net profit of USD 538.9 Mn, up by 5.7% vs. a profit of USD 504.2 Mn in Q3-2023 mainly led by higher net operating income which increased by 7.0% to USD 103.5 Mn. Lower impairment losses also supported profits that were partially offset by higher operating expenses as compared to Q3-2023. Net profits for KFH reached USD 464.1 Mn during Q3-2024, up by 10.6% compared to USD 414.8 Mn from Q3-2023 mainly due to the increase in the net financing income in addition to the increase in net fees and commission income. Meanwhile, net profits reported by CBK declined to reach USD 84.7 Mn in Q3-2024 from USD 96.9 Mn Q3-2023 on account of higher loan loss recoveries occurred last year resulting from legal verdict.

Profits for the Real Estate sector reached USD 105.3 Mn in Q3-2024 compared to a net profit of USD 185.7 Mn in Q3-2023 down by 43.3%. Mabaneer Co. also reported an increase in quarterly net profits that reached USD 54.3 Mn in Q3-2024 against a net profit of USD 51.4 Mn in Q3-2023 mainly led by an increase in real estate rental income during the period. The Commercial Real Estate Co. posted a net profit of USD 12.1 Mn for Q3-2024 against a profit of USD 9.8 Mn led by an increase in share of profits from investments in associates and net gain on investments. United Real Estate Co. also recorded higher net profits that reached USD 4.2 Mn in Q3-2024 compared to a net profit of USD 2.3 Mn in Q3-2023 led by the increase in net operating profit from hospitality sector, contracting and services sector.

The Diversified Financials sector outperformed other sectors as the biggest contributor to net profits during the period by recording a net profit of USD 198.1 Mn in Q3-2024 vs. USD 31.9 Mn in Q3-2023. Arzan Financial Group for Fin. & Invest. witnessed strong y-o-y jump in Q3-2024 net profit that reached USD 25.8 Mn from a net profit of USD 4.5 Mn during Q3-2023 which was mainly due to the increase in the revenue from contracts with customers and increase in realized profit from instalment sales.

BUSINESS

Zain welcomes Kuwait Airways as the official carrier of Khaleeji Zain 26

Partnership highlights public and private sectors' joint efforts to ensure the success of the region's premier tournament

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: Zain has welcomed Kuwait Airways as the official carrier of Khaleeji Zain 26 (the Arabian Gulf Cup), which will be hosted by Kuwait from December 21, 2024, to January 3, 2025. The two companies have signed a strategic partnership to enrich the experience of the tournament's guests, a step that embodies the collaboration between public and private sector institutions to ensure the success of the region's premier sporting event.

The partnership was signed at Kuwait Airways' headquarters, with the attendance of the company's Chairman, Captain Abdulmohsen Alfagaan, CEO of Zain Kuwait, Nawaf Al-Gharabally, CEO of Kuwait Airways, Captain Ahmad Al-Kuraibani, and other executives from both companies.

Under this partnership, the visual identity of Khaleeji Zain 26 will be integrated into Kuwait Airways' operations, including on aircraft flying to and from participating countries, the Terminal 4 building that is dedicated to welcoming visitors and guests, and cabin crew uniforms. Special and exclusive offers will also be available for guests, aiming to deliver a delightful and comfortable travel experience from Kuwait Airways, paired with an enriching and innovative digital experience from Zain.

On this occasion, Chairman of Kuwait Airways, Captain Abdulmohsen Alfagaan, said, "Kuwait Airways is honored to host the signing ceremony for the partnership agreement with Zain for the Khaleeji Zain 26 competition. This tournament, being held on Kuwaiti soil, holds a special place in the hearts of football enthusiasts in Kuwait and across the Arab world. This partnership reflects Kuwait Airways' commitment to being close to the Kuwaiti and Gulf communities in all its facets and activities, emphasizing the importance of the national carrier's role in supporting sports events. It also highlights our ongoing efforts to contribute to the growth of tourism, which is a key aspect of Kuwait's governmental framework. We consider it both a duty and a national responsibility to provide all forms of support for such occasions."

Captain Alfagaan expressed deep appreciation for the significant role Zain plays in advancing the telecommunications sector in Kuwait and the region. He praised the importance



Alfagaan and Al-Gharabally with executives from Zain and Kuwait Airways.

Abdulmohsen Alfagaan:

- "We will utilize all our capabilities to deliver a distinguished travel experience for the tournament's fans"

Nawaf Al-Gharabally:

- "This partnership with Kuwait's Blue Bird bolsters the tournament's national identity"



Captain Abdulmohsen Alfagaan and Nawaf Al-Gharabally sign the partnership.

of collaboration between national institutions to achieve shared goals and support the local economy, highlighting the pivotal role national companies play in contributing to the success of events like Khaleeji Zain 26. He also pointed out that this partnership aligns with Kuwait Airways' strategy to expand cooperation with local companies to serve mutual in-

terests and enhance its competitiveness in the market.

Alfagaan emphasized the importance of continued coordination and joint work to strengthen national partnerships that serve mutual interests and enhance Kuwait's position as a leading regional hub for both telecommunications and air transport.

He also mentioned that Kuwait

Airways spares no effort in supporting and promoting meaningful events that attract public interest, with a special focus on supporting sports and athletes as part of the company's CSR policy, demonstrating a continued commitment to empowering youth and providing them with necessary support.

Alfagaan further noted that Kuwait

Airways aims to elevate Kuwait's position through offering the best services to official delegations, fans, and travelers, utilizing all the company's resources for those traveling to and from Gulf countries and around the world via Terminal 4 and on board the national carrier's aircraft, ensuring a distinguished, comfortable, and safe travel experience.



From the signing ceremony.

Concluding his remarks, Alfagaan said, "This agreement is a fruitful and important one that significantly contributes to achieving our goals and raising Kuwait's profile globally through successful partnerships with national companies. We appreciate Zain's tangible efforts in building strong and productive relationships across both government and private sectors as a key driver of telecommunications technology development."

Zain Kuwait CEO Nawaf Al-Gharabally commented: "We're thrilled to welcome Kuwait's Blue Bird as the Official Carrier of Khaleeji Zain 26, and this partnership will further bolster the national identity embodied by this tournament. Both Zain and Kuwait Airways are among Kuwait's most established national organizations, pioneers in their respective sectors, and today we join hands to highlight the spirit of Gulf unity and competitiveness that this tournament represents."

He added: "This partnership is a continuation and extension of our fruitful collaboration over the years with Kuwait Airways, and through it, we look forward to jointly contribute to realizing the vision of the nation's leadership for the success of Khaleeji Zain 26 and to welcoming Kuwait's guests."

He concluded: "The national carrier's official presence in the tournament will greatly enhance the collective efforts being made to deliver an exceptional edition of this beloved tournament, and we are committed to providing the best experience for fans and lovers of Gulf football."

Zain Group recently announced its role as the Title Partner of the tournament, now branded as Khaleeji Zain for the second consecutive time. Kuwait will host this historic sporting event for the fifth time in its history, and Zain warmly welcomes Gulf teams and delegations to this premier regional event.

Zain is reaffirming its commitment to supporting major sporting events, enhancing Kuwait's position as a key player in regional sports, boosting the development of football among the youth.

The Arabian Gulf Cup, which began in 1970, has solidified its place as one of the most prominent sporting events in the region. The football competition underscores the unity, deep-rooted relations, and shared heritage of Gulf nations.

Zain will utilize its resources and national talents to ensure this edition of the tournament leaves fans with unforgettable memories. In addition, the company plans to engage football enthusiasts through a series of interactive events and programs like fan zones, social media contests, giveaways, and more.

Tokyo's Nikkei index falls 0.8%

Asian shares mixed, with China benchmarks higher

BANGKOK, Nov 27, (AP): Shares were mixed in Asia on Wednesday, with Chinese shares leading gains, after U.S. stocks rose to records despite President-elect Donald Trump's latest talk about tariffs.

Tokyo's Nikkei index fell 0.8% to 38,134.97 as the Japanese yen surged in value against the U.S. dollar. The dollar fell to 151.59 yen from 153.08 yen. It had traded above 155 yen recently, but uncertainty over the future course of U.S. trade policy has led investors to buy yen as a safe haven, analysts said.

Sharp tariff hikes that Trump said he would impose on imports of goods from Canada, Mexico and China could roil the global economy if they take effect. His comments Monday provoked vehement responses from all three major U.S. trading partners.

"Investors, already jittery, are keenly aware of the ripple effects such protracted disputes could have, particularly on the Chinese and European economies that are bracing for Trump's tariff onslaught," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

Chinese markets advanced, led by strong buying of technology shares. Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 2.4%

to 19,615.17, while the Shanghai Composite index added 1.5% to 3,309.78. A 10% drop in industrial profits may have raised expectations for additional government stimulus, and investors may have resumed buying, seeking bargains after prices fell recently.

South Korea's Kospi dropped 0.7% to 2,503.06 as Samsung Electronics lost 3.4% after the company announced a shift in its top management.

The company said the reshuffle, which included appointing Young Hyun Jun, a Samsung vice chairman who heads its Device Solutions division, to be CEO was intended to strengthen Samsung's competitiveness, focusing on computer chips.

Australia's S&P/ASX gained 0.6%, to 8,406.70, while India's Sensex jumped 0.6%. Taiwan's Taiex sank 1.5% and the SET in Bangkok shed 0.6%.

On Wall Street, investors appeared to shrug off the tough talk on trade.

In other dealings early Wednesday, U.S. benchmark crude oil gained 23 cents to \$69.00 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, picked up 19 cents, to \$72.51 per barrel.

The euro rose to \$1.0511 from \$1.0488.

Tokyo's Nikkei index falls 0.8%

Pro-consumption policies boost China's retail sector

NANNING, Nov 27, (Xinhua): Inside a Suning chain store, a leading home-appliance retailer, in Nanning, south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, colorful stickers adorned a vast array of durable goods ranging from kitchen stoves to smart toilets, with eye-catching signs reading, "enjoy up to 20 percent off with state subsidies."

These enticing offers are part and parcel of the country's 300-billion-yuan (around 41.7 billion U.S. dollars) program designed to spur equipment renewal and consumer goods trade-in.

The program, which is bankrolled by ultra-long treasury bonds, was a huge expansion of a program

launched back in March.

The impact of the pro-consumption measures has been palpable, with an influx of shoppers steaming into brick-and-mortar stores across the country.

"We have seen a sudden spike in turnout since the local subsidy program took effect," said Huang Bentao, a manager at a Suning chain store. "Inquires jumped nearly tenfold after eager buyers got a whiff of the upcoming rebates."

The sheer size of this year's discount is virtually unheard of, not to mention the range of products that qualify for subsidies under the scheme, according to Huang. "And it covers almost all models available under the subsidized categories."

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: Gulf Bank's Digital Transformation Program has been honored with two distinguished awards: "Best Digital Platform Implementation" and "Best Program Vision" at the 2024 IBSi Global FinTech Innovation Awards. The awards ceremony, held in Mumbai, India, gathered representatives from leading banks and companies around the world to celebrate innovation in financial services.

The IBSi Global FinTech Innovation Awards are internationally recognized for acknowledging financial institutions, technology providers, and developers who deliver groundbreaking solutions that enhance banking operations and financial services.

Mr. Himanshu Tiwari, Gulf Bank's Head of Business Process Improvement, Information Systems Security, and Quality Assurance, expressed his pride in the achievement, stating, "At Gulf Bank, we firmly believe that technology and knowledge are key drivers in enhancing our operations and elevating the customer experience."

Mr. Tiwari highlighted the success of Gulf Bank's Digital Transforma-



Himanshu Tiwari receiving the award.

Himanshu Tiwari:

- At Gulf Bank, we firmly believe that technology and knowledge are key drivers in enhancing our operations and elevating the customer experience.

tion Program in providing an exceptional digital experience for both individual and corporate clients. By

utilizing advanced tools and technologies, the program has enhanced customer engagement while opti-

mizing operational efficiency.

The awards are granted by the International Banking Systems Institute (IBSi), a globally renowned organization specializing in research and analysis of innovation in financial technology (FinTech) and banking services.

Winners are selected based on rigorous criteria focusing on innovation, creativity, and the impact of digital transformation on institutions and their clients. Evaluation metrics include the achievement of business objectives, successful implementation, scalability, compliance, enhanced customer solutions, cost reduction, service acceleration, improved user experiences, sustainability, and positive social impact.

Gulf Bank's strategic technology partner, Profinch, played a critical role in implementing the bank's Digital Transformation Program. Using the Oracle Banking Digital Experience (OBDX) platform, the program introduced services such as online customer onboarding, streamlined application processing, and enhanced digital payment capabilities for both retail and corporate clients.

Agreement sparking protests by European farmers

What is the EU-Mercosur trade deal and why does it matter?

PARIS, Nov 27, (AP): After more than 20 years of negotiations, the 27-nation European Union and Mercosur - a South American trade bloc of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia - are still trying to finalize a major trade agreement that is sparking protests by European farmers.

A draft deal was announced in 2019, but disagreements over environmental, economic and political issues are delaying its final approval.

Here's a look at the deal, why it matters, and challenges it faces:

It aims to create one of the largest free trade zones in the world, covering over 700 million people and nearly 25% of global GDP. Much like the U.S.-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement, its goal is to reduce tariffs and trade barriers, making it easier for businesses on both sides to export goods.

For the EU, the deal would mean lower tariffs on products like cars, machinery and chemicals. Mercosur countries would benefit from better access to EU markets for agricultural exports such as beef, poultry and sugar.

Negotiations began in 1999 and an initial agree-

ment was reached in 2019, but it remains unratified due to significant opposition, particularly from France.

European farmers, especially in France, worry that an influx of South American products would saturate their markets, undercutting local agriculture.

One year after a massive European farmers' protest movement, another round of protests have erupted across the continent, with many claiming that reduced tariffs or duty-free quotas for South American products could be fatal for them.

For example, 99,000 tons of beef would face a reduced tariff of just 7.5%, while 180,000 tons of poultry would enter duty-free. According to the European Commission, this accounts for less than 2% of the EU's annual beef consumption.

Livestock farmers argue they cannot compete with South American producers, who benefit from lower labor costs, larger farms and less stringent regulations on practices such as the use of growth hormones compared to EU standards.

In October, a European Commission audit found that Brazil, the world's largest exporter of

beef, cannot guarantee that its exports to the EU are free of the growth hormone "oestradiol 17-B," which has been banned in Europe for decades.

Germany, Spain, Italy and Portugal are among EU countries pushing for the deal to be finalized by year's end. Germany, in particular, sees Mercosur as a key market for its automakers.

In South America, leaders like Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva view the agreement as a boost for regional trade and economic growth. Countries like Uruguay and Paraguay also support the deal, hoping to diversify their trade partners and reduce reliance on China. Argentina's President Javier Milei has also backed it, signaling a shift from his predecessor's skepticism.

The deal is also backed by industries in both regions. European carmakers and pharmaceutical companies see it as a way to access Mercosur's growing markets.

Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, has also expressed strong support, calling it "an agreement of great economic and strategic importance" - despite opposition from certain EU member states.

NBK receives Lord Mayor of London and his accompanying delegation



Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Lord Alderman Alastair King, and British Ambassador Belinda Lewis with members of the Board of Directors and the Executive Management at the bank.

The bank hosted a luncheon attended by British Ambassador to Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) hosted Alderman Alastair King, Lord Mayor of the City of London, and his accompanying delegation for a luncheon at its headquarters, on the sidelines of their visit to Kuwait, in the presence of Belinda Lewis, British Ambassador to Kuwait.

Lord King and the accompanying delegation were welcomed by Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait, along with a number of the Bank's board members and executive management team.

In a speech delivered on behalf of the Bank's board of directors and executive management, Al-Sager welcomed the Lord Mayor of the City of London and his accompanying economic delegation. He highlighted that this visit has special significance as it coincides with the 125th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Britain, underscoring the long-standing, solidities of friendship and cooperation between the two countries and peoples on many levels, especially the economic relations lasting for long decades.

Al-Sager mentioned that these ties have yielded decades of successful business and financial relations, extending to exchange of expertise and visions, and significantly contributing to serving the mutual interests of the two countries, expressing his appreciation to the Lord Mayor of the City of London and his leading role in building resilient bilateral relations

Al-Sager:

- The visit has special significance as it coincides with the 125th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Britain
- We are proud of the long-standing, solid ties between the business communities of the two countries, looking forward to strengthening these ties
- The City of London has played a key role in shaping the global financial landscape with its legacy of stability and innovation

between Kuwait and London, which hosts many leading Kuwaiti financial institutions.

"We, at NBK, are proud of the strong ties between the business communities of the two friendly countries, which we have been able to strengthen over the years," he said, adding that the City of London, with its legacy of stability and innovation in the banking and financial sector, has played a key role in shaping the global financial landscape.

"The Kuwaiti-British partnership has been instrumental in supporting this role, and we look forward to further strengthening relations going forward," he emphasized.

"The visit of the Lord Mayor of the City of London to NBK's Headquarters underscores the continued strong cooperation between the Bank and the business community in London, and we look forward to furthering this cooperation in the future," Al-Sager added.

The Mayor and his accompanying delegation's visit to Kuwait is part of his tour to promote economic and trade relations between Kuwait and the UK, in addition to unlocking investment opportunities and discussing areas of cooperation across various sectors, which contributes to fostering the economies of the two countries.

NBK always seeks to strengthen its presence in the main financial markets, foremost of which is the City of London, in line with the Bank's strategy to support trade exchange between developed economies and countries in the region, in addition to serving its customers around the world. It also aims to solidify relations with major London-based international companies seeking to launch their business in Kuwait and the region.

NBK's international presence spans many of the world's leading financial centers including branches, subsidiaries and representative offices in China, Geneva, London, Paris, New York, and Singapore, alongside its regional presence in Lebanon, Egypt, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and UAE.

Eco-friendly

KNPC opens new solar fuel station

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: The Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), as part of its ongoing expansion plan, recently opened a new fuel station in West Abdullah Al-Mubarak. This station features modern designs and uses advanced solar energy technology that enables it to generate clean energy for meeting 30 percent of the station's electricity needs.

In addition to fueling services, the station offers a range of customer amenities, including a mini-market, an ATM, car maintenance services, and water and air filling points. It also allows customers to pay for fuel via advanced, easy-to-use electronic payment systems and applications.

According to informed sources, KNPC is focusing its efforts on expanding its network of fuel stations that incorporate cutting-edge technology.

Stations that will be opened in the coming years will be designed to offer even more services, including central markets, to enhance the overall customer experience.

Kuwait oil down to USD 73.48 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27, (KUNA): The price of Kuwait oil went down by USD 1.06 to USD 73.48 per barrel (pb) on Tuesday, compared to USD 74.54 pb the previous day, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Wednesday.

At the global level, the Brent crude fell by 20 cents to USD 72.81 pb, the same occurred to the West Texas Intermediate, which dropped by 17 cents to USD 68.77 pb.

ASMEK organizes conference for GCC Member States on 'entrepreneurship'

Experts, entrepreneurs discuss opportunities for growth at Gulf Weeks event

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27, (KUNA): The Association of Small and Medium Enterprises in Kuwait (ASMEK) organized Tuesday a conference on entrepreneurship in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Member States as part of the Gulf Weeks activities held ahead of the 45th GCC Summit, which will be hosted by Kuwait on December 1.

The Head of the Gulf Weeks Preparation Team in the GCC countries, Salwa Al-Qarni, told KUNA that the conference, held in cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), features a dialogue session with a panel of speakers sharing experiences and visions to advance entrepreneurship in the GCC countries. Al-Qarni added that the goal of Gulf Week activities, inaugurated last Friday, is to reach the widest audience possible to showcase the GCC's achievements across various fields.

She explained that during the preparation phase, the team ensured the schedule was comprehensive and integrated, reflecting the diverse aspects of the GCC's journey. The program was also designed to target all age groups and specializations, enhancing engagement and interest from everyone.

Shaima Bin Hussein, Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Association for Small and Medium Enterprises, said in a similar statement to KUNA that the conference fosters regional cooperation and supports entrepreneurs by facilitating communication and professional networking.

Bin Hussein added that the event covered topics such as the digital economy, social and environmental responsibility, and governance. It also aimed to raise awareness among



Salwa Al-Qarni, Head of the preparation team for the Gulf Weeks in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.



Shaima Bin Hussein, Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Association for Small and Medium Enterprises.



Heba Al-Rifai, Director General of the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises Development.



Waleed Al-Ansari, Acting Deputy Director General of the Youth Sector at the Public Authority for Youth.

entrepreneurs about key concepts and share success stories from Kuwait and other GCC countries.

She emphasized that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are vital pillars of sustainable economic development in the GCC, not-

ing that these projects constitute a significant percentage of the region's total commercial ventures.

The Director General of the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Heba Al-Rifai, told KUNA that the fund's participation reaffirms its commitment to supporting and empowering entrepreneurs while enhancing the entrepreneurship ecosystem in Kuwait and the GCC.

Al-Rifai described the conference as an exceptional opportunity to highlight the pivotal role of SMEs in achieving sustainable economic development, noting that these projects are sources of innovation and progress.

She added that the conference aims to achieve several key objectives, including creating opportunities for growth and innovation amid rapid economic and technological developments, promoting innovation and social responsibility in entrepreneurship, improving the business environment to ensure sustainability, exchanging experiences and ideas, and attracting investments to strengthen this vital sector.

Al-Rifai also noted that the National Fund's role as a strategic partner reflects its commitment to providing entrepreneurs with financial services, guidance, training, and partnerships with relevant authorities.

Acting Deputy Director General for the Youth Sector at the Public Authority for Youth, Waleed Al-Ansari, told KUNA that the conference, one of the outcomes of Gulf Week, represents a pioneering initiative whose results are translated into actionable projects adopted by the Public Authority for Youth. These projects, he said, are always aligned with the Authority's strategy.

Al-Ansari emphasized that the Public Authority for Youth seeks to provide platforms for launching Kuwaiti youth initiatives, noting that the conference is distinguished by its focus on the exchange of experiences.

Cheating, alliances, and drama on reality TV

'Vanderpump Rules' to return with new cast, except for Lisa

LOS ANGELES, Nov 27, (AP): "Vanderpump Rules," the Emmy-nominated Bravo reality show that launched countless memes, merch, podcasts, endorsement deals and scandals, is recasting its 12th season - apart from its namesake, **Lisa Vanderpump**.

Bravo said in a press release Tuesday that the upcoming season would feature "a new group of close-knit SUR-ers who are as complicatedly involved with one another as their iconic predecessors."

The series debuted in 2013 as a spinoff to "The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills," executive produced and starring Vanderpump, a restaurateur. It focused on the personal lives of select staff at her West Hollywood restaurant, SUR, with Vanderpump in the role of both boss and maternal figure.

With in-fighting, cheating scandals, changing alliances and non-stop drama, the cast seemed destined to be followed by reality TV cameras.

"They're 20-something and they're young and they're hot," said Vanderpump of the cast in an interview ahead of the series premiere. "They want to play and they're waiting for their dream and unfortunately their dream isn't really to work at my restaurant."

Bravo did not elaborate on its decision to cast a new group, but said the cast would be announced later and the new season would go into production next year.

"I can't thank enough those who have shared their lives.

How I love you all," Vanderpump said in the statement. "In the restaurant business, one shift always gives way to another."

As the original cast became more famous, they stopped working at SUR and launched their own ventures (and podcasts): Tom Schwartz and Tom Sandoval opened a restaurant and bar called TomTom with Vanderpump as a majority owner. The Toms, as they're known, branched off with different owners for a second bar called Schwartz & Sandy's - on Monday, they announced that venture would be closing its doors.

In 2023, the show reached a different level of attention and wider audience with the revelation of what became known as "Scandoval": It was revealed that Sandoval, who lived with his longtime partner and co-star, Ariana Madix, had been having an affair with another cast member, Rachel "Raquel" Leviss. News broke after filming wrapped on Season 10, but cameras were picked back up to film the aftermath for an additional episode. It was followed by a three-part reunion that took place weeks after the discovery.

The cast, sans Leviss, returned to filming for Season 11 with Sandoval attempting to make amends with the others. Madix would film in group scenes with Sandoval but refused to interact with him 1:1, leading to friction within the group. During this year's reunion, Madix tearfully said to Sandoval, "I just want you away from me." Shortly after, it was revealed the show was "on pause."

While many key "Vanderpump" cast members have not re-



Lisa Vanderpump

leased statements or did not immediately respond to requests for comment, a few shared complicated feelings online.

"I'm feeling at peace with closing this chapter and im excited for everything that is to come," Madix posted on Instagram. "I don't know that these were the best days of our lives, but they were definitely something special."

The scandal and its fallout, though, made Madix America's sweetheart. She received a plethora of endorsement deals, was cast on "Dancing with the Stars" and on Broadway as Roxie Hart in "Chicago." She also was named the new host of "Love Island USA." Earlier this year, Madix opened a sandwich shop in Los Angeles called Something About Her with another "Vanderpump" star, Katie Maloney.

"It's a mixed bag. But I wouldn't change a thing," said Maloney, whose rocky relationship with now-ex-husband Tom Schwartz was chronicled in the series, in an Instagram story. "Thank you for the memories and the love the last 11 years."

"I have such mixed feelings right now. It's no secret I do not like change. This is the exception," Lara Kent posted on Instagram. Kent previously told The Associated Press she benefited from Scandoval with the sale of merch. She - along with current and former cast members - also devoted episodes of their individual podcasts to dissecting the drama.

Kent, Shay and Schwartz will make appearances on the second season of the successful "Vanderpump" spin-off, "The Valley," which will air next year. That show stars Kristen Doucette, a former "Vanderpump" star who along with Stassi Schroeder was fired in 2020 for racially profiling a Black co-worker. Two others, Max Boyens and Brett Capriani, were also let go at the time over tweets with racial slurs.

Bravo will also air a retrospective for the original show in 2025.

Pays attorney fees

Manson ends legal 'battle' with Wood

LOS ANGELES, Nov 27, (AP): Rocker Marilyn Manson has agreed to drop a lawsuit against his former fiancée, "Westworld" actor **Evan Rachel Wood**, and to pay her attorneys' fees, lawyers for both sides said Tuesday.

The move comes 18 months after a Los Angeles County judge threw out much of the 2022 suit in which Manson, whose legal name is Brian Warner, claimed Wood had fabricated public allegations that he sexually and physically abused her during their relationship and encouraged other women to fabricate their own allegations.

"After four years of fighting a battle where he was able to tell the truth, Brian is pleased to dismiss his still-pending claims and appeal in order to close the door on this chapter of his life," Manson attorney Howard King said in a statement.



Wood

Manson had been appealing the judge's decision but his attorneys reached out to Wood's seeking a settlement in the spring. Wood's attorneys said Tuesday that she rejected requests that the terms be kept confidential.

Manson "filed a lawsuit against Ms. Wood as a publicity stunt to try to undermine the credibility of his many accusers and revive his faltering career," Wood's lawyer Michael J. Kump said in a statement. "But his attempt to silence and intimidate Ms. Wood failed."

Manson agreed to pay nearly \$327,000 in attorney fees for Wood.

The settlement comes nearly four years into a criminal investigation of the 55-year-old Manson involving multiple women that remains unresolved. Outgoing LA County District Attorney George Gascón said in October that his office's sex crimes division had just discovered new evidence and that a decision on whether to file charges would be made when the picture was more complete.

Lawsuit

The women involved in the criminal case have not been identified, but "Game of Thrones" actor Esme Bianco has said she was among them, and criticized the district attorney for taking so long to investigate. Bianco settled her own lawsuit against Manson last year.

The Associated Press does not typically name people who say they have been sexually abused unless they come forward publicly as Wood and Bianco have.

Manson has denied engaging in any non-consensual sexual acts.

In 2017, with the #MeToo movement gaining momentum, Wood said publicly that she had been raped and abused, and gave testimony on the subject to a Congressional committee in 2018, but did not name anyone in either instance.

Then in a 2020 Instagram post, Wood said it was Manson who had "horribly abused me for years." The two revealed they were a couple in 2007, and were briefly engaged in 2010 before breaking up.

Manson's original lawsuit alleged that Wood and another woman, Ashley Gore, also known as Illma Gore in court papers, defamed him, intentionally caused him emotional distress and derailed his career in music, TV and film. It says they used false pretenses, including a phony letter from the FBI, to convince other women to come forward with sexual abuse allegations and coached them on what to say. The suit said Wood had only glowing things to say about Manson during their relationship.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Teresa A. Beaudet dismissed the part of the suit dealing with the disputed FBI letter, which Wood denied forging. Beaudet also tossed out a section that alleges Wood and Gore used a checklist found on an iPad for other women to use to make abuse claims about Manson.

Film



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

Earnest and visually dazzling animation

'Moana 2' is more dull than so shiny

LOS ANGELES, Nov 27, (AP): The warm Polynesian spirit and open-sea sense of adventure is back in "Moana 2," but little of the original's humor or catchy songs finds its way into this heartfelt but lackluster sequel set three years after the original.

"Moana 2," which opens in theaters Wednesday, was originally put into development as a streaming series before it was rerouted the big screen. Curiously, though, it's not scale or spectacle lacking here. Directors David Derrick Jr., Jason Hand and Dana Ledoux Miller have made an often dazzlingly animated film that is, visually, a step up from 2016's "Moana."

But in a story that brings in a literal boatload of new characters, it's hard to shake the feeling that "Moana 2" got caught in the crosswinds - too blown between shifting studio imperatives to really find its own way.

That's a shame because the original "Moana" is about the lightest, most joyful animated movie Disney has made in a decade - with the possible exception of "Encanto," which likewise bounced to the buoyant rhythms of songs by Lin-Manuel Miranda. (Miranda is crucially absent in "Moana 2," though "Hamilton" director Thomas Kail is currently developing a live-action "Moana.")

Photorealistic remakes have been the more dominant providence of the Magic Kingdom in recent years, a trend that's made more whimsical, imagination-filled animations like "Moana" all the more exceptional. Here was a movie that somehow balanced Pacific Island cultural authenticity with the cartoony delights of a demigod turned accidental

shark and Jemaine Clement as a singing, flaunting giant crab. Talk about win win.

Such inventiveness is harder to come by in the perfectly earnest but not especially inspired "Moana." It opens with a visibly grown Moana (Auli'i Cravalho, returning) engaged in a search for evidence of Pacific Islanders beyond her home island. She is by now a mythic figure, herself, to her people, idolized by youngsters for her courage and for being "superbesties" with the demigod Maui (Dwayne Johnson, also back).

Evidence

When Moana turns up an artifact with evidence of a two-peaked island, Motufetu, fabled as the once binding center of their ancestors, she sets out to find the cursed island and reunite the disparate people of Oceania. This time, though, Moana is sailing with a more crowded boat.

Some of the old sidekicks - the rooster Heihei (with noises courtesy of Alan Tudyk) and the pig Pua - are back. But Moana decides she needs human help this time, and brings along a crew featuring the uber Maui fan Moni (Hualalai Chung), the engineer Loto (Rose Matefeo) and the curmudgeonly older farmer Kele (David Fane).

Each of these characters has one generic note to play, and while you could see the need to add in more personalities for a series (Moana also now has a cute little sister, voiced by Khaleesi Lambert-Tsuda), they are effectively dead weight in "Moana 2."

To me, the iconic image of these films is Moana as a solo adventurer, leaning against the wind in her camakau and

setting an unknown course. Sure, Maui is inevitably her buddy-comedy partner in adventure, but Moana and her canoe should permit passengers no more than John Wayne did on his horse.

After an encounter with the coconut brigade of the Kakamora, Moana and Maui eventually reunite via a giant clam, where Maui has been trapped by Matangai (Awhimai Fraser, having fun), a mysterious, bat-adorned figure who's a kind of villain for the movie. She's more interesting than some recent Disney antagonists and gets probably the best song ("Get Lost") in a movie that mightily misses Miranda's touch. (The songs are by Abigail Barlow and Emily Bear.)

That scene and the climactic one, with a sea of tornadoes spinning across stormy waters, are vividly drawn - enough, surely, to delight younger moviegoers. Coming fast on the heels of "Wicked," one of the most salient selling points of "Moana 2" may be its comparatively nimble running time. At 100 minutes, it's a full hour shorter than "Wicked."

Ironically, "Moana 2" - beefed up from a would-be series - has brevity in its favor. But the hopes for "Moana 2" should go beyond mere placeholder. Only a few times does the banter between Moana and Maui really remind you of the fun that characterized the original. In one such moment, Moana corrects Maui after he calls her - perhaps confusing Moana for many other Disney protagonists - a princess. His comeback? "Well, a lot of people think you are."

"Moana 2," a Walt Disney Co. release is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association for action/peril. Running time: 100 minutes. Two stars out of four.

Variety

NEW YORK: Harvey Weinstein's lawyers filed a legal claim Tuesday against New York City, alleging that he is receiving substandard medical treatment in unhygienic conditions while in custody at the notorious Rikers Island jail complex.

The notice of claim, which is the first step in filing a lawsuit against the city, accuses the facility of failing to manage the former movie mogul's medical conditions, which include chronic myeloid leukemia and diabetes, and negligence ranging from "freezing" conditions to a lack of clean clothes.

The city's law department and Department of Correction did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

"When I last visited him, I found him with blood spatter on his prison garb, possibly from IV's, clothes that had not been washed for weeks, and he had not even been provided clean underwear - hardly sanitary conditions for someone with severe medical conditions," Weinstein's attorney, Imran H. Ansari, said in a statement, comparing the facility to a "gulag." (AP)

NEW ORLEANS: New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell's administration has launched its own news service, with city employees producing a "news magazine" on the city's of-

ficial YouTube channel.

Segments of "City News" will highlight New Orleans' "rich culture, diverse communities, and untold stories," the administration said in a news release.

"City News is designed to meet the community where they are," Deputy Press Secretary Kourtney Williams said in the release. "The ongoing mission is to connect with the people of New Orleans."

A city spokesperson did not respond to questions about the new outlet, which is expected to cover "news, in-depth features and inspiring stories" in New Orleans. Details were not released about whether Cantrell will participate in its coverage, how much it will cost or how it will be funded.

Williams will co-host the program with Raven Frederick, a digital communications director on Cantrell's staff. Steven Martinez, a multimedia manager for the city, will work on production. The release also named three producers. It was unclear if they were already city employees.

Cantrell for months has avoided attention from traditional media outlets amid a federal investigation and political challenges from the City Council.

She launched a podcast in April, which her team said would "bridge the gap" between New Orleans residents and

their local officials. The Times-Picayune/The New Orleans Advocate reported. The podcast has released just two episodes, the newspaper said. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: US customs officers have intercepted more than 3,000 fake Gibson electric guitars, the largest counterfeit musical instrument seizure on record, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection said Tuesday.

Founded in 1902 in Kalamazoo, Michigan, the iconic U.S. guitar brand has produced all its instruments exclusively at US facilities. A new, authentic Gibson guitar typically costs between 500 US dollars to 2,000 dollars, while some models would retail for more than 10,000 dollars.

According to customs officers assigned to the Los Angeles Long Beach Seaport, the counterfeit guitars, all destined for the e-commerce market, would have been worth an estimated 18 million dollars if genuine.

They noted that knockoff products often use low-quality or toxic materials that can pose health risks, as well as substandard electrical components that increase the risk of fires.

The seizure was an important reminder for consumers about the risks of buying fraudulent products online or from questionable sources in which authenticity cannot be verified, they said.

"They are fraudulent, and they are part of a massive attempt to con the American consumer," said Port Director Africa Bell. (Xinhua)



Actor Chutimon Chuengcharoensukying poses with the Emmy for Best Performance by an Actress at the 52nd International Emmy Awards at the New York Hilton Midtown on Monday, Nov. 25, in New York. (AP)

Ex-German Chancellor talks contrasting US presidents, Brexit

Merkel recalls Putin's 'power games' in her memoirs

BERLIN, Nov 27, (AP) — Former German Chancellor Angela Merkel recalls Vladimir Putin's "power games" over the years, remembers contrasting meetings with Barack Obama and Donald Trump and says she asked herself whether she could have done more to prevent Brexit, in her memoirs published Tuesday.

Merkel, 70, appears to have no significant doubts about the major decisions of her 16 years as German leader, whose major challenges included the global financial crisis, Europe's debt crisis, the 2015-16 influx of refugees and the COVID-19 pandemic. True to form, her book — titled "Freedom" — offers a matter-of-fact account of her early life in communist East Germany and her later career in politics, laced with moments of dry wit.

Merkel served alongside four US presidents, four French presidents and five British prime ministers. But it is perhaps her dealings with Russian President Putin that have drawn the most scrutiny since she left office in late 2021.

Merkel recalls being kept waiting by Putin at the Group of Eight summit she hosted in 2007 — "if there's one thing I can't stand, it's unpunctual."

And she recounts a visit to the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi that year in which Putin's Labrador appeared during a photo opportunity, although Putin knew she was afraid of dogs.

Putin appeared to enjoy the situation, she writes, and she didn't bring it up — keeping as she often did to the motto "never explain, never complain."

The previous year, she recounts Putin pointing to wooden houses in Siberia and telling her poor people lived there who "could be easily seduced," and that similar groups had been encouraged by money from the US government to take part in Ukraine's "Orange Revolution" of 2004 against attempted election fraud, Putin, she says, added: "I will never allow something like that in Russia."

Merkel says she was irritated by Putin's "self-righteousness" in a 2007 speech in Munich in which he turned away from earlier attempts to develop closer ties with the US. She said that appearance showed Putin as she knew him, "as someone who was always on guard against being treated badly and ready to give out at any time, including power games with a

dog and making other people wait for him."

"One could find this all childish and reprehensible, one could shake one's head over it — but that didn't make Russia disappear from the map," she writes.

As she has before, Merkel defends a much-criticized 2015 peace deal for eastern Ukraine that she helped broker and her government's decisions to buy large quantities of natural gas from Russia. And she argues it was right to keep up diplomatic and trade ties with Moscow until she left power.

Merkel concluded after first meeting then-Sen. Obama in 2008 that they could work well together. More than eight years later, during his last visit as president in Nov. 2016, he was one of the people with whom she discussed whether to seek a fourth term.

Obama, she says, asked questions but held back with an opinion, and that in itself was helpful. He "said that Europe could still use me very well, but I should ultimately follow my feelings," she writes.

There was no such warmth with Trump, who had criticized Merkel and Germany in his 2016 campaign.



Former German Chancellor Angela Merkel arrives for the presentation of her memoirs in Berlin, Germany, Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2024. Book title reads 'Freedom'. (AP)

Merkel says she had to seek an "adequate relationship ... without reacting to all the provocations."

In March 2017, there was an awkward moment when Merkel first visited the Trump White House. Photographers shouted "handshake!" and Merkel quietly asked Trump: "Do you want to have a handshake?"

There was no response from Trump, who looked ahead with his hands clasped.

Merkel faults her own reaction. "He wanted to create a topic of discussion with his behavior, while I had acted as if I were dealing with an interlocutor behaving normally," she writes. She adds that Putin apparently

"fascinated" Trump and, in the following years, she had the impression that "politicians with autocratic and dictatorial traits" beguiled him.

Merkel says she tried to help then-Prime Minister David Cameron in the European Union as he faced pressure from British Euroskeptics, but there were limits to what she could do. And, pointing to Cameron's efforts over the years to assuage opponents of the EU, she says the road to Brexit is a textbook example of what can arise from a miscalculation.

After Britons voted to leave the EU in 2016, an outcome she calls a "humiliation" for its other members, she says the question of whether she should have made more concessions to the UK "tormented me."

"I came to the conclusion that, in view of the political developments in the country at the time, there would have been no acceptable possibility for me to prevent Britain's way out of the European Union from outside," Merkel says.

Merkel was the first German chancellor to leave power at a time of her choosing. She announced in 2018 that she wouldn't seek a fifth term, and says she "let go at the right point."

Books

Political book sales dip

Will Trump's return spark new wave of bestsellers?

NEW YORK, Nov 27, (AP) — As she anticipates her estranged uncle's return to the White House, Mary Trump isn't expecting any future book to catch on like such first-term tell-alls as Michael Wolff's million-selling "Fire and Fury" or her own blockbuster, "Too Much and Never Enough."

"What else is there to learn?" she says. "And for people who don't know, the books have been written. It's all really out in the open now."

For publishers, Donald Trump's presidential years were a time of extraordinary sales in political books, helped in part by Trump's legal threats and angered tweets. According to Circana, which tracks around 85% of the hardcover and paperback market, the genre's sales nearly doubled from 2015 to 2020, from around 5 million copies to around 10 million.

Besides books by Wolff and Trump, other bestsellers included former FBI Director James Comey's "A Higher Loyalty," former national security adviser John Bolton's "The Room Where it Happened" and Bob Woodward's "Fear." Meanwhile, sales for dystopian fiction also jumped, led by Margaret Atwood's "A Handmaid's Tale," which was adapted into an award-winning Hulu series.

Interest

But interest has dropped back to 2015 levels since Trump left office, according to Circana, and publishers doubt it will again peak so highly. Readers not only showed little interest in books by or about President Joe Biden and his family — they even seemed less excited about Trump-related releases. Mary Trump's "Who Could Ever Love You" and Woodward's "War" were both popular this fall, but neither has matched the sales of their books written during the first Trump administration.

"We've been there many times, with all those books," HarperCollins publisher Jonathan Burnham says of the various Trump tell-alls. He added that he still sees a market for at least some Trump books — perhaps analyzing the recent election — because "there's a general, serious smart audience, not politically aligned in a hard way,"

one that would welcome "an intelligent voice."

"It's like the reboot of any hit TV show," says Eric Nelson, publisher and vice president of Broadside Books, a conservative imprint of HarperCollins that's released books by Jared Kushner, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and Trump Cabinet nominees Pete Hegseth and Sen. Marco Rubio. "You're not hoping for ratings like last time, just better ratings than the boring show it's replacing."

In the days following Trump's victory, "The Handmaid's Tale" and George Orwell's "1984" returned to bestseller lists, along with more contemporary works such as Timothy Snyder's "On Tyranny," a 2017 bestseller that expanded upon a Facebook post Snyder wrote soon after Trump defeated Hillary Clinton. Books appealing to pro-Trump readers also surged, including those written by Cabinet picks — Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s "The Real Anthony Fauci" and Hegseth's "The War on Warriors" — and Vice President-elect J.D. Vance's "Hillbilly Elegy," his 2016 memoir that's sold hundreds of thousands of copies since Trump selected him as his running mate.

Memoir

First lady Melania Trump's memoir, "Melania," came out in October and has been high on Amazon.com bestseller lists for weeks, even as critics found it contained little newsworthy information. According to Circana, it has sold more than 200,000 copies, a figure that does not include books sold directly through her website.

"The Melania book has done extraordinarily well, better than we thought," says Barnes & Noble CEO James Daunt. "After Election Day, we sold everything we had of it."

Conservative books have sold steadily over the years, and several publishers — most recently Hachette Book Group — have imprints dedicated to those readers. Publishers expect at least some critical books to reach bestseller lists — if only because of the tradition of the publishing market favoring the party out of power. But the nature of what those books would look like is uncertain. Perhaps a onetime insider will have a falling out with Trump and write a memoir, like Bolton or former Trump attorney Michael Cohen, or maybe some of his planned initiatives, whether mass deportation or the prosecution of his political foes, will lead to investigative works.



A collection of books about President Donald Trump, (from left), 'Siege' by Michael Wolff, 'Devil's Bargain' by Joshua Green, 'Where Law Ends' by Andrew Weissmann, 'A Higher Loyalty: Truth, Lies, and Leadership' by James Comey, 'Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House' by Michael Wolff, 'Rage' by Bob Woodward, 'Too Much and Never Enough' by Mary L. Trump, 'Disloyal' by Michael S. Schmidt, 'Battle Grounds: The Fight to Defend the Free World' by H. R. McMaster and 'Wicked Game' by Rick Gates appear on a shelf in Westchester County, N.Y., on Monday, Nov. 9, 2020. (AP)



This image released by Hulu shows Chloe Bennet (left) and Jimmy O. Yang in a scene from the series 'Interior Chinatown.' (AP)



This image released by Hulu shows Jimmy O. Yang (right) and Ronny Chieng in a scene from the series 'Interior Chinatown.' (AP)

Asian American stories take center stage

Cast of 'Interior Chinatown' mirrors its characters' Hollywood struggles

LOS ANGELES, Nov 27, (AP) — Jimmy O. Yang once played "Chinese Teenager #1." He's now No. 1 on the call sheet in "Interior Chinatown" — despite playing downtrodden background actor Willis Wu in the new Hulu series.

There's no escaping the layers of meta around "Interior Chinatown," an adaptation of Charles Yu's award-winning satirical novel that jabs at how Asian American men have been treated by Hollywood — and in life — one trope at a time.

"I feel like I have gone through every single number on the call sheet now," Yang told The Associated Press. "And I've learned from a lot of other great No. 1s, you know? To carry yourself a certain way. It's not just about showing up when you work, but it's also about leading by example."

The dramedy, premiered recently, is told from the view of Willis, a Chinatown restaurant server stuck in a police procedural show whose perspective starts to shift as he looks into the yearslong disappearance of his older brother. The 10-episode season has a mostly Asian cast including Ronny Chieng, Chloe Bennet, Archie Kao and Tzi Ma. There is also plenty of Asian talent behind the scenes, led by Yu, who serves as creator and executive producer.

The episodes are full of nods to cop dramas such as "Law & Order." They also evoke scenes from '80s and '90s US action-comedies structured around one of the co-leads being Asian and knowing martial arts — think "Rush Hour" and

"Martial Law." But it wasn't a youth spent watching these movies and shows that inspired Yu's book, which is structured like a screenplay.

"More what informed the book was the experiences of my parents, who are immigrants, and of their community and seeing how they and their friends had built lives here, were trying to be Americans, were succeeding at it in a lot of ways, but still were feeling like outsiders — and wanting to just tell their story," Yu said.

Voices

Taika Waititi, the director of "Jojo Rabbit" and two "Thor" movies and the first person of Maori descent to win an Academy Award, also produces. He's no stranger to promoting underrepresented voices on television, co-creating the Emmy-nominated "Reservation Dogs," the first series where every role on and off-screen was held by someone Indigenous. Growing up in New Zealand, he saw similarities in "Interior Chinatown" with how Indigenous Maori like him were treated even in daily interactions.

"I remember working in a convenience store and I was always out the back of the convenience store. There were people who got to come in — and I'd been working there for six months — and they went straight to work on the till," Waititi told The Associated Press. "One of the big draws to me was to be able to be involved in something that highlights those issues."

The series' episode titles reference different archetypes that have shadowed Asian American actors for decades. These include "delivery guy," "tech guy," "kung fu guy" and "Chinatown expert." There has been a reclaiming in recent years of "kung fu guy," particularly, Marvel's "Shang-Chi," the CW's "Kung Fu," and "Warrior" on Max all have protagonists with martial arts prowess who also deal with personal baggage. All three stories happen to take place in San Francisco's Chinatown.

The show's commentary on stereotyping seems more relevant in a post-coronavirus pandemic era, Ma said.

"In every major city, you know, the Chinatowns are going through hard times particularly after the pandemic," Ma said. "I hope that people who come to Chinatown realize that Chinatown isn't just a place for you to eat food. It's a community."

A third of "Interior Chinatown's" main cast has been in projects set in a Chinatown, which Yu says affirms the story's examination of how Hollywood limits the range of roles available to Asian Americans.

"You don't have to look too far down the IMDb listings of some of our cast who are really successful actors, but a few years ago could have easily been — you know, Jimmy likes to still tell the story of how he was "Chinese Teenager (#1)" on Chloe's show, "Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.," which is 10 years ago," Yu said.

Variety

LOS ANGELES: For the second straight day, Drake has taken legal action against Universal Music Group, this time in Texas, over Kendrick Lamar's diss track "Not Like Us."

It follows a similar filing in New York on Monday, in which Drake alleges UMG falsely pumped up the popularity of "Not Like Us" on Spotify and other streaming services.

The two court moves have taken the bitter beef between the two hip-hop superstars to a whole new level, with the parent company of the labels for both men now pulled directly into the fight.

Tuesday's filing in Bexar County alleges UMG engaged in "irregular and inappropriate business practices" to get radio airplay for "Not Like Us," including making



Drake

illegal payments to San Antonio-based iHeartMedia. The petition, a precursor to a potential lawsuit, seeks depositions from corporate representatives of both companies.

The filing takes aim at UMG for allegedly knowing that "the song itself, as well as its accompanying album art and music video, attacked the character of another one of UMG's most prominent artists, Drake, by falsely accusing him of being a sex offender, engaging in pedophilic acts, harboring sex offenders, and committing other criminal sexual acts." (AP)

ATLANTA: Deliberations are underway in Atlanta after a year of testimony in the gang and racketeering trial that originally included the rapper Young Thug. Jurors are considering 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.

Opening statements in the trial for six of those defendants happened a year ago. Four of them, including Young Thug, pleaded guilty last month. The rapper was freed on probation. Stillwell and Kendrick rejected plea deals after more than a week of negotiations, and their lawyers chose not to present evidence or witnesses.

Both seemed to be in good spirits Tuesday morning after closings wrapped the previous night. Kendrick was chatting and laughing with Stillwell and his lawyers before the jury arrived for instructions. (AP)

NEW YORK: When Seuk Kim took off from Maryland last weekend with three small dogs aboard his plane, it was the latest of many volunteer flights he had made to rescue animals in need.

After realizing a childhood dream of becoming a pilot, Kim transported cats and dogs from disaster areas, overcrowded shelters and other misfortunes — including a dog trapped for days in a shipping container — to rescue groups. He lined up other aviators to do the same.

But Sunday's flight to New York was his last. Kim's 1986 Mooney M20J crashed in the snowy woods of the Catskill Mountains, killing the 49-year-old pilot and one of the dogs, authorities said. The other two pups survived and were recovering Tuesday.

"There are very few people like Seuk in this world. He has no ulterior motives. He never needed recognition," said Sydney Galley, a fellow rescue flight volunteer. "He just wanted to help."

Whiskey — a 4-month-old Labrador-mix puppy who was found huddled in the snow with two broken legs — was doing well while awaiting surgery at Pieper Memorial Veterinary emergency and specialty hospital in Middletown, Connecticut. (AP)

Lebanon's Cancer Center fights to save lives

War adds strain for Lebanon's young cancer patients

BEIRUT, Nov 27, (AP) - Carol Zeghayer gripped her IV as she hurried down the brightly lit hallway of Beirut's children's cancer center. The 9-year-old's face brightened when she spotted her playmates from the oncology ward.

Diagnosed with cancer just months before the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel erupted in October 2023, Carol relies on weekly trips to the center in the Lebanese capital for treatment.

But what used to be a 90-minute drive, now takes up to three hours on a mountainous road to skirt the heavy bombardment in south Lebanon, but still not without danger from Israeli airstrikes. The family is just one among many across Lebanon now grappling with the hardships of both illness and war.

"She's just a child. When they strike, she asks me, 'Mama, was that far?'" said her mother, Sindus Hamra. The family lives in Hasbaya, a province in southeastern Lebanon where the rumble of Israeli airstrikes has become part of daily life. Just 15 minutes away from their home, in the front-line town of Khiam, Israeli troops and Hezbollah fighters clash amidst relentless bombardments.

On the morning of a recent trip to Beirut for her treatment, the family heard a rocket roar and its deafening



Doctor Dolly Noun, a pediatric hematologist and oncologist, checks Carol Zeghayer, 9, a girl who suffers from leukaemia ahead of her treatment at the Children's Cancer Center of Lebanon, in Beirut, Lebanon, Friday, Nov. 15, 2024. (AP)

impact as they left their home. Israeli airstrikes have also hit vehicles along the Damascus-Beirut highway, which Carol and her mother have to cross.

The bombardment hasn't let up even as hopes grew in recent days that a ceasefire might soon be agreed.

More than war, Hamra fears that Carol will miss chemotherapy. "Her situation is very tricky - her cancer can spread to her head," Hamra

said, her eyes filling with tears. Her daughter, diagnosed first with cancer of the lymph nodes and later leukemia, has completed a third of her treatment, with many months still ahead.

While Carol's family remains in their home, many in Lebanon have been displaced by an intensified Israeli bombardment that began in late September. Tens of thousands fled their homes in southern and eastern Leba-

non, as well as Beirut's southern suburbs - among them were families with children battling cancer.

The Children's Cancer Center of Lebanon quickly identified each patient's location to ensure treatments remained uninterrupted, sometimes facilitating them at hospitals closer to the families' new locations, said Zeina El Chami, the center's fundraising and events executive.

During the first days of the escalation, the center admitted some patients for emergency care and kept them there as it was unsafe to send them home, said Dolly Noun, a pediatric hematologist and oncologist.

Panic

"They had no place to go," she added. "We've had patients getting admitted for panic attacks. It has not been easy." The war has not only deepened the struggles of young patients.

"Many physicians have had to relocate," Noun said. "I know physicians, who work here, who haven't seen their parents in like six weeks because the roads are very dangerous."

Since 2019, Lebanon has been battered by cascading crises - economic collapse, the devastating Beirut port explosion in 2020, and now a relentless war - leaving institutions like the cancer center struggling to secure the funds needed to save lives.

"Cancer waits for no one," Chami said. The crises have affected the center's ability to hold fundraising events in recent years, leaving it in urgent need of donations, she added.

The facility is currently treating more than 400 patients aged from few days to 18 years old, Chami said. It treats around 60% of children with cancer in Lebanon.

For Carol, the war is sometimes a topic of conversation with her friends at the cancer center. Her mother hears her recount hearing the booms and how the house shook.

For others, the moments with their friends in the center's playroom provide a brief escape from the grim reality outside.

Eight-year-old Mohammad Mousawi darts around the playroom, giggling as he hides objects and books for his playmate to find. Too absorbed by the game, he barely answers questions, before the nurse calls him for his weekly chemotherapy treatment.

His family lived in Ghoheiry, a neighborhood in Beirut's southern suburbs. Their house was marked for destruction in an Israeli evacuation warning weeks ago, his mother said.

"But till now, they haven't struck it," said his mother, Suzan Mousawi. "They have hit (buildings) around it - two behind it and two in front of it." The family has relocated three times.

They first moved to the mountains, but the bitter cold weakened Mohammad's already fragile immune system.

Now they've settled in Ain el-Rummaneh, not far from their home in the southern Beirut suburbs known as Dahiyeh, which has come under significant bombardment. As the Israeli military widened the radius of its bombardment, some buildings hit were less than 500 meters (yards) from their current home.

The Mousawis have lived their entire lives in Dahiyeh, Suzan Mousawi said, until the war uprooted them. Her parents' home was bombed. "All our memories are gone," she said.

Mohammad has 15 weeks of treatment left, and his family is praying it will be successful. But the war has stolen some of their dreams.

"When Mohammad fell ill, we bought a house," she said. "It wasn't big, but it was something. I bought him an electric scooter and set up a pool, telling myself we'd take him there once he finishes treatment."

She fears the house, bought with every penny she had saved, could be lost at any moment.

For some families, this kind of conflict is not new. Asinat Al Lahham, a 9-year-old patient of the cancer center, is a refugee whose family fled Syria.

"We escaped one war to another," Asinat's mother, Fatima, added.

Severe depression insights

Study links irregular sleep to higher risk of heart problem

SYDNEY, Nov 27, (Xinhua) - An Australian-led international research has found that people with irregular sleeping patterns are at a higher risk of major heart problems.

The study, which was published online in the Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health, found that an irregular sleep-wake cycle is linked to a 26 percent higher risk of a major adverse cardiovascular event (MACE).

Researchers from Australia's University of Sydney and Monash University, Columbia University of the United States and Canada's University of Ottawa analyzed data from 72,269 people aged 40-79 taking part in the ongoing United Kingdom Biobank study.

The participants, none of whom had any history of MACEs, wore an activity tracker for seven days to record their sleep. The data from the trackers was then used to calculate each participant's Sleep Regularity Index (SRI) score.

People with an SRI score of over 87.3 were considered to have a regular sleeping pattern while those with a score lower than 71.6 were considered irregular sleepers. People with a score between 71.6 and 87.3 were categorized as moderately irregular sleepers.

Incidents of cardiovascular death, heart attack, heart failure and stroke among participants were then recorded over the next eight years.

After accounting for potentially influential factors such as age, exercise levels, medication use and diet, irregular sleepers were found to be 26 percent more likely to suffer a MACE than regular sleepers.

Moderately irregular sleepers were 8 percent more likely than regular sleepers to have major heart problems.

Depression: Australian researchers have made a breakthrough in diagnosing a severe form of depression by analyzing facial expressions and brain activity.

Researchers from the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute in Australia's state of Queensland said on Wednesday that they have discovered

how to diagnose melancholia by analyzing a person as they watch a film.

Melancholia is a severe form of depression. People affected by melancholia can experience deep, long-lasting sadness and slowed speech, thoughts and movements, and are less likely to respond to psychological treatments and often need strong medication or brain stimulation to recover.

Phillip Mosley, lead author of the new study from QIMR Berghofer, said that early and accurate diagnosis of melancholia is critical.

The research team used artificial intelligence to analyze the facial expressions of 70 clinical trial participants with depression as they watched a funny movie. The participants then watched an emotional short film while their brain activity was measured.

Mycoplasma pneumonia: Japan is experiencing a surge in mycoplasma pneumonia cases, with an average of 2.84 patients per medical institution reported nationwide for the week ending Nov. 17, according to the National Institute of Infectious Diseases.

This marks a significant rise from previous weeks and the highest figure since the current tracking system was introduced.

Mycoplasma pneumonia, a bacterial infection often seen in children, spreads through droplets or contact and presents symptoms like persistent cough, fever, fatigue, and headaches. While many cases resolve without severe complications, some can progress to serious pneumonia requiring hospitalization.

Fukui Prefecture reported the highest regional average at 8.83 cases per medical institution, followed by Aomori (5.0), Kyoto (4.71), and Hokkaido (4.59). Major cities such as Tokyo and Osaka also recorded elevated rates of 4.32 and 3.17, respectively.

Public health authorities are urging citizens to adopt preventive measures, such as wearing masks, practicing hand hygiene, and consulting doctors if symptoms persist.



John Alfred Tinniswood poses for a photo on April 4, 2024. The world's oldest man has died in England at age 112. The family of John Alfred Tinniswood said he died Monday, Nov. 25 at a care home outside Liverpool, where he was born in 1912. (AP)

Healthy life

World's oldest man dies at 112

LONDON, Nov 27, (AP) - For nearly nine months, John Alfred Tinniswood held the title of world's oldest man, marking his 112th birthday during his reign.

His record-holding status ended Monday when Tinniswood died in a care home in northwest England near Liverpool, where he was born on Aug. 26, 1912, his family said in a statement.

Tinniswood attributed his longevity to "pure luck."

"You either live long or you live short, and you can't do much about it," the retired accountant and great-grandfather told the Guinness World Records when he earned the title in April.

If there was any secret to it, though, he said moderation was key to a healthy life. He never smoked, rarely drank and followed no special diet, apart from having fish and chips every Friday.

"If you drink too much or you eat too much or you walk too much - if you do too much of anything - you're going to suffer eventually," Tinniswood said.

Govt agrees to strengthen privacy rules

Australia's social media ban for kids is closer to becoming law

MELBOURNE, Australia, Nov 27, (AP) - Australia's House of Representatives on Wednesday passed a bill that would ban children younger than 16 years old from social media, leaving it to the Senate to finalize the world-first law.

The major parties backed the bill that would make platforms including TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, Reddit, X and Instagram liable for fines of up to 50 million Australian dollars (\$33 million) for systemic failures to prevent young children from holding accounts.

The legislation passed 102 to 13. If the bill becomes law this week, the platforms would have one year to work out how to implement the age restrictions before the penalties are enforced.

Opposition lawmaker Dan Tehan told Parliament the government had agreed to accept amendments in the Senate that would bolster privacy protections. Platforms would not be allowed to compel users to provide government-issued identity documents including passports or driver's licenses, nor could they demand digital identification through a government system.

Perfect

"Will it be perfect? No. But is any law perfect? No, it's not. But if it helps, even if it helps in just the smallest of ways, it will make a huge difference to people's lives," Tehan told Parliament.

The bill was introduced to the Senate late Wednesday but it adjourned for the day hours later without putting it to a vote. The legislation will likely be passed on Thursday, the Parliament's final session for the year and potentially the last before elections, which are due within months.

The major parties' support all but guarantees the legislation will pass in the Senate, where no party holds a majority of seats.

Lawmakers who were not aligned with either the government or the opposition were most critical of the legislation during debate on Tuesday and



In this October 2023 photo provided by the Holdsworth family, Wayne Holdsworth sits with his son Mac on a family holiday in Hawaii. (AP)

Wednesday.

Critics include that the legislation had been rushed through Parliament without adequate scrutiny, would not work, would create privacy risks for users of all ages and would take away parents' authority to decide what's best for their children.

Critics also argue the ban would isolate children, deprive them of positive aspects of social media, drive children to the dark web, make children too young for social media reluctant to report harms encountered, and take away incentives for platforms to make online spaces safer.

Independent lawmaker Zoe Daniel said the legislation would "make zero difference to the harms that are inherent to social media."

"The true object of this legislation is not to make social media safe by design, but to make parents and voters feel like the government is doing something about it," Daniel told Parliament.

"There is a reason why the government parades this legislation as world-leading, that's because no other country wants to do it," she added.

The platforms had asked for the vote to be delayed until at least June next year when a government-commissioned evaluation of age assurance technologies made its report on how the ban could be enforced.

Melbourne resident Wayne Holdsworth, whose 17-year-old son Mac took his own life last year after falling victim to an online sextortion scam, described the bill as "absolutely essential for the safety of our children."

"It's not the only thing that we need to do to protect them because education is the key, but to provide some immediate support for our children and parents to be able to manage this, it's a great step," the 65-year-old online safety campaigner told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

"And in my opinion, it's the greatest time in our country's history," he added, referring to the pending legal reform.

Holdsworth became an advocate for banning Australian children younger than 16 from social media because his son took his own life after falling victim to an online sextortion scam.

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'There will be a tribute to Italian skier Matilde Lorenzi'

Olympic flame for 2026 Games will go on 63-day journey across Italy

VERONA, Italy, Nov 27, (AP): The Olympic flame for the 2026 Milan-Cortina Games will pass through all 110 provinces in Italy on a 63-day journey before the cauldron is lit.

Organizers announced the route for the torch relay at a palace facing the historic Verona Arena, the large Roman amphitheater that will host the closing ceremony of the 2026 Winter Games as well as the opening of the Paralympics.

The presentation of the 12,000-kilometer (7,455-mile) route took place exactly a year before the flame will be lit in Ancient Olympia, Greece.

"The Olympic torch relay is the moment when the Games enter peoples' homes, spreading the magic of winter sports across Italy," Milan-Cortina CEO Andrea Varnier said.

"This is very important ... it's the only project that literally takes the Olympics in front of millions of people's houses."

The flame will arrive in Rome on Dec. 4 and will begin its journey across Italy two days later.

A total of 10,001 people will participate in the torch relay. The flame will travel through Tuscany before going across to the islands of Sardinia and then Sicily - by sea - and returning to the Italian mainland on Dec. 19.

The torch relay, which includes 60 city celebrations, will be in Naples for Christmas and in Bari for New Year's Eve. It will then travel up the eastern side of Italy and across to the north-west, reaching Torino - the site of Italy's last Olympic Games in 2006 - on Jan. 11.



President of the Italian National Olympic Committee, Giovanni Malagò speaks during a news conference to present the 2026 Winter Olympics and Paralympics torch route, in Verona, Italy. (AP)

While it is in Piedmont, there will be a tribute to Italian skier Matilde Lorenzi, who died last month at the age of

19 following a crash in training.

"There will be something to honor her I promise, also because it was her

dream to participate in these Olympics," said Italian Olympic Committee president Giovanni Malagò, who also leads the organizing committee for the Milan-Cortina Games.

The torch will arrive in Verona on Jan. 18 and reach Cortina d'Ampezzo eight days later - on the 70th anniversary of the opening ceremony of the 1956 Winter Olympics there.

The torch will conclude its journey in Milan, entering the San Siro stadium on Feb. 6 for the opening ceremony.

Full details on how to apply to be a torch bearer will be announced in February.

"We will choose the participants focusing on their stories of courage, of those who have had experience of peace, inclusion and respect," said Milan-Cortina ceremonies director Maria

Laura Iascone.

The Milan-Cortina Games will run from Feb. 6-22, followed by the Paralympics from March 6-15. The flame for the Paralympics will be lit in the British town of Stoke Mandeville and will be carried by 501 people.

"Every step through our cities will become a moment of celebration and reflection, reminding us of the power of sport to build bridges and break down barriers," Malagò said. "When the flames will travel through our streets, they will touch millions with a unique and unforgettable warmth: the kind only sport can convey."

"Igniting in people's hearts the sense of being part of something bigger, the Olympic torch relay and Paralympic torch relay will be unique opportunities for Italy to shine, once again, on the world stage."

Milwaukee goes 3-0 in Cup play as Houston bags group



Houston Rockets guard Fred VanVleet (5) works toward the basket as Minnesota Timberwolves follows during the second half of an Emirates NBA Cup basketball game in Minneapolis. (AP)

Beal, KD return from injury, lead Suns past Lakers

MIAMI, Nov 27, (AP): Damian Lillard scored 37 points and handed out 12 assists, and the Milwaukee Bucks wasted a 22-point second-half lead before beating the Miami Heat 106-103 in an NBA Cup game on Tuesday night.

Brook Lopez scored 13 points and Bobby Portis had 11 for the Bucks, who have won five in a row and moved back to the .500 mark - 9-9 - for the first time since they were 1-1.

The Bucks (3-0 in Cup play) also moved a half-game ahead of Detroit (2-0) in the East Group B standings.

Jimmy Butler scored 23 points for Miami, which got 18 from Tyler Herro, 17 from Terry Rozier and 16 from Bam Adebayo. The Heat tied the game at 96-96 on a layup by Butler and got within one point on three later occasions, but never led.

The Heat - who were outscored 60-30 from 3-point range - fell to 1-2 in Cup play.

The Bucks played without Giannis Antetokounmpo, a late pre-game scratch because of swelling in his left knee.

Rockets 117, Timberwolves 111, OT

In Minneapolis, Alperen Senogun had 22 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists, Fred VanVleet added 27 points and 11 assists, and the Houston Rockets pulled out overtime win against the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Dillon Brooks added 22 points for Houston, which improved



Milwaukee Bucks guard Damian Lillard (0) shoots over Miami Heat forward Haywood Highsmith (24) during the first half of an Emirates NBA Cup basketball game in Miami. (AP)

to 3-0 in the competition and clinched West Group A and a spot in the NBA Cup quarterfinals.

Anthony Edwards had 29 points and 10 rebounds for Minnesota, which has lost three in a row. Julius Randle scored 21, while Naz Reid had 19 off the bench.

Rookie Rob Dillingham, the No. 8 pick in the draft out of Kentucky, had his best game of the season, helping to fill the void left by point guard Mike Conley, who missed his third straight game with a left great toe sprain. Dillingham had 12 points and season highs with seven assists and five rebounds.

Suns 127, Lakers 100

In Phoenix, Bradley Beal and Kevin Durant each scored 23

points and the Phoenix Suns celebrated the healthy return of both players with a 127-100 win over the Los Angeles Lakers.

Devin Booker led the way with 26 points and had 10 assists as the Suns snapped a five-game losing streak.

Beal had missed the past five games while Durant had missed seven in a row - both players were sidelined by a strained left calf.

Beal made 10 of 15 shots, including 3 of 6 from 3-point range.

The Lakers were led by Anthony Davis, who scored 25 points and grabbed 15 rebounds. LeBron James added 18 points, eight rebounds and 10 assists. Los Angeles has lost three straight.

The Suns outscored the Lakers 36-18 in the third quarter, turning a tight game into a 98-78 advantage. Booker had 11 points during the run while Jusuf Nurkic had 10.

Spurs 128, Jazz 115

in Salt Lake City, Victor Wembanyama scored 34 points, rookie Stephon Castle matched a season high with 23 and the San Antonio Spurs beat the Utah Jazz 128-115 in an NBA Cup game on Tuesday night.

The 7-foot-3 Wembanyama made six 3-pointers and shot 13 of 23 from the field. Julian Champagnie scored 15 points and made three 3s in the fourth quarter to help the Spurs pull away.

Utah's Lauri Markkanen had to be helped from the court after banging knees with Wembanyama in the fourth quarter.

Keyonte George led Utah with 26 points and shot 6 of 12 from 3. Collin Sexton and John Collins each scored 20 for the Jazz, who were eliminated from the NBA Cup quarterfinals.

13-year-old Suryavanshi becomes the youngest-ever pick in mega IPL auction

NEW DELHI, India, Nov 27, (AP): A 13-year-old cricketer from India's northern state of Bihar could become the sport's latest Twenty20 batting sensation.

The Rajasthan Royals think so highly of Vaibhav Suryavanshi that they paid \$130,000 in the Indian Premier League's mega auction for his services, making him the youngest ever to be selected.

Suryavanshi came to the limelight last month when he scored a century against Australia's under-19 team off just 58 balls before he got out for 104.

At the age of 13 years and 187 days, Suryavanshi broke the record of Bangladesh's present test captain Najmul Hossain Shanto, who at the age of 14 years and 241 days held the previous record of scoring a century at youth level.

The Delhi Capitals also showed interest when the bid for Suryavanshi started at his base price of \$35,500.

"He's been to our high performance center in Nagpur, he had trials there and really impressed our coaching set-up there," Rajasthan CEO Jake Lush McCrum said after the auction ended Monday. "He's an incredible talent and of course you've got to have the confidence so he can step up to the IPL level."



Vaibhav Suryavanshi, one of the youngest Indian cricket players to earn an Indian Premier League contract after Rajasthan Royals (RR) signed for approximately 1.10 crore or \$130,481, walks to bat during local Ranji Trophy cricket league, in Patna, India. (AP)

McCrum described Suryavanshi as a "hell of a talent" and hoped lots of work will go into the coming months before the IPL begins on March 14 with former Indian captain Rahul Dravid among the coaching panel of the franchise.

Suryavanshi idolizes legendary

West Indian batter Brian Lara and often gets tips from former India batter Wasim Jaffer, with whom he met during an under-19 tournament in Bangladesh last year.

Suryavanshi's father, Sanjiv, is his coach and has worked with him since his son showed interest in the game at an early age.

"He is not just my son now, but entire Bihar's son," the elder Suryavanshi told Press Trust of India. "My son has worked hard."

The IPL does not have a formal minimum age requirement, but in 2020 the International Cricket Council set the minimum age of 15 for players to compete internationally.

However, the game's governing body also said at that time that cricket boards can request permission to allow players under 15 to represent their country.

Prayas Ray Barman held the previous record of youngest player to win an IPL contract. He was 16 in 2019 when the Royal Challengers Bengaluru spent about \$200,000 for him. But the wrist spinner faded away after playing just one match.

Pakistani batter Hasan Raza holds the record of youngest cricketer to make his test debut - at the five-day cricket format - at the age of 14 years and 227 days in 1996.

Botafogo closes in on Brazilian Serie A title

RIO DE JANEIRO, Nov 27, (Xinhua): Botafogo returned to the top of Brazil's Serie A championship on Tuesday with a 3-1 away victory over championship rival Palmeiras.

Gregore gave the visitor the lead when he swept a first-time effort into the top-right corner following Thiago Almada's one-touch pass.

The host was reduced to 10 men in the 70th minute after Marcos Rocha was shown a straight red card for lashing out at Igor Jesus with a hand to the face.

It took less than three minutes for Botafogo to capitalize on its numerical advantage as

Jefferson Savarino ran onto Jesus' headed pass and calmly slotted a low shot past goalkeeper Weverton.

Adryelson put the result beyond doubt a minute from time with a towering header at the far post following a Savarino corner.

Richard Rios opened Palmeiras' account by rifling home a first-time effort from 25 yards, but it proved little more than a consolation as the defending champion fell to its eighth defeat of the campaign.

The result leaves Botafogo three points clear of Palmeiras in the 20-team standings with two match days remaining.

"We're very happy to have picked up the three points against an opponent that is also challenging for the title," Jesus said. "This was the victory of a team that doesn't stop working hard and always tries to win. We haven't been at our best in the past few games but this victory will give us confidence." Botafogo, who is bidding for its first top-flight title since 1995, will now turn its attention to Saturday's Copa Libertadores final against Brazilian rival Atletico Mineiro in Buenos Aires.

Sri Lanka and rain allow SA only 80-4 on Day 1

DURBAN, South Africa, Nov 27, (AP): Sri Lanka reduced South Africa to 80-4 in 20.4 overs before rain washed out the rest of the first day of the first cricket test at Kingsmead on Wednesday.

The Sri Lankans, who have not lost three previous tests in Durban, won a crucial toss and opted to bowl in overcast conditions with a pace-heavy attack.

Fast bowlers Asitha Fernando and Vishwa Fernando, no relation, removed the openers by the fourth over.

Lahiru Kumara got the other two wickets and could have had captain Temba Bavuma on 20,

but Kumara was no-balled for overstepping.

Bavuma rode his luck to 28 and Kyle Verreynne was on 9 - they were a combined 26 off 21 balls - when stumps were called after a 3 1/2-hour wait.

Aiden Markram, who has one century and one half-century in five previous tests this year, hit a couple of boundaries through cover and point in the first over but then edged Asitha Fernando to first slip on 9.

Two balls later, fellow opener Tony de Zorzi gave a thick edge off Vishwa Fernando to second slip and South Africa was 14-2 in the fourth over.

Tristan Stubbs was joined by

Bavuma, who was dropped on 1 off Vishwa Fernando by Dimuth Karunaratne at second slip.

With the sun out, Lahiru Kumara's first over went for 17 runs, including a couple of Stubbs boundaries, but he claimed Stubbs on 16 in his second over and Karunaratne made amends with the catch at third slip.

When Kumara bowled David Bedingham at 54-4 in the eighteenth over, Kyle Verreynne came in.

Verreynne and Bavuma plundered 17 runs off another over by Kumara, who should have made Bavuma his third wicket for a catch behind, but he was no-balled.

Agirrezabala has performed admirably during Simon's absence

Goalkeeper Simon could return as Athletic Bilbao looks to continue Europa League form

MADRID, Nov 27, (Xinhua): Athletic Club Bilbao could welcome back Spain international goalkeeper Unai Simon as it looks to take a major step towards assuring its place in the knockout stage of the UEFA Europa League on Thursday.

Simon has been on the sidelines after needing an operation for a wrist ligament injury after helping Spain win

the UEFA European Championship in July, but is now back in full training and was on the substitutes' bench for Athletic's 1-0 win at home to Real Sociedad in the Basque derby on Sunday.

Julen Agirrezabala has performed admirably during Simon's absence, but Athletic coach Ernesto Valverde will look to start giving game time to his No. 1 goalkeeper and

Thursday's home game against Swedish side Elfsborg looks to be a good moment.

Athletic goes into the game sixth in the 36-team group, with three wins and a draw from their four matches so far in the tournament, and another win would leave it on the verge of assuring a top-eight finish.

Valverde has a full squad available and will make some

changes to the side that won at the weekend, with Gorka Guruzeta, Aitor Paredes, Mikel Jauregizar and Alex Berenguer all in with a chance of starting along with Simon.

Elfsborg is currently 24th in the group, occupying the last playoff spot, but has beaten Roma and drawn with Sporting Braga this season, while narrow defeats to Galatasaray and AZ Alkmaar show it is a tough rival

to break down.

If Athletic does win, it could do a favor for its neighbor, Real Sociedad, who currently sits one place below Elfsborg.

The side from San Sebastian has a difficult home match against Ajax, with the Dutch side in a similar position to Athletic on 10 points.

Sunday's defeat in Bilbao seemed to open up a divide be-

tween coach Imanol Alguacil and some players, with Imanol highly critical of his side's first-half display and striker Mikel Oyarzabal rejecting the coach's comments.

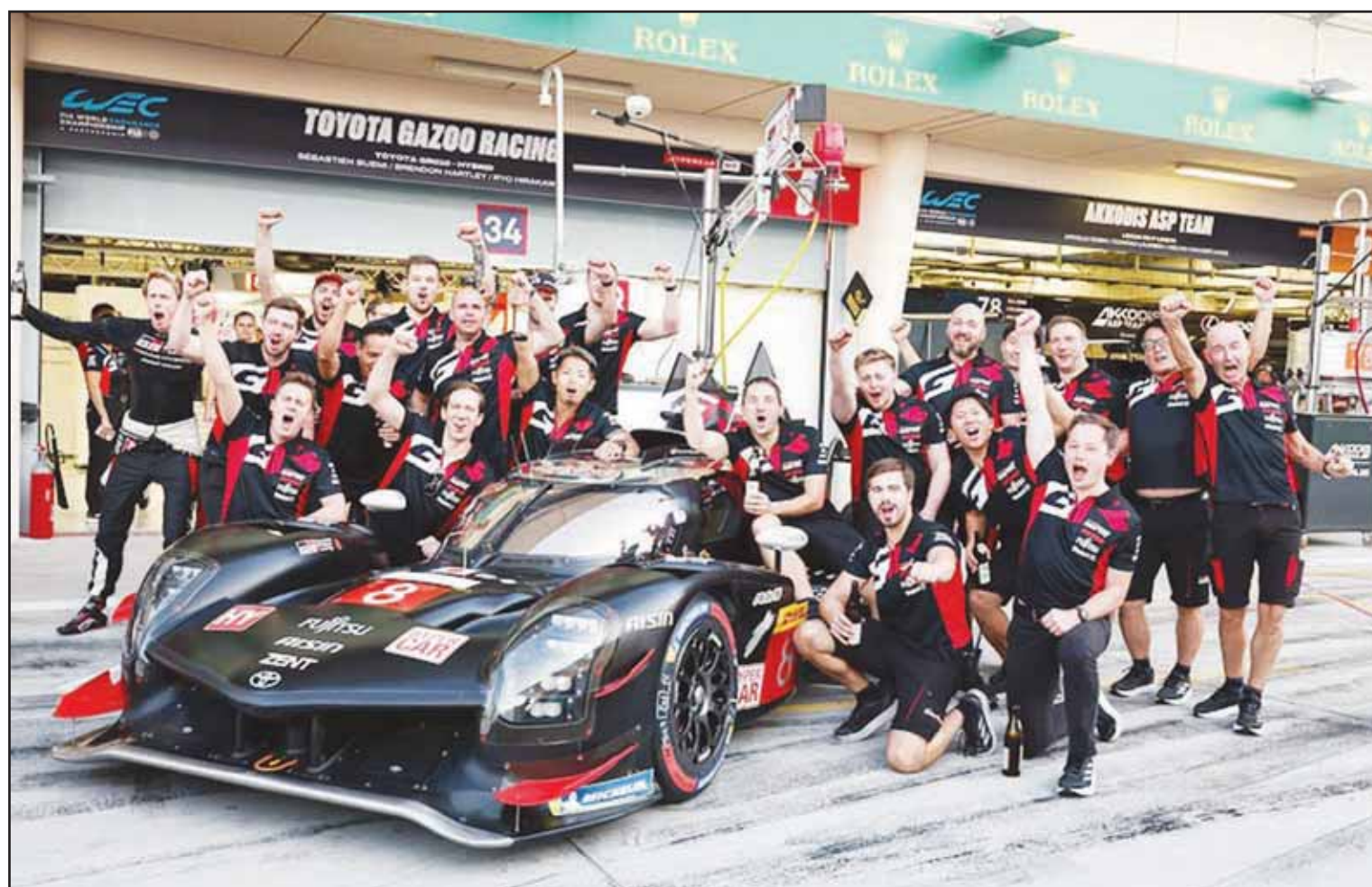
Imanol is likely to make changes to the side ahead of a key league game at home to Real Betis, but failure to win could see Real Sociedad's European adventure heading to a premature halt.

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing claims victory at 8 Hours of Bahrain

Toyota takes sixth-consecutive manufacturers' championship title

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: TOYOTA GAZOO Racing (TGR) has secured top podium position at 8 Hours of Bahrain, the final race of the 2024 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) season. Sébastien Buemi, Brendon Hartley, and Ryo Hirakawa raced to victory in the No.8 Toyota GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar thanks to their incredible team effort and a dominant driving performance. TGR's relentless determination has also helped Toyota achieve its sixth successive manufacturers' World Championship title.

Nobuyuki Takemura, Chief Representative of Middle East & Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, commented: "Buemi, Hartley, and Hirakawa, thank you for ending this season on such an incredible high note with your first-place victory in the Toyota GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar! Your dedication, masterful performance, and team spirit is what made this year such a success for TGR as well as for Toyota by achieving the manufacturers' World Championship title. We look forward to returning to racetracks around the world next season to showcase our ongoing advancements in electrified vehicle technology and continue our pursuit of 'ever-better



TOYOTA GAZOO Racing team celebrates.

cars', as well as strengthening our commitment to providing sustainable mobility for all, with no one left behind. Thank you to every member of TGR for making this year yet another success, and to our fans and supporters worldwide for cheering us on every step of the way."

The chequered flag in Bahrain concluded a 2024 season which featured 72 hours of racing, at eight rounds on four continents over almost 10 months. TOYOTA GAZOO Racing's season record stands at five podiums, including three wins, and two pole positions,



Drivers in action during the 8 Hours of Bahrain race.

earning 190 World Championship points.

The race kicked off with Buemi leading confidently from pole, setting a strong pace for the team.

He showed impressive resolve after sustaining an early rear collision, quickly recovering several positions before Hartley took over late in the second hour.

Hartley and Hirakawa then demonstrated determination in managing tyre wear, working diligently to keep the No.8 Toyota GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar within reach of the front runners.

Two safety car periods in the

second half of the race closed the gaps throughout the Hypercar field and set up a thrilling final stage. When racing resumed, Buemi was in 10th, just 15 seconds behind the leader. He mounted an extraordinary charge, overtaking multiple competitors to claim second place following his final pit stop.

With only half an hour left in the season, Buemi completed an astonishing comeback to seize the lead.

He extended his advantage, crossing the finish line comfortably to win by 27.539 seconds, marking the No.8 Toyota GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar's second win of the season and the team's 10th in Bahrain.

Over the years, Toyota has been participating in many different forms of motorsports, including Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC), and the Nürburgring 24 Hours endurance race.

Toyota's participation in these events was overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when Toyota established TGR, to consolidate all of its

motorsport's activities under one in-house brand. Representing Toyota's belief that 'the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,' TGR highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of Toyota's commitment to making 'ever-better' cars. Harnessing years of experience gained under the extreme conditions of various motorsports events, TGR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone.

Race Notes:

No. 8 Toyota GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar (Sébastien Buemi, Brendon Hartley and Ryo Hirakawa)

- o Position: 1st
- o No. of Laps: 235
- o Best lap: 1:50.492
- o Elapsed time: 8:01:25.839

Kuwait Club takes on Al-Arabi

Kazma maintains good run in championship

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: The fifth round of the Federation Volleyball



Easy win for Kazma over Al-Nasr.

Championship is set to take place today, featuring two exciting matchups at the Federation Hall in the Sheikh Saad Indoor Halls Complex. Al-Qadsiya will face Al-Nasr at 5:00 pm, followed by a clash between Kuwait and Al-Arabi at 7:00 pm.

In the first game, Al-Qadsiya is favored to secure a win over Al-Nasr due to the evident technical disparity between the teams. However, the second match promises to be more competitive, as Al-Arabi aims to challenge Kuwait Club and demonstrate its ability to contend for the title against the "Al-Abyad."

Kazma delivered a commanding 3-0 victory over Al-Nasr, while Al-Shabab overcame Al-Sulaibikhat 3-1. Kazma maintained its unbeaten streak, increasing its tally to 9 points from three consecutive wins.

Al-Nasr, a newcomer to the tournament, remains without points after three losses. Meanwhile, Al-Shabab improved to 4 points from one win and three losses, while Al-Sulaibikhat continues to struggle with four consecutive defeats and no points.

Kazma dominated its match against Al-Nasr, winning in straight sets with scores of 25-15, 25-16, and 25-19. Al-Shabab showed resilience in its game, recovering from a first-set loss (19-25) to take the next three sets 25-22, 25-16, and 25-19.

The championship follows a single-round league format, with the top four teams advancing to the semi-finals. The first-place team will face the fourth-place team, while the second and third-place teams will compete for a spot in the final.

UConn falls again in Maui

Kansas holds off Duke after Dickinson ejected

LAS VEGAS, Nov 27, (AP): Dajuan Harris scored 14 points and top-ranked Kansas withstood the ejection of star center Hunter Dickinson to beat No. 11 Duke 75-72 in the Vegas Showdown on Tuesday night.

Dickinson, who entered the game averaging 17.8 points and 10.4 rebounds, received a fragrant-2 foul and was ejected for kicking the Blue Devils' Maliq Brown in the head midway through the second half.

Highly touted Duke freshman Cooper Flagg took advantage of Dickinson's absence, and the Blue Devils kept it close all the way to the buzzer. Zeke Mayo added 12 points for Kansas (6-0), and Dickinson and AJ Storr each scored 11.

Tyrese Proctor led Duke (4-2) with 15 points, Flagg scored 13, Kon Knueppel had 11 and Ston James finished with 10.

Mayo put Kansas ahead for good when he made a jumper with 1:57 left for a 73-71 lead. Flagg hit a free throw for Duke and Rylan Griffen answered



Iowa State guard Keshon Gilbert (10) kicks the ball as Dayton forward Nate Santos (2) passes during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game at the Maui Invitational in Lahaina, Hawaii. (AP)

with two foul shots with 2 seconds left.

Kansas has won four of the past five meetings with the Blue Devils and six of eight. Nine of the past 10 meetings have been decided by single digits.

Colorado 73, UConn 72

In Lahaina, Andrej Jakimovski converted an off-balance layup with 8 seconds left, and Colorado handed No. 2 UConn

its second loss in two days at the Maui Invitational, beating the two-time defending national champion.

A day after a 99-97 overtime loss to Memphis that left Huskies coach Dan Hurley livid about the officiating, UConn (4-2) couldn't shake the unranked Buffaloes (5-1), who shot 62.5% in the second half.

With Colorado trailing 72-71

in the closing seconds, Jakimovski drove to his right and absorbed contact from UConn's Liam McNeeley. He tossed the ball toward the glass and the shot was good as he fell to the floor. Hassan Diarra missed a 3-pointer just ahead of the buzzer for UConn.

Auburn 85, UNC 72

In Lahaina, Johni Broome had 23 points and a career-best 19 rebounds to lead No. 4 Auburn to an 85-72 victory over No. 12 North Carolina in a Maui Invitational semifinal Tuesday night.

Miles Kelly added 15 points and Chad Baker-Mazara scored 14 for the Tigers (6-0), who never trailed and led by as many as 19. They will play Memphis for the tournament championship on Wednesday.

Broome scored 18 points in the first half and finished 9 of 18 from the field. He also had five assists and three blocks.

Chaney Johnson had 11 points and eight rebounds for Auburn. Denver Jones and Tahaad Pettiford scored 10 apiece.

Al-Qadsiya eyes vital win against Al-Arabi in the handball league

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: Al-Qadsiya enters a must-win clash against its traditional rival Al-Arabi at 6:30 pm today in the tenth round of the preliminary phase of the Handball League. The match, which carries significant weight for both teams, will follow an important face-off between Al-Qurain and Al-Fahaheel at 5:00 pm. Both games are set to take place at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Halls Complex.

Currently sitting in ninth place with 8 points from 4 wins and 5 losses, Al-Qadsiya faces a challenging situation as it battles to secure a top-six spot needed to advance to the Premier League stage.

On the other hand, Al-Arabi, with 14 points and high morale following a key victory over Al-Salmiya in the previous round, leads the standings and looks to consolidate its position.

The top five positions are closely contested by Al-Arabi, Al-Salmiya, Burgan, Kuwait Club, and Kazma, while Al-Sulaibikhat, Al-Qadsiya, Al-Fahaheel, and Al-Qurain



Players in action.

compete for the final qualification spot.

In the earlier game, Al-Qurain (seventh place) and Al-Fahaheel (eighth place) both have 8 points, though Al-Fahaheel holds a game in hand. A win for Al-Fahaheel could significantly boost its chances of breaking into the qualification zone.

Recent matches saw Al-Yarmouk defeat Al-Sahel 35-28 and Al-Fahaheel claim an impressive 35-18 win over Al-Tadamon.

Best of the Rest

Coote under investigation:

Suspended Premier League referee David Coote is the subject of another investigation by the Football Association, this time following allegations that he discussed the possibility of booking a player with a fan before a match.

Coote denies any wrongdoing, according to British newspaper The Sun, which published the allegations.

The Sun has claimed Coote discussed the prospect of booking a then-Leeds player, Ezgjan Alioski, with a supporter of the club the day before a game against West Bromwich Albion in the second-tier Championship in October 2019. The newspaper alleges that after Coote booked the player, he messaged the supporter back to say: "I hope you backed as discussed." (AP)

Norgaard's red card overturned:

Brentford has been successful in its appeal to get a red card overturned after midfielder Christian Norgaard was sent off against Everton in the Premier League this past weekend.

The Denmark international was shown a straight red card following a VAR check after he lunged in attempting to poke the ball into the goal from close range, only to make contact with the knee of Everton goalkeeper Jordan Pick-

ford instead.

The red card for serious foul play came in the 41st minute at Goodison Park on Saturday. Brentford held on for a 0-0 draw.

The Football Association said Wednesday that Brentford's appeal against the decision was successful and that Norgaard is available to play the next three matches instead of being suspended. (AP)

Zhang confident of recovery:

China forward Zhang Yuning said he was confident of his recovery from an ankle injury ahead of China's next FIFA World Cup qualifier.

Zhang, who twisted his right ankle in China's 1-0 win over Bahrain on November 14, has planned to seek treatment at a rehabilitation center in Amsterdam, Holland.

"We will go to a professional rehabilitation center in Amsterdam, Holland in a few days, where Zhang Yuning can receive comprehensive treatment and have a full recovery," his father Zhang Quancheng said.

Zhang Yuning, who scored the winner in China's win over Bahrain, said he had to recover in time for China's next match -- the World Cup qualifier against Saudi Arabia on March 20.

"I yearn to play for the national team, and I'm sure I will be available then," he said. (Xinhua)



Manchester City's Erling Haaland scores his side's third goal during the Champions League opening phase soccer match between Manchester City and Feyenoord at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

Sports

Lewandowski joins Ronaldo & Messi in CL 100-goal club as Man City draws

Bayern pips struggling PSG

ROME, Nov 27, (AP): Robert Lewandowski joined Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi as the only players in Champions League history with 100 or more goals. But Erling Haaland is on a faster pace than anyone by boosting his total to 46 goals at age 24.

Still, Haaland's brace wasn't enough for Manchester City in a 3-3 draw with Feyenoord that extended the Premier League champion's winless streak to six matches.

Lewandowski's early penalty kick started Barcelona off to a 3-0 win over previously unbeaten Brest to move into second place in the new single-league format. The Poland striker added goal No. 101 in second-half stoppage time.

Ronaldo leads the all-time scoring list with 140 goals and Messi is next with 129. But neither Ronaldo nor Messi play in the Champions League anymore following moves to Saudi Arabia and the United States, respectively.

The 36-year-old Lewandowski required 125 matches to reach the century mark, two more than Messi (123) and 12 fewer than Ronaldo (137).

Barcelona also got a second-half score from Dani Olmo. The top eight finishers in the standings advance directly to the round of 16 in March. Teams ranked ninth to 24th go into a knockout playoffs round in February, while the bottom 12 teams are eliminated.

Haaland converted a first-half penalty to eclipse Messi as the youngest player to reach 45 goals then scored City's third after the break to raise his total to 46 goals in 44 games.

Ilkay Gundogan had City's second. But then Feyenoord struck back with goals from Anis Hadj Moussa, Santiago Gimenez and David Hancko.

Inter Milan beat Leipzig 1-0 with an own goal to move atop the standings with 13 points, one more than The Serie A champion is the only club that hasn't conceded a goal.

Bayern Munich beat Paris Saint-Germain 1-0 - the same score from the 2020

final between the two teams. PSG ended with 10 men and remained in the elimination zone. The French powerhouse has struggled in Europe after Kylian Mbappe's move to Real Madrid.

Kim Min-jae's first-half header was enough for Bayern, especially after Ousmane Dembelé was sent off in the 56th with his second yellow.

Atalanta moved within two points of the lead with a 6-1 win at Young Boys. Charles De Ketelaere scored two and assisted on three other goals for Atalanta.

Also, Arsenal kept red-hot striker Viktor Gyokeres quiet in a 5-1 win over Sporting Lisbon; and Germany star Florian Wirtz scored two goals and was involved in two more as Bayer Leverkusen boosted its chances of finishing in the top eight with a 5-0 rout of Salzburg.

AC Milan followed up its win at Real Madrid with a 3-2 victory at last-place Slovan Bratislava in an early match.

Christian Pulisic put the seven-time champion ahead midway through the first half by finishing off a counterattack. Then Rafael Leao restored the Rossoneri's advantage after Tigran Barseghyan had equalized for Bratislava and Tammy Abraham quickly added another.

Nino Marcelli scored with a long-range strike in the 88th for Bratislava, which ended with 10 men.

Bratislava has lost all five of its matches. Argentina World Cup winner Julian Alvarez scored twice and Atletico Madrid routed Sparta Prague 6-0 in the other early game.

Alvarez scored with a free kick 15 minutes in and Marcos Llorente added a long-range strike before the break. Alvarez finished off a counterattack early in the second half after being set up by substitute Antoine Griezmann, who then marked his 100th Champions League game by getting on the scoresheet himself.

Angel Correa added a late brace for Atletico, which earned its biggest away win in Europe.

Atletico beat Paris Saint-Germain in the previous round and extended its winning streak across all competitions to six matches.



Young Boys' Darian Males, from left, Atalanta's Rafael Toloi, Young Boys' Cedric Itten and Atalanta's Ben Godfrey during the UEFA Champions League opening phase soccer match between BSC Young Boys and Atalanta BC in Bern, Switzerland. (AP)

Raad Kuwait claims Flag Football League title



Flag Football League champion Raad Kuwait.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: Raad Kuwait clinched the Flag Football League Championship with a thrilling 29-22 victory over Al-Shaheed in the final match held at Boulevard Stadium. The event was attended by prominent figures, including Sheikh Mishaal Talal Al-Fahad, former Vice President of the Asian American Football Federation and founder of the game in Kuwait; Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Nawaf, Vice President of the Kuwait Olympic Committee;

Mohammed Khalfan, Director General of the Kuwait Olympic Committee; and Madi Al-Mutairi, President of the Kuwait American Football Committee.

The final delivered excitement and intense competition, with the first half ending in a tie before Raad Kuwait secured the win with a decisive touchdown.

Sheikh Mishaal Al-Fahad expressed gratitude to the Kuwait Olympic Committee for

its support, emphasizing that the championship should serve as a stepping stone for future local tournaments, fostering player development and interaction as the Kuwaiti national team prepares for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic qualifiers.

Madi Al-Mutairi shared his pride in the tournament's success, congratulating the top-performing teams and wishing all participants success in future competitions.

Kuwait national team begins training camp in Doha

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 27: The Kuwait national team will hold its first training session this evening at Qatar University Stadium as part of their training camp in Doha, preparing for the upcoming "Khaleeji Zain 26" tournament, which Kuwait will host from December 21 to January 3.

The Kuwait delegation arrived in Doha yesterday, led by Federation Board Member Ayman Al-Hussaini.

The group includes technical and administrative staff along with 15 players: Suleiman Abdul Ghafoor, Abdul Rahman Al-Fadhli, Mahdi Dashti, Montaser Abdul Salam, Ali Khalaf, Salman Al-Awadhi, Bandar Bursali, Hamad Harbi, Nasser Khader, Hassan Hamdan, Fawaz Ayed, Youssef Majed, Moaz Al-Aseima, Reda Hani, and Mashari Ghannam.

These players participated in the final training session in Kuwait recently.

Al-Qadisiya and Kuwait SC players are expected to join the squad on December 5.

These include Khaled Al-Rashidi, Khaled Ibrahim, Mubarak Al-Fanani, Saud Al-Hoshan, Eid Al-Rashidi, Fahad Al-Hajri,

Sami Al-Sanea, Moaz Al-Dhafiri, Rashid Al-Dosari, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, Faisal Zayed, Khaled Al-Kharqawi, and Mohammed Daham.

Injuries prevented Mashari Ghannam and Youssef Nasser

from traveling with Kuwait Club, while Sultan Al-Enezi remains committed to his club Dhofar in Oman. Both Sultan and Youssef are expected to join the camp within the next two days.

The camp schedule includes three friendly matches: against Syria on December 9, Lebanon on December 12, and Yemen on December 15, marking the conclusion of the team's preparations.



Kuwait head coach addresses the players.

Al-Wasl moves into fourth

Al-Hilal draws with Al-Sadd in Asian Champions League

DOHA, Qatar, Nov 27, (AP): Al-Hilal drew 1-1 with Al-Sadd of Qatar to maintain Saudi Arabia's control of the group stage of the Asian Champions League Elite.

Al-Hilal is second in the 12-team group, level on 13 points with Cristiano Ronaldo's Al-Nassr and two behind leader Al-Ahli. All three have already progressed to the knockout stage with three group games still remaining.

Even without the injured Neymar, four-time champion Al-Hilal took an early lead as central defender Ali Al-Bulaihi scored from a corner in the 10th minute. Al-Sadd, going for

a third Asian title, leveled through Paulo Otavio with 18 minutes remaining.

In the closing stages, Al-Hilal had three penalty appeals reviewed by VAR but none were awarded.

Elsewhere in the western zone, Al-Wasl of the United Arab Emirates defeated Iraq's Al-Shorta 3-1 to move into fourth.

In the eastern zone, Vissel Kobe of Japan stayed top with a 3-2 win over Central Coast Mariners to leave the Australian team struggling with one point from five games.

Two-time champion Ulsan HD is pointless and bottom after a 3-1 defeat at home to Shanghai Port.

It was a good day for Chinese teams as Shandong Taishan beat Malaysia's Johor 1-0.

Elsewhere, Kawasaki Frontale of Japan won 3-0 at Thailand's Buriram United.



Al-Bulaihi

Best of the Rest

Chess Open concludes in China:

The fourth "Belt and Road" Chess Open concluded in Qinhuangdao city of north China's Hebei Province on Wednesday.

The seven-day event attracted 98 players from 16 countries and regions, including China, Spain, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan.

Chinese player Xiao Tong won the open group, followed by China's Kong Xiangrui and Dai Changren after nine rounds of competition.

Foreign chess players also went to seven chess schools in Qinhuangdao to interact with local children during the tournament. (Xinhua)

FUFA bans referee for life:

The Federation of Uganda Football Association (FUFA) has permanently banned referee Ali Kadu due to his involvement in match manipulation.

FUFA announced on Tuesday that 12 individuals have been sanctioned for their roles in a match manipulation scheme orchestrated by a foreign betting syndicate, which targeted several fixtures during the 2023-24 season.

Kaduu had initially been suspended for six months earlier this year to facilitate investigations.

The sanctions were issued by the FUFA Ethics and Disciplinary Committee. "Investigations and the Adjudicatory held hearings against several football individuals for alleged breach of Article 43 of the FUFA Ethics and Disciplinary Code," read the statement.

The committee emphasized that the sanctions were determined based on the specific mitigating and aggravating circumstances for each individual, taking into account their level of involvement in match-fixing and their cooperation during the investigation. (Xinhua)

Messi's son makes debut:

Thiago Messi, the eldest son of the Argentina star, has made his debut in the "Newell's Cup" tournament in the countryside city of Rosario.

The 12-year-old Messi played with the No. 10 jersey of an Inter Miami youth team, which lost 1-0 on Monday to host Newell's Old Boys in the traditional under-13 competition. The team also played Tuesday.

Lionel Messi took his first steps as a footballer in the Argentinean club in Rosario, 300 kilometers (186 miles) northwest of capital Buenos Aires.

Thiago's mother, Antonela Rocuzzo, and several members of his family, including grandparents Jorge Messi and Celia Cuccitini, were in the stands to watch him play. Lionel Messi did not attend.

Thiago, who was substituted in the second half, played with his friend Benjamin Suárez, son of Uruguayan striker Luis Suárez, Messi's teammate and close friend at Barcelona and now at Inter Miami. (AP)

Stokes opted out of IPL bidding:

England test captain Ben Stokes said he opted out of the bidding in the Indian Premier League to prioritize playing international cricket in what he described as the "back end" of his career.

Stokes sat out the lucrative IPL this year to ease his workload following knee problems and was a notable absentee in the auction for the 2025 edition.

Stokes, one of cricket's biggest stars, could have commanded a huge fee, given he signed a contract worth \$2 million with Chennai Super Kings for last season. His priorities lie elsewhere, though.

"I obviously want to play as long as I possibly can," Stokes told the BBC the day before England begins its test series against New Zealand. "Looking after my body and looking after myself as much as I can is key to that - prioritizing games and when I do play."

"It's about looking at what I've got ahead and making the decision that I think is right for me to be able to prolong my career as long as possible. I want to be wearing this England shirt for as long as I can." (AP)