



## Kuwait's Amir, Crown Prince, PM congratulate UAE on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable of congratulations to the President of the UAE Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan on the advent of his country's 53rd National Day.

lauded the vast achievements and developments in the UAE, expressing pride in the strength of ties and showcasing eagerness to bolstering them on all possible domains. His Highness the Amir wished more progress and development for the UAE under the country's wise leadership. Similarly, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah

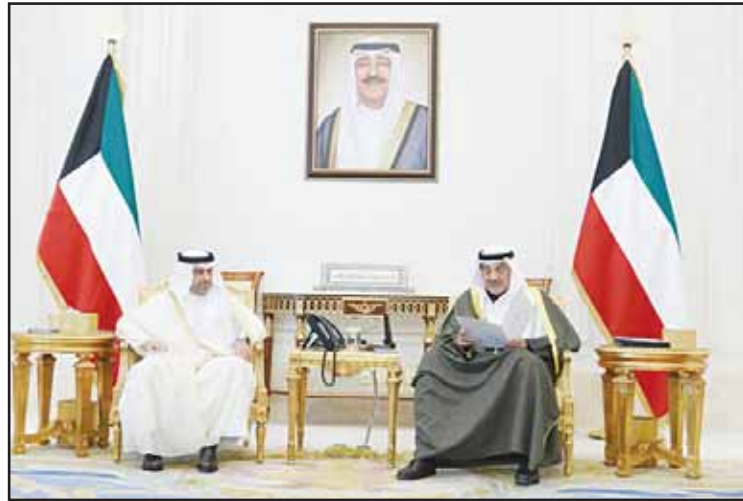
Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable of congratulations to the President of the UAE Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan on the advent of his country's 53rd National Day. In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished the UAE leadership and people more progress and development.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdulah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent on Monday a cable of congratulations to the President of the UAE Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan on the occasion of his country's 53rd National Day.

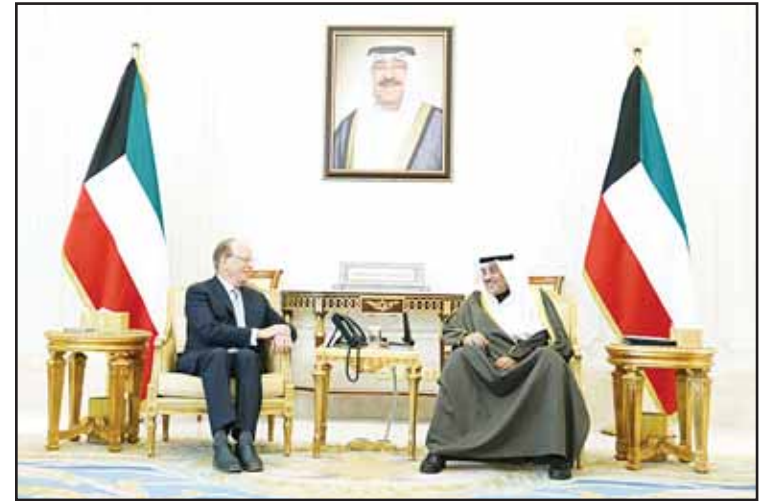
Continued on Page 5



His Highness the Crown Prince receives Omani Ambassador, who delivered a letter from Sultan Haitham bin Tareq addressed to His Highness the Amir.



His Highness the Crown Prince receives the Ambassador of Qatar, who delivered an invitation from Qatari Prime Minister to participate in the upcoming Doha Forum.



His Highness the Crown Prince receives the Chairman and CEO of BlackRock.

Crown Prince Diwan photos

## Crown Prince receives diplomatic correspondence, BlackRock execs

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace, Monday, a written letter addressed to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah from Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tareq.

Attending the ceremony were Minister of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Undersecretary at the Amiri Diwan and head of His Highness the Amir office Ambassador Ahmad Al-Fahad, head of His Highness the Crown Prince office retired Lieut-General Jamal Al-Thiyab and Foreign Affairs Undersecretary at the Diwan of the Crown Prince Mazen Al-Essa.

Continued on Page 5

## Summit's final communique calls for greater cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2, (KUNA): Arab Gulf leaders, in a final communique of the 45th GCC Summit, held in Kuwait Sunday, called for bolstering cooperation amongst Council members on all possible domains as well as addressing numerous challenges facing the region.

gence (AI) quantum computing, and inter-government work cooperation. The council commended the results of the Summit for the Future, which was held in New York on September 22, which approved the Pact for the Future. The document sets course for security, sustainable development, Artificial Intelligence (AI) as well as finding solutions to ailing problems such climate change and the digital gap.

The final communique, issued by the Supreme Council of the GCC, expressed deep sorrow over the passing of the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, saying that the deceased Gulf leader left a legacy of achievements and accomplishments that would be remembered for years to come by the Gulf, Arab, and Muslim nations.

The council reflected on the success of the global Logistics Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on October 12-14, 2024, which hopefully assist in developing global logistic work and operations to achieve global sustainability.

The council congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on gaining trust of the Kuwaiti people, touting his leadership of the State of Kuwait in addition to contributions to the GCC.

The council valued the UAE and the World Health Organization (WHO) collaboration to establish a global center for logistic emergencies and also the signing of an agreement worth USD three million between the two sides to support Sudanese refugees in Chad.

### Accomplishments

The council expressed gratitude to the Amir of Qatari Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani for chairing the previous 44th summit in Doha, commending the numerous important accomplishments that came out of the summit.

The supreme council expressed appreciation toward Qatar's award for combating corruption and the Qatari vision to create a world rid of corruption as part of the international efforts within this task. The award, established in 2016, had become an international platform to celebrating organizations, institutes and individuals who contribution to anti-corruption and good governance.

It congratulated Saudi Arabia on the successful Hajj Season and stressed that the Kingdom, leadership and people, had done their utmost to serve the pilgrims from all around the globe.

The council lauded the Third Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) summit in Doha, which highlighted "Sports Diplomacy" as a tool to bring the globe together in harmony as observed in the 2022 FIFA World Cup hosted by Qatar.

The council lauded the outcome of the extraordinary Arab-Islamic summit hosted by Saudi Arabia, which focused on the Palestinian cause and unconditional support to the Palestinian people for a sovereign independent state.

The Supreme Council commended efforts within Cyber Security amongst GCC countries, especially the one led by Saudi Arabia within the 2024-28 strategy, which launched its unified platform in this regard.

The council touched on the Bahraini initiative to host the intra-Islamic dialogue conference in February of 2025, deeming the event an excellent platform to promote dialogue, understanding, and unity among Muslim nations.

The Supreme Council congratulated US President-elect Donald Trump on winning the election in November, hoping that the US-GCC ties would go forward during his Presidency.

In the final communique, the council congratulated Bahrain on successfully hosting the 33rd Arab Summit on May 16, 2024, commending the excellent preparation and results of the grand Arab event.

Meanwhile, the council reviewed the GCC Secretariat's report on achieving the vision of Saudi Arabia King Salman bin Abdulaziz's vision approved in the 36th GCC Summit in 2015, affirming that the council worked tirelessly to bolster economic unity, defense, and security amongst GCC member states to safeguard Gulf interest and bolstering strategic cooperation and coordination regionally and internationally.

On Qatar hosting of the 2024 the Web Summit, the final communique of the council lauded the Gulf country for organizing the event, which resulted in a pledge of USD one billion to support emerging companies in Qatar and the region, part of the Qatari 2030 Vision for development.

The council called on all GCC entities to implement the vision of the Saudi King according to the agreed upon schedule to push forward for overall development, tasking in the process, the GCC Secretariat to work on a report to be forwarded to the council.

The Council also commended Bahrain on the success of the ISF World School Summer Games. On Qatar hosting of the 2024 the Web Summit, the final communique of the council lauded the Gulf country for organizing the event, which resulted in a pledge of USD one billion to support emerging companies in Qatar and the region, part of the Qatari 2030 Vision for development.

On joint GCC cooperation, the Supreme Council viewed efforts, based on the 2015 Saudi initiatives, to transition from the phase of cooperation to unification, tasking the Secretariat to look further into the matter and take the necessary decisions.

The council lauded the Kuwait-hosted fourth senior-level conference on bolstering global cooperation in fighting terrorism and building flexible mechanisms for border security -- the Kuwait phase of the Dushanbe process on November 4-5, 2024, which supports the UN global agreement on coordinating efforts against terrorism.

Continued on Page 5

## Indians vent 'frustration' after 19-hour Kuwait airport ordeal

'Not entitled' passport comment leaves bitter aftertaste

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Indian passengers flying from Mumbai to Manchester reportedly faced severe issues during their 19-hour ordeal at Kuwait International Airport after their flight made an emergency landing due to an engine fire. The passengers allege they received no food or assistance during their wait.

According to a report published by NDTV, a chaotic video emerged on social media showing Indian passengers of the Gulf Air flight from Mumbai to Manchester arguing with the airport authorities. They claimed that only travelers from the European Union, the UK, and the US were provided with accommodation, while those holding Indian, Pakistani, and other Southeast Asian passports were left without help.

Continued on Page 5

### MPW minister assesses progress

## Al-Mashaan pushes to expedite bridge project

By Mohammed Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: As part of the ongoing efforts by the Ministry of Public Works to enhance infrastructure, the Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan visited the Sabah Al-Nasser Bridge project on Monday to review the latest developments and assess the progress of the bridge's field maintenance work.



Ministry of Public Works photo  
Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan during her inspection visit to the Sabah Al-Nasser Bridge Project.

In a press statement, Minister Al-Mashaan said the purpose of her visit was to closely monitor the project's progress.

She affirmed the need to accelerate the completion of the project, and urged the team to increase both labor and equipment to ensure the project is finished on time and in accordance with the terms of the signed contract.

Highlighting the importance of maintaining road and transportation services for ensuring a

better future for citizens, Dr. Al-Mashaan said it is essential to regularly monitor the bridge's condition and perform necessary maintenance to ensure the safety of both the bridge and surrounding roads.

She reiterated the urgent need to complete the bridge's construction and maintenance, given its significance, particularly with the high number of trucks on the road, and the traffic congestion in the area.

Dr. Al-Mashaan urged the project team to put forth their best efforts to complete the project, which will benefit the local community.

Based on the established standards and requirements, the minister instructed relevant teams from the ministry and the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation to expedite the implementation phases of the project.

### Newswatch

Passenger numbers surge 34.7%

### 56 dead in Guinea stadium stampede

CONAKRY, Guinea, Dec 2, (AP): At least 56 people, including children, have died after fans at a soccer game in Guinea allegedly clashed over a disputed call by the referee, authorities said Monday.

The stampede broke out on Sunday afternoon at the stadium in the city of Nzerekore during the final of a local tournament between the Labe and Nzerekore teams in honor of Guinea's military leader, Mamadi Doumbouya.

BEIRUT: Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have deployed in Syria to back the government's counteroffensive against a surprise advance by insurgents who seized the largest city of Aleppo last week, a militia official and a war monitor said Monday.

Insurgents led by jihadi group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham launched a two-pronged attack on Aleppo and moved into the countryside around Idlib and neighboring Hama province. (AP)

## Kuwait DGCA fires warning on violating in-flight smoking ban

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has warned licensed air operators about the dangers of violating the Environmental Protection Law No. 42/2014 and its

amendments regarding the ban on smoking in transportation, revealing that penalties could reach up to KD 200,000.

According to informed sources, DGCA sent a reminder to air operators about the Environmental Protection Law

Continued on Page 5

6 rescued

## Two lives lost in Adan blaze

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Fire broke out Monday afternoon in a residential home in Adan, resulting in the tragic deaths of two women.

According to a press statement issued by the Kuwait Fire Force, firefighters from Qurain and Bai-raq fire stations rushed to the site of the incident, managed to control the blaze, and rescued six people

Continued on Page 5

## MoSA takes action on coop violations

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Ministry of Social Affairs has announced that it will take all necessary legal measures against any parties found to be involved in legal violations within cooperative societies or their supply chains, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This follows a complaint filed by a citizen regarding the fruit and vegetable branches, which is currently under investigation by the relevant authorities.

In a press statement, the Ministry emphasized that these actions are in line with the instructions of Minister Amthal

Continued on Page 5

8 KFH participates in Industries and Construction Exhibition

8 Burgan Bank partners with Soroptimist Kuwait to support UN's 'Orange the World' campaign



10 Zain Group enters agreement to acquire remaining 70% of IHS Kuwait Limited



## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 05:01 Asr ..... 14:30  
 Sunrise .. 06:25 Maghrib .. 16:49  
 Zohr ..... 11:37 Isha ..... 18:11

# Local

## Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

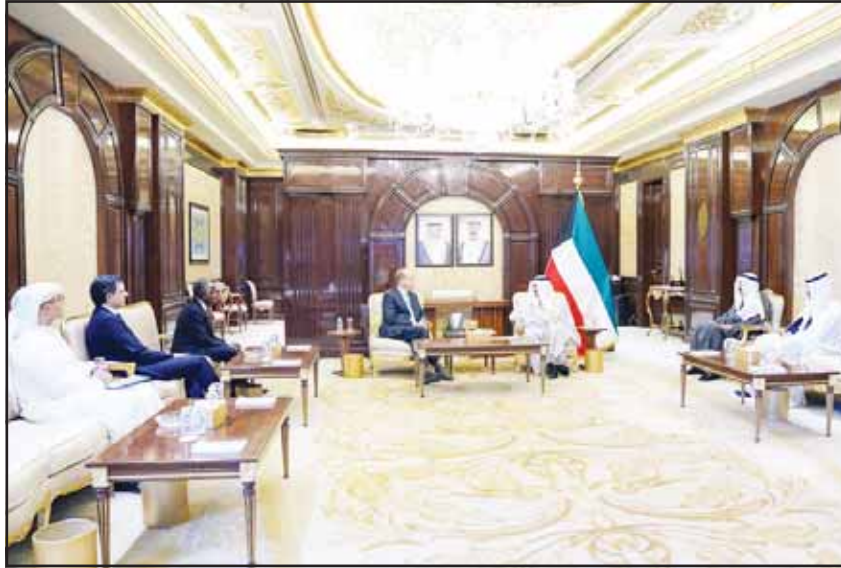
**By Day:** Mild and partly cloudy with light variable wind changing to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 06-28 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain later on.  
**By Night:** Rather cold to cold

## Weather

and cloudy to partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 06-28 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	22	12

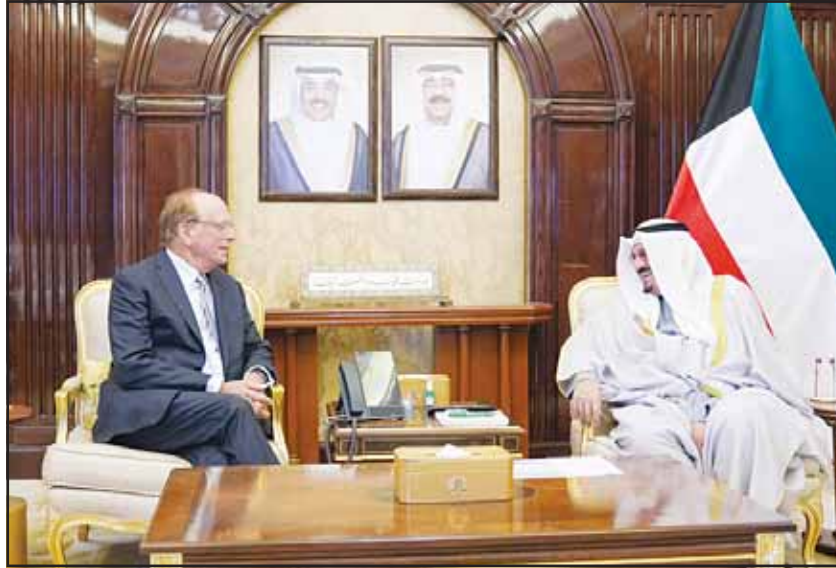
Kuwait Airport	21	09
Abdaly	22	07
Bubyan	22	11
Jahra	24	13
Failaka Island	21	15
Salmiyah	21	08
Ahmadi	21	08
Jal Aliyah	23	11



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives the BlackRock Chairman and CEO and the accompanying delegation.

## Prime Minister receives BlackRock officials

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Monday, BlackRock Chairman and CEO, Larry Fink, Chairman & CEO of Global Infrastructure Partners, Adebayo Ogunsisi, as well as Global Head of the Financial and Strategic Investors Group,



PM Diwan photos  
 His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives the BlackRock Chairman and CEO.

Charles Hatami.

Attending the meeting were Chief of His Highness' the Prime Minister Diwan, Abdulaziz Al-Dakheel, and Head of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, Sheikh Dr. Mishal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. (KUNA)

## Kuwait lauds UN COP16 talks platform to fight climate shift

RIYADH, Dec 2, (KUNA): Kuwait on Monday hailed the ongoing UN biodiversity conference COP16 as a "platform" for knowledge exchange on efforts to fight climate change, saying such gatherings are crucial to ensure a sustainable future.

Kuwait's participation in the UN COP16 conference is a testament to national commitment towards global efforts aiming to address environmental challenges linked with climate change, Environment Public Authority chief Sameera Al-Kandari told KUNA on the sidelines of the talks, calling for more international cooperation on the matter.

On Kuwait's "environmental vision," the official said it falls in line with similar plans pursued by countries around the region, including Saudi Arabia's Middle East Green Initiative, which are instrumental in achieving sustainability.

The UN conference, in which a number of Kuwaiti state bodies are taking part, is expected to yield a number of definitive solutions to environmental challenges, added the official, citing droughts and deforestation as chief among them.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) is committed to environment protection plans on both regional and global levels, its acting chief Waleed Al-Bahar told a UN biodiversity conference in the Saudi capital on Monday.

Amid the UN COP16 conference, KFAED plans on sealing a number of significant agreements aiming to keep the effects of climate change in check, chief among them projects that allow countries around the world to cope with "rapid" environmental changes, he said.

# Amir leadership pivotal in GCC Summit success: FM

We're proud to host GCC leaders, reps: Al-Yahya

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya extended his appreciation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, stressing that his wise leadership as Chairman of the 45th GCC Summit was pivotal in its success.

This came during a press conference held by Al-Yahya alongside GCC Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi following the conclusion of the 45th GCC Summit in Kuwait on Sunday.

Al-Yahya expressed Kuwait's

pride in hosting the GCC leaders and representatives, emphasizing that the meeting underscored the deep ties among the GCC countries and their shared commitment to advancing unified efforts.

He congratulated Al-Budaiwi on the renewal of his term, praising his efforts in supporting the GCC's journey and strengthening cooperation among its members.

He affirmed that the results of the Summit showcase the GCC as a pioneering example of collective action based on shared interests.

On regional and international issues, Al-Yahya stated that the final outcomes addressed the GCC's vision on current challenges, emphasizing the importance of coordination among member states to ensure regional stability and pro-

tect mutual interests.

The leaders also stressed the importance of strategic partnerships with other countries and international organizations, highlighting the GCC's role in promoting regional and global security and peace.

He added that the Kuwaiti Declaration reflects on (our) vision on political issues and future priorities, including supporting the digital economy, enhancing technological infrastructure, and strengthening cybersecurity to protect our nations' interests.

He extended special thanks to the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, for his significant contributions during the previous summit in Doha, which contributed to the advancement of

joint efforts and unity.

Al-Yahya also thanked the GCC Secretary-General and his team for their efforts in preparing for this successful summit, appreciating the media's role in showcasing the joint Gulf endeavors.

For his part, Secretary-General Al-Budaiwi expressed profound gratitude to His Highness the Amir for hosting the 45th GCC Summit.

He also thanked Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani for Qatar's effective leadership during the previous summit, which contributed significantly to many achievements.

Following this, Al-Budaiwi read the Kuwait Declaration issued at the conclusion of the 45th GCC Summit.

## Kuwait Amir receives cables of gratitude from top GCC officials

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, received a cable from the Bahraini Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, expressing deep gratitude for the hospitality and generous reception to him and his accompanying delegation during their participation in the 45th GCC Summit, on behalf of the Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa.

Al-Khalifa wished His Highness the Amir good health and further progress and prosperity.

In response, His Highness the Amir sent a cable thanking Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, expressing his gratitude for the sincere sentiments.

His Highness also praised the Crown Prince participation on behalf of King Hamad and appreciated his valuable contributions to the success of the session.

He also wished Bahrain and its people continued progress and prosperity

under King Hamad's wise leadership.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, received a cable from the Sultanate of Oman's Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al-Said, expressing sincere appreciation for the hospitality extended to him and his delegation during their participation in the 45th GCC Summit on behalf of Sultan Haitham bin Tariq.

Sayyid Fahd Al-Said wished His Highness the Amir good health and further progress and prosperity.

In response, His Highness the Amir sent a cable thanking Sayyid Fahd, expressing his gratitude for the sincere sentiments.

He praised his participation on behalf of Sultan Haitham and appreciated his significant contributions to the Summit's success.

He also wished Oman and its people continued progress and prosperity under Sultan Haitham's wise leadership.



Al-Khalifa



Al-Said



KUNA photo  
 Deputy Prime Minister of the Sultanate of Oman Sayyid Fahad bin Mahmoud Al-Said and his team at the meeting.

## Holding meetings regularly boosts GCC global position

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2, (KUNA): Deputy Prime Minister of the Sultanate of Oman Sayyid Fahad bin Mahmoud Al-Said, affirmed that holding regular meetings increases cohesion among GCC countries and the Council's position in the international community and its ability to address common challenges, achieving more progress and prosperity.

In his speech at the 45th session of the GCC Supreme Council's meeting, hosted by Kuwait, Al-Said affirmed the Sultanate's determination to continue efforts in all areas of cooperation to establish security and stability in the region and interact with current issues.

He extended sincere congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on assuming presidency of the current GCC Supreme Council's session, expressing appreciation for the warm reception and hospitality.

He also expressed his gratitude to His

Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani of Qatar for his successful management and administration of the last 44th session of the GCC Supreme Council, conveying the greetings of the Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tariq to the summit.

The Deputy Prime Minister concluded his speech by offering his gratitude to GCC Secretary General and the work team of the GCC General Secretariat for the good preparation of this summit, wishing them success towards a better future.

Earlier today, Al-Said praised the achievements of the GCC since its establishment in economic, social, legislative and scientific fields, saying that more efforts must be made to enhance cooperation and integration among Gulf nations, which are united by a common history.

He added that rapid regional and international developments require exchanging views to reach a unified vision to address developments and challenges.

## 'Summit reaffirmed commitment to GCC solidarity'

MANAMA, Dec 2, (KUNA): Bahraini Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullatif Al-Zayani spoke highly of the outcomes of the 45th GCC Summit, hosted by Kuwait on Sunday, saying that the results meet the aspirations of the Gulf peoples for integration.

The GCC leaders reaffirmed their commitment to deepen solidarity and cooperation in all areas as a means of reaching unity among the GCC member countries, he said in a press release.

"They expressed keenness on promoting the status of the GCC member countries as active players in the regional and international affairs, and effective partners in peacemaking and sta-

bilization efforts.

"Renewing support for the fair Arab causes, foremost among which is the Palestine question, the GCC leaders highlighted the need of resolving the tensions and disputes through peaceful means.

"They stated desire to deepen the strategic partnerships with friendly countries and regional blocs with a view to promote security, stability and prosperity across the

Middle East region," Dr. Al-Zayani pointed out.

The participation in the summit by Bahraini Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad, on behalf of King Hamad bin Isa, reflects the Kingdom's firm support to GCC integration and unity under the wise leadership of the King, he went on.

Al-Zayani expressed gratitude for the State of Kuwait, under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, for the hospitality and neat organization of the summit meeting.

He also thanked GCC Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi and the staff of the GCC Secretariat for following up the preparations for the summit.



Dr. Al-Zayani

## Education minister talks on future progress plans

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: In confirmation of a report published by the daily on its website, the Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaei held an urgent meeting with the newly appointed directors of educational zones and central departments.

During an extensive session with the assistant undersecretaries and the newly assigned directors, the minister discussed the preparations for the upcoming stage in various sectors, particularly with the upcoming first-term exams for the 2024/2025 academic year.

The minister expressed his confidence in the educational leaders and their ability to achieve the desired goals.

He stressed that holding the negligent accountable and rewarding the distinguished will be two basic pillars to ensure everyone's commitment and to motivate them to give their best.

Minister Al-Tabtabaei outlined future plans that the ministry intends to implement, including improving the school infrastructure and providing modern educational tools.

He affirmed that these efforts are part of a comprehensive strategy aimed at achieving a qualitative shift in the quality of education in Kuwait.

The minister emphasized the importance of accelerating the pace of work and dealing the current stage's challenges with a sense of urgency and seriousness, as well as creating innovative ideas that will contribute to improving performance and productivity.

He highlighted that collective solidarity, teamwork, increased efforts, and a strong commitment to the assigned tasks are essential to overcome the challenges facing the educational process and to achieve the desired goals.

## First Deputy PM thanks all forces

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2, (KUNA): First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Saud Al-Sabah sent on Monday appreciation cables to the Kuwaiti Army, Ministry of Interior, the National Guard and Kuwait Fire Forces, for their participation in the 45th GCC Summit, held in Kuwait on Sunday.

Sheikh Fahad thanked all participating forces for their sincere efforts that reflected their experience in preserving security and stability of Ku-

wait, according to an interior ministry press statement.

He praised the cooperation of all participants, which led to the success of the summit, praying to Almighty Allah for the homeland's safety under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



The KUNA team covering the GCC summit.

## KUNA active in summit role

Living up to the 45th GCC Summit hosted by Kuwait on Sunday, KUNA team has covered accurately, quickly and credibly the Summit's activities and details minute by minute.

The team, which included Kuwaiti efficient members, was keen on mak-

ing all details of the Summit available for the Arab and GCC nations as well as those interested in the Gulf affairs, out of the true and objective role of media in meeting the needs of those interested in pivotal events in the region. (KUNA)

## Minister lifts block on mandatory MoE transfers

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: "I will not accept injustice" is a phrase frequently used by the Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, during his meetings with ministry leaders and field staff, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to informed educational sources, Al-Tabtabaei has instructed the cancellation of all decisions related to the compulsory transfer of teach-

ers, insisting that they be returned to their previous work centers at the start of the second semester, and that this should not cause any disruption to the educational process.

The minister directed the Coordination Department to assign educational supervisory roles based on residence or proximity to the teacher's area, and to avoid forcing teachers in one specific area.

The sources affirmed the minister's keenness to stabilize the educational sector to ensure that teachers and students can perform their duties to the fullest, adding that teachers and students are among his top priorities. On the other hand, most schools have finished teaching the curricula to students and are preparing to conduct tests outside the regular schedule this week.



# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## 'This is not how wars are won, this is how nations are leveled'

"THE scene is one that evokes both sorrow and ridicule: remnants of the so-called 'Hezbollah' parade through the streets with their yellow flags, flashing victory signs, despite having left southern Lebanon in ruins," columnist **Talal Abdul Karim Al-Arab** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"The entire regions, including its southern suburbs, have been devastated and hundreds of thousands have been displaced, similar to the destruction they wrought in Syria.

"This grim situation was compounded by the announcement of Naim Qassem, the party's new Secretary-General, proclaiming victory over Israel -- a 'divine victory' he claimed surpassed Hassan Nasrallah's infamous 'divine victory' of 2006.

"Yet even Nasrallah later admitted he had underestimated Israel's ferocity in response to his provocations.

"The problem with leaders of this kind is their inability to acknowledge defeat. They twist catastrophic losses into false triumphs, so long as they and their militias survive, regardless of the immense cost: the thousands of lives lost, the destruction of homes and livelihoods and the occupation of land.

"This warped narrative persists, perpetuated across generations, resistant to change. Wouldn't it have been wiser -- though wisdom has never been their strong suit -- to admit the folly of being lured into such a destructive trap?

"And wouldn't it have been more responsible to hand over their Iranian-supplied weapons to the national army, rather than letting those arms fall intact into the hands of the Israeli occupation army, which even announced plans to form a new division from the spoils?

"Qassem's rhetoric about 'divine victory' echoes Nasrallah's 2006 statements, prompting the same question: If this is victory, then what constitutes defeat?

"At that time, in the aftermath of events like the Qana massacre, we asked: How can this be called a victory when Lebanon suffers daily massacres, destruction and displacement?

"Is the act of launching Katyusha rockets at Israel, retaining weapons, or keeping their leader alive truly worth the devastation Lebanon endures?

"Does this hollow 'victory' absolve the party of its grievous crimes against Lebanon? Have the lives and well-being of the Lebanese become so expendable?

"We questioned then, as we do now: How will the victims' families, the injured and the hundreds of thousands of displaced reconcile with the consequences of this party's reckless actions? How can the Lebanese people accept the hollow dedication of a 'victory' that has turned their nation into rubble?

"The military confrontations with Israel are not games and Israel's response to these reckless provocations has been devastating -- destructive by its design, not by Arab aspirations.

"And yet, history repeats itself. Opportunities are continually handed to Israel on a platter of blood and fire, fueled by the party's unyielding allegiance to Iran. Iran, of course, remains unscathed, far removed from the suffering it orchestrates through its proxies. No, Naim Qassem, this is not how victories are won -- this is how nations are destroyed."

### Also:

"Religiosity in America is largely defined by belief in God rather than regular worship practices. While the American people are generally considered religious, their religiosity has evolved, giving rise to what is often referred to as American Christianity or new fundamentalism," columnist **Abdullah Khalaf** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"This trend sees many Americans engaging with religion primarily through televised religious programming rather than traditional worship settings.

"The United States, in its constitution, does not endorse a specific religion or church, affirming the separation between religion and the state.

"The 20th century marked a rise in religious fundamentalism. In 1942, the National Evangelical Association was established, sparking a wave of evangelical activism.

"The Christian television channels became a powerful medium for religious outreach and by this time, the number of Christian publishing houses had grown to 1,300, emphasizing a focus on religious literature and media.

"In 1992, the influence of televangelism was highlighted at the Republican National Convention, where televangelist Pat Robertson took center stage.

"During President George H.W. Bush's administration, prayer became a ritual before commencing governmental work. The evangelical right began exerting substantial influence on American politics, with the Christian Coalition led by Robertson aligning closely with the Republican Party in the early 1990s.

"This alignment between politics and religion became evident when the evangelical right supported President Jimmy Carter, a Democrat, for his commitment to renewing Christian values.

"By the 1990s, the fundamentalist movement shifted its focus to gaining control over the U.S. Congress. This influence led to legislative initiatives such as advocating for prayer in schools and opposing LGBTQ+ rights.

"The fundamentalist evangelical right played a decisive role in the elec-

tion of President George W. Bush, who won two terms with their backing.

"Despite opposing Jewish Zionism, the movement paradoxically supported Jewish nationalism in defense of Israel, often citing religious justifications.

"The Evangelical leaders propagated the belief that God supported Israel, sidelining the historical identity of Palestine.

"This political-religious fusion effectively erased Palestine's legacy, empowering modern Zionism and reshaping narratives around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"This blending of religion and politics demonstrates how faith can be wielded as a tool for political agendas, raising questions about the balance between belief and governance in American society."

□ □ □

"THE term 'shedding face' refers to a person's humiliation or loss of dignity by either seeking something from someone who doesn't deserve it or exposing oneself to situations that diminish one's value in the eyes of others," columnist **Dr. Khaled Al-Janfawi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"A wise person loses face when they voluntarily place themselves in situations that embarrass them morally, especially situations that diminish their own value or how they are viewed by rational individuals.

"For instance, when someone insists on making requests to a person they know to be stingy, pins their hopes on someone who is unlikely to provide any help, or excessively defends the faults of bad relatives.

"Another example is when someone flatters the rich with the hope of gaining their approval, even though they know that Allah Almighty is the true provider, and He extends provision to whomever He wills.

"Perhaps the most damaging form of shedding face is to voluntarily associate with fools, and get close to those who harbor hatred or ill intentions towards you or your loved ones, especially when they openly express their contempt. When a person places themselves in such situations, they are effectively losing face.

"Excessive dependence on others and constantly complaining to people also represent forms of losing face.

"Then there is the term 'saving face'. In this regard, a wise person should remember that life is short, and that they should strive to live it with integrity, moderation, and chivalry in both their private and public lives.

"They should remember that no one can prevent what Allah has decreed for them, and they should work to raise their children with a sense of self-esteem and personal dignity.

"Every Muslim should always remember that 'Allah is more honorable than all of His creation, and more honorable than what we fear or are wary of'. Therefore, as a Muslim, one should never lose face for the sake of another person."

□ □ □

"Buthaina Al-Essa's novel, *The Guardian of the Roof of the World*, offers a profound exploration of censorship and the suppression of imagination. Through her creative lens, Al-Essa paints a stark picture of a dystopian world where intellectual freedom is strangled, and conformity is demanded.

In this society, human imagination is deemed taboo, and the role of the individual is reduced to mere obedience," columnist **Hassan Al-Essa** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"Al-Essa's narrative captures the plight of a new type of human -- one devoid of desires and stripped of autonomy. The novel chillingly reflects the indoctrination that convinces individuals to unquestioningly embrace the regime: 'How difficult it is for a person not to love the government when he sees it striving so hard to make him happy. In the end, who is he to disobey the system?'"

"Set in a fictional Arab country, the story centers on an inspector who is indoctrinated into the principles of censorship. His training takes place in an institution filled with rabbits, symbolizing fear, and their droppings, representing the decay of intellectual freedom.

"Here, he learns that meaning is irrelevant; words are to be taken literally, and any deeper interpretation is to be eradicated. In this system, the imagination -- the very tool for creating meaning -- is treated as a greater danger than drugs, weapons, or even love.

"The novel's parallels to George Orwell's 1984 are striking. Al-Essa revisits themes of totalitarian control where 'Big Brother' watches, and contradictions reign supreme 'War is peace. Slavery is freedom. Ignorance is strength'.

"The inspector's life takes a transformative turn when he dares to read forbidden books, igniting a shift in his thoughts and actions. His rebellion against the system not only changes him but also profoundly affects his family. What happens next? The answer lies within the pages of Al-Essa's gripping work.

"At its heart, the novel is a critique of regimes that stifle creativity, impose rigid narratives, and reduce individuals to mere tools of compliance. In such a world, imagination becomes a crime, and silence is the only path to safety.

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes / Mahmoud Attiyeh

## Minister issues decision to set up 'Health Union'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah issued ministerial Resolution No. 4/2024 to announce the establishment of the Kuwait Union of Health Institutes (KUHI), reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The union's bylaws, as summarized, state that the founding general assembly met on November 30, 2023, and the founders agreed to establish the Kuwait Union of Health Institutes.

The bylaws include the following provisions:

1. Eligibility for Membership:

Any individual or entity working in the field of health institutes and meeting the following conditions is eligible to join the union:

- The activity license must be valid.

- The applicant (company or health institute) must be Kuwaiti.

2. General Assembly:

The union's general assembly shall meet annually in March on an ordinary basis.

3. Board of Directors:

The union's Board of Directors shall consist of five members, elected by the general assembly via secret ballot for a term of three years. The number of board members must be odd.

4. Board Leadership:

At its first meeting, the Board of Directors will elect from among themselves the following: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary.

5. Legal Representation:

The Chair of the Board of Directors will serve as the legal representative of the union before all parties.

6. Fiscal Year:

The union's fiscal year will run from January 1 to December 31 each year.

7. Membership Fees:

The annual fee for joining the union is KD 100.

8. Financial Management:

The union's funds will be deposited in a local bank account, with withdrawals governed by the regulations outlined in the union's bylaws.

9. Powers and Responsibilities:

The bylaws define the powers of the ordinary and extraordinary general assemblies, the authority of the Board of Directors, and the record-keeping requirements for the union.



Sheikh Fahad



KUNA photo Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Major General (Pilot) Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (right) discussed military ties with the Bangladeshi Ambassador to Kuwait Syed Tariq Hossain.

## Deputy Army chief, B'desh envoy meet

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2, (KUNA): Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Major General (Pilot) Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met with the Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to Kuwait, Syed Tariq Hossain, on Monday to discuss issues of common

interest.

According to a statement released by the Ministry of Defense, the meeting took place at the Deputy Chief of Staff's office, where both sides engaged in discussions on topics of mutual concern, with a particular focus on military cooperation.

# Gallows for killing brother of ex-MP

Fully responsible: court

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Criminal Court sentenced the killer of Ahmed Al-Jalal to death, based on a medical report that confirmed the accused was fully responsible for his action.**

The Public Prosecution started investigations into the murder of Ahmed Al-Jalal -- brother of former MP Mutab Al-Jalal -- when the accused turned himself in to the police after fatally stabbing the victim during an altercation in Hadiya.

During the trial, Attorney Hussein Al-Asfour demanded that the maximum penalty be imposed on the accused, citing the psychiatric report which affirmed the latter's accountability for his action.

In his argument before the court, Deputy Director of Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer Prosecution Nasser Al-Misbahi pointed out that the accused deprived the victim of his most fundamental right -- the right to life. He stressed that by submitting to personal impulses and demonic whims, the accused violated not only the victim's right; but also the will of Almighty Allah, who alone grants life and has the power to take it away.

Al-Misbahi further described the crime as brutal and called for the death penalty as a just punishment to serve as a deterrent to others. He added that the sentence should be a guiding example for those who reflect, insight for those who see and a reminder for those who remember.

**Verdict set for Jan 20:** The Court of Cassation scheduled a session for Jan 20, 2025 to announce its verdict on the case of money laundering through a luxury car dealership, in which two citizens were sentenced to 12 years in prison and fined KD 34 million.

Earlier, the Court of Appeals intensi-

fied the penalties for the owner and manager of the luxury car office, who were charged with defrauding numerous clients and stealing their money. The court maintained the 10-year prison sentence and KD 34 million fine for both defendants, in addition to sentencing them to two years in prison with hard labor for the separate charges of fraud and deception.

The two defendants were accused of orchestrating large-scale fraud and money laundering operations, deceiving more than 500 individuals in and outside the country. They promised customers that they can purchase luxury vehicles at lower prices directly from car dealers, only to take their money without delivering the vehicles.

They were also accused of laundering more than KD17 million and QAR1.5 million that they collected from the victims by transferring the funds to conceal their illegal sources.

**Blogger jailed 2 years:** The Criminal Court sentenced an individual to two years in prison for posting a statement on 'X' platform, in which he publicly challenged the rights of His Highness the Amir and criticized him following the dissolution of the National Assembly.

The defendant, who had a fake account on 'X', was arrested by State Security officers; leading to the discovery of his real identity.

The court, presided over by Judge Nayef Al-Dahoum, emphasized that while freedom of expression is a fundamental right, it is not permissible to drag the Amir's name into public discourse in a manner that undermines his authority. The court stressed that the Amir, due to his exceptional status and high position, is entitled to respect and reverence in order to safeguard his dignity and the stature of the position.

The Public Prosecution referred the accused to the court on charges related to State security, specifically for attempting to interfere with and challenge the powers of His Highness the Amir through his post on 'X' platform.



KFF official delivering lecture.

KFF photo

## KFF launches course on judicial control policies

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Prevention Sector of the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) organized a training course on judicial control procedures.

According to a press release issued by KFF, the course was aimed to familiarize participants with judicial control procedures and related obligations.

It was attended by the heads of various fire stations, as well as a number of officers and personnel from KFF.

□ □ □

**Residences secured:** The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) successfully completed its mission of securing the residences of the diplomatic delegations that participated in the 45th GCC Summit.

According to a press release issued by KFF, from Sunday, November 24, firefighting teams from various sectors of KFF began implementing precautionary measures to ensure the safety of the participating delegations, with the support of various departments and in coordination with the relevant authorities.

### 'Safety priority'

## Don't use heaters, fridge, e-kettles in office: DGCA

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: As part of its commitment to enhancing safety and security standards at its headquarters in Subhan, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued a circular to prohibit certain practices that could compromise the safety of the work environment.

According to the circular, the use of electrical appliances such as heaters, electric kettles and refrigerators inside offices is prohibited. Employees are instructed to use the appliances available in the designated kitchens for each department. Smoking in non-designated areas, and burning charcoal and incense inside offices and corridors are forbidden.

DGCA has called on all departments to fully comply with these regulations and to implement them immediately upon the issuance of the circular.

According to informed sources, these instructions are part of DGCA's ongoing efforts to ensure a safe and healthy work environment for both employees and visitors. The circular is aligned with PACT's commitment to safeguarding the public interest by enforcing measures that protect individuals and property. The administration will closely monitor compliance with these instructions and take appropriate action if any violations are detected.



**MUGHAL MAHAL**  
"We Cater, You Party!"



Wedding | Anniversary | Birthday | Events  
Corporate Party & much more



1800 188  
5501 1985  
@mughalmahalkuwait  
www.mughalmahal.com



National Day

# Amir sends congratulations to Barbados, Romania, Laos and Central African Republic

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable Monday to the President of Barbados, Sandra Mason, congratulating her on her country's Independence Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president long-lasting health and the people of Barbados further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable to President Sandra Mason, congratulating her on her country's Independence Day, and wishing her good health.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable to President Sandra Mason, congratulating her on her country's Independence Day.

**Romania**

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad sent on Monday a cable of congratulations to the President of Romania Klaus Iohannis on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal wished President Iohannis and his people more progress and development.



Mason



Iohannis



Sisoulith



Touadera

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled sent a cable to President Klaus Iohannis, congratulating him on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince also expressed wishes of progress and welfare to the president and his people.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah sent a cable of congratulations to President Klaus Iohannis.

**Laos**

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad congratulated in a cable on Monday the President of Laos Thongloun

Sisoulith on the advent of his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir expressed wishes of good health and welfare to the president and his people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled sent a cable to President Thongloun Sisoulith, congratulating him on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah sent a cable of congratulations to President Sisoulith

**Central African Republic**

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad sent on Monday a cable of congratulations to the Central African Republic President Faustin-Archange Touadera on his country's National Day. His Highness the Amir wished the president and his people more progress and development.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled sent a cable of President Faustin-Archange Touadera on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad sent a cable of congratulations to President Faustin-Archange Touadera on the occasion.

# MoSA teams to review 4 co-ops operations & financial integrity

Ministry partners with Zakat House to support vulnerable groups

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Ministry of Social Affairs, through its Cooperative Sector, has formed specialized teams to run a check on four cooperative societies operating in the Hawalli, Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorates, reports Al-Jarida daily.

These teams are tasked with reviewing the operations and financial accounts of the societies in question to ensure compliance with Law No. 2013/118, which regulates cooperative societies, as well as relevant administrative decisions.

The inspections will focus on identifying any potential violations or misuse of authority by the boards of directors that could harm the interests of shareholders or undermine the association's financial integrity.

If the inspection teams find any suspicious activ-

ity or breaches, they will initiate investigation committees to address the issue and protect the interests of the cooperative associations, which play a crucial role in ensuring food security in the country.

The ministry is determined to maintain its commitment to the core goals of cooperative work, which include providing high-quality goods at affordable prices, thus alleviating financial burdens on citizens and residents.

The ministry's efforts will be ongoing, with teams working throughout the year alongside investigation committees. These committees will address financial and administrative complaints from shareholders, with continuous monitoring to ensure compliance with regulatory standards.

In a separate initiative, the Ministry of Social Affairs has entered into a cooperation protocol with the Zakat House to provide financial support for the charitable fund for social care homes.

The first payment of 45,000 dinars has been received, with a total of 200,000 dinars to be allocated for supporting vulnerable groups served by the ministry, including the elderly, children in foster care and juveniles.

A technical committee, composed of representatives from both the Ministry and Zakat House, will oversee the projects funded by this agreement, which will last for one year starting from the beginning of next year.

Additionally, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, the Minister of Social Affairs, issued a new Ministerial Resolution No. 247/2024, which transfers the responsibility for reviewing and preparing work systems and procedures from the Organization Development Department to the Service Development section within the Administrative Development Department.



Dr Al-Huwailah

Project valued at KD 1.495 million

# CAPT gives nod for new water filling station in West Funaitees

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Central Agency for Public Tenders has approved the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy's request to float a tender for the construction, completion and maintenance of a new water filling station in the West Funaitees area, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The project is valued at 1.495 million Kuwaiti dinars and will be awarded to the company offering the lowest prices that meet all technical and administrative requirements.

This new station will replace the existing water filling station in the Mishref area, which has faced significant complaints from local residents due to its proximity to residential areas, traffic disruptions and damage to roads caused by the water filling process. In response to these concerns, the ministry has decided

to relocate the station.

The new water filling station is part of the ministry's broader efforts to modernize and enhance the water sector infrastructure.

The station will include facilities for water filling and storage and the project will focus on maintaining the station's facilities to ensure sustainability and operational efficiency. The goal is to improve service quality and meet the growing water needs of citizens in the region.

Work on the project is expected to start within the next few weeks, following the signing of the contract with the winning company.

The project is scheduled to be completed according to a specified timeline, aligning with the ministry's ongoing efforts to develop the energy and water sector in Kuwait.

# PAHW signs deals for 24 service buildings in Al-Mutla'a city

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) has signed two contracts to construct 24 service buildings in the "N2" and "N4" suburbs of Al-Mutla'a Residential City, reports Al-Jarida daily.

PAHW Acting Director General Eng. Rashid Al-Enezi announced on Monday that the contracts are valued at 44.26 million Kuwaiti dinars, with a scheduled implementation period of 900 days.

The projects include facilities such as a central market, public health center, police station, mosque, resi-

dences for the imam and muezzin and buildings for key government services like the municipality, post office, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, citizen services, social units and community development centers, along with retail shops.

Al-Enezi also highlighted ongoing projects in other suburbs ("N9," "N10," "N1" to "N12") comprise 65 service buildings, including health centers, central markets, police stations, and schools spanning all educational levels.

These also include 21 shop clusters, 3 gas branches, and additional government facilities.

Other Voices

# Reporting requirements according to GRI

**Dr. Jaber Eid Al-Wandah**

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

In this article, we will cover the requirements for preparing a report according to the GRI Initiative (Global Reporting Initiative), which enables the organization to provide a comprehensive picture of its most significant impacts on the economy, environment, and individuals. The organization must adhere to nine essential requirements when issuing its report, otherwise, any claim that

the report was prepared according to this initiative would be inaccurate. The first of these requirements is applying the principles of reporting. These principles are general guidelines that must be followed in any report aimed at credibility and accurately reflecting the reality of the studied phenomenon. The report's data and information should be accurate, correct, and sufficiently detailed, balanced, clear, comparable, and complete. The report must also explain how the principles of sustainability are incorporated into the organization, and the information should be issued in a timely manner. Finally, the report should be verifiable, meaning that the report and its information can be validated.

The second requirement is including data and information related to the general disclosures detailed in GRI 2-2021, which includes 30 disclosures related to the organization's information and activities. The third and fourth requirements pertain to identifying material topics that are significant to the organization's work and impact, and how to

identify and manage these topics and their effects. For example, in charitable organizations, one of the most important material topics is financial sustainability, among other key topics that the report should address. The report should explain how the charitable organization manages these topics and how they affect its work, whether positively or negatively.

The fifth requirement relates to disclosing material topics in the report, whether they are topics within a specific sector (e.g., oil, gas, coal, food, clothing, etc.) or topics related to economic, environmental, or social issues.

If the organization chooses not to address a specific topic within the sector it operates in, or in the economic, environmental, or social topics, it must explain the reason. This is detailed in the sixth requirement, which involves providing the reason for any omission of a disclosure.

The seventh requirement is about including the GRI content index within the published report. The eighth requirement pertains to providing a usage statement for the report, where the organization must include the following statement in the report's content index: "[Organization X] has reported its sustainability report according to GRI Standards for the period [from X to Y]."

The ninth and final requirement involves notifying the GRI by sending the report via email to: [reportregistration@globalreporting.org](mailto:reportregistration@globalreporting.org).

Some of the most important topics that concern humanitarian organizations, in our view, include financial sustainability, governance in charitable work, donor and beneficiary privacy, volunteering, community engagement, impact measurement and social return, employing technologies, project monitoring, legal compliance, health, safety, and security, staff retention and development, and performance indicators for charitable work.

To be continued



Dr Al-Wandah



Celebrate Eid al-Fitr  
بأعياد البدرين

# DECEMBER

Room Promotion



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

Now **BHD 49.550** Net



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

Now **BHD 110.661** Net

Promo period from December 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>,  
excluding December 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Terms & conditions apply\*

Tel: +973 17701201 - Ext. 351

Email: [reservation@albander.com](mailto:reservation@albander.com)

[www.albander.com](http://www.albander.com)

[fb @albanderhotelandresort](https://www.facebook.com/albanderhotelandresort)



## LOCAL

### Bid to help raise job levels

## MEW urges quick completion of staff performance evaluations

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy has instructed its sectors to expedite the completion of performance evaluations for its 35,501 employees for the current year. This is in preparation for the procedures related to raising job levels and determining employee entitlements for bonuses and promotions, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to informed sources, the ministry is keen to adhere to the established timetable for the evaluation reports, and ensure fairness and transparency in awarding job grades and recognizing employees who have demonstrated exceptional performance during the year. This initiative aims to support outstanding employees, encourage effective performance, and enhance work efficiency, as well as contribute to the

ministry's strategic goals.

The ministry affirmed the importance of following the approved evaluation criteria, which include job performance, commitment to tasks, and contributions to work development, as determined by the Civil Service Commission (CSC). The implementation of these evaluations will be closely monitored to ensure equal opportunities for all employees.

In addition, the ministry has affirmed its commitment to addressing grievances through the Grievance Committee, which will review complaints from employees who were excluded from receiving bonuses for any reason. These complaints will be examined and audited by the relevant committee, ensuring that bonuses are granted to those who genuinely deserve them.

## Indians vent

### Continued from Page 1

Sharing her experience with NDTV, one of the passengers, Arzoo Singh, said they asked for lounge access, but the airport authorities initially ignored their request, claiming that Indians and Pakistanis are not "entitled passport holders", as only those entitled to a transit visa can be put in a hotel outside. They chased airport authorities for nearly two hours before finally gaining access to the lounge. Despite their requests, they were not provided with blankets or food, and for the first four hours, they had no access to water.

In a post on his X account, the Indian Embassy in Kuwait confirmed that a team was on the ground to assist the stranded passengers and coordinate with the airline. Passengers were accommodated in two airport lounges, and efforts were being made to place them in an airport hotel, though it was unavailable due to the GCC Summit.

The embassy explained in the post that Indian nationals do not benefit from the visa-on-arrival facility in Kuwait, and all government offices were closed due to the summit.

It announced on Monday morning that the flight to Manchester had "finally" departed at 4:34 am, and the embassy team was on the ground until the flight departed.

Gulf Air has not yet commented on the incident.

According to passengers, the flight, which was traveling from Bahrain to Manchester after departing from Mumbai, had been airborne for nearly two hours when the emergency landing was announced.

Arzoo Singh explained that the engine was on fire and there was smoke. After landing, passengers repeatedly requested a place to sit, but everyone was left sitting on the floor.

She said that many passengers had important commitments, with some needing to reach the UK for work the following day, and they had been trying to contact the embassy for assistance.

## Kuwait's Amir,

### Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti diplomats congratulated on Monday the UAE on the advent of the 53rd National Day, commending the decades-long ties and strategic cooperation between the two GCC nations.

Speaking to KUNA Kuwaiti Ambassador to the UAE Jamal Al-Ghunnaim deemed the UAE-Kuwaiti relations as exemplary, saying that the ties were based on goodwill and mutual understanding.

He commended the great achievements of the leadership and people of the UAE, saying that it came through a strong desire for development and hard work.

He reflected the State of Kuwait's sincere wishes for more development and progress in the UAE, saying that Kuwaitis were proud of what the UAE had achieved throughout the decades.

In a similar statement, the General Consul of Kuwait in Dubai and the Northern Emirates Ambassador Ali Al-Thaidi expressed wishes for more progress and development to the UAE leadership and people.

He commended the Emirates' wide-scale regional and international achievements, saying that the 45th GCC Summit made sure that ties between Gulf countries, including Kuwait and the UAE, would continue to prosper in the future.

The diplomat lauded the long-standing relationship between the two brotherly nations, affirming that both countries were eager to boost relations in all possible domains.

## Crown Prince

### Continued from Page 1

Also on Monday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received a formal invitation on Monday at Bayan Palace from Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, inviting him to participate in the 22nd Doha Forum which will be held from December 7 to 8, 2024.

The invitation was delivered to His Highness the Crown Prince by the Ambassador of Qatar to Kuwait, Ali Bin Abdulla Al-Mahmoud.

The meeting was attended by the Director of His Highness the Crown Prince's office retired Lieutenant Gen-

eral Jamal Mohammad Al-Thayab, and the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs at the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince's office, Mazen Al-Issa.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Monday at Bayan Palace Larry Fink, Chairman and CEO of BlackRock, Adebayo Ogunsle, Chairman and CEO of the Infrastructure Division at BlackRock, and Charles Hatami, Global Head of Financial Investors and Strategists at BlackRock, during their visit to Kuwait.

The meeting was attended by the Director-General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Director of His Highness the Crown Prince's office retired Lieutenant General Jamal Mohammad Al-Thayab, and the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs at the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince's office, Mazen Al-Issa.

## Kuwait DGCA

### Continued from Page 1

after receiving multiple reports of smoking incidents involving both flight crews and passengers during flights.

These actions contravene paragraph one of article 56 of the law, which prohibits smoking in public transportation, and Article 138, which stipulates the imposition of large fines for violations. The law imposes fines ranging from KD 50,000 to KD 200,000 on anyone who violates the aforementioned smoking ban law, along with strict legal accountability.

DGCA has urged air operators to take firm measures to ensure compliance, including instructing crew members to refrain from smoking and informing passengers of the law during flights.

The sources stressed that smoking-related penalties should be incorporated into safety guidelines to enhance passenger adherence to the rules.

In other news, recent statistics issued by the Central Statistical Bureau revealed a 29.17 percent increase in the movement of arriving and departing aircraft from 2014 to 2023. The number of aircraft in 2014 was approximately 83,443, and in 2023, this number increased to 117,822.

According to the statistics, the COVID-19 pandemic during the period from 2020 to 2021 resulted in a noticeable decrease in air traffic. The number of aircraft during these two years dropped to 30,215 and 35,215, respectively, which reflected the pandemic's impact on the sector.

There has also been a significant growth in passenger numbers over the past decade. Departing and arriving passengers increased from 10,129,821 in 2014 to 15,519,437 in 2023, marking a 34.7 percent increase. However, there was a substantial decline in 2020 and 2021, with passenger numbers falling to about 3.5 million, due to travel restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The statistics also revealed growth in the capacity of Kuwait International Airport. While it accommodated seven million passengers annually in 2015, its capacity reached 14 million passengers in 2023.

Observers stressed the need to intensify efforts to modernize the infrastructure, improve service efficiency, and expedite the completion of the new passenger terminal.

Meanwhile, the same statistics highlighted a noticeable increase in the number of direct travel destinations from Kuwait to international locations from 101 destinations in 2014 to 134 destinations in 2023, which is a 24.6 percent increase.

Experts suggest that this expansion reflects the strengthening of air links between Kuwait and global airports, and the bolstering Kuwait's position as a key hub for international travel.

In addition, the statistics highlighted an increase in the size of the national fleet, as the number of aircraft increased from 29 in 2014 to 55 in 2023, marking an addition of 26 new aircraft in the past decade.

## MoSA takes

### Continued from Page 1

Al-Huwailah, who has stressed the importance of addressing these issues with seriousness to ensure the integrity of operations within cooperative societies.

The Ministry is coordinating with regulatory authorities to verify the claims made in the complaint and is committed to implementing all nec-

# KTS demands disbursement of bonus for examination panels

## Al-Houli addresses letter to Minister Al-Tabtabaei

**KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Kuwait Teachers Society (KTS) has called on the Ministry of Education to disburse a bonus to the members of the examination committees of the 2023-2024 academic year, reports Al-Anba daily.**

The Chair of KTS Board of Directors Hamad Al-Houli expressed this request in a letter addressed to the Minister of Education Eng.

Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei.

He stated, "We appreciate your efforts to strengthen the cooperation and coordination between the Ministry of Education and the Kuwait Teachers Society, which has helped in developing the educational and teaching process and improving its outcomes.

In line with the society's keenness to enhance cooperation in all matters related to the educational process, and with the upcoming assignment of personnel to examination committees, especially with the rotation of secondary school principals during the examination period, the tasks and preparations

required for these committees, including work on Fridays, rest days, and official holidays over a 16-day period, warrant the disbursement of workers' bonuses for that period, as has been the practice since 2021.

Regarding the recent decision issued by the Assistant Undersecretary for Financial Affairs Matrouk Al-Mutairi, dated 06/25/2024, concerning the disbursement of bonuses without including rest and holidays, based on decision No. 427/2009 dated 12/13/2009, we would like to clarify that the rotation of school principals, along with the various tasks and responsibilities

for workers and those assigned to examination committees, was not implemented in 2009.

We kindly request that the progress bonus for the committees be disbursed for 16 working days to those involved in the exams of the 2023/2024 academic year. We also urge the continued assignment of committee members, including for Fridays, rest days, and school holidays, for the same 16 days, as has been the practice in previous years. This represents a rightful entitlement for teachers and those working in the educational sector."

essential measures to protect the interests of cooperative societies and their shareholders.

The Ministry also plans to establish a joint committee comprising relevant government agencies to enhance oversight in this vital sector, ensuring compliance with laws and regulations and safeguarding consumer rights while promoting transparency.

## Two lives

### Continued from Page 1

who were subsequently evacuated safely from the premises.

After the fire was extinguished, investigations were launched to determine the cause of the fire.

## Summit's final

### Continued from Page 1

The Supreme Council stressed the importance of unifying stances of the GCC members against all challenges via boost cooperation and fending of threats.

The council expressed satisfaction towards what was reached in the 18th regular meeting of heads of parliaments and national councils of the GCC, which held in November of 12, 2024 in Abu Dhabi.

The council was informed on the accomplishment reports of the GCC health cities, the report on implementing international health regulations in the region concerning GCC health emergencies, and the secretariat report on laborers health check.

The Supreme Council approved the unified guidelines to empower individuals with special needs in the GCC in addition to amendments on the unified system for insurance for Gulf citizens.

The Supreme Council expressed appreciation of member states' efforts in anti-corruption, improving transparency via implementing governance on state-owned companies, in addition to providing media and awareness content of GCC anti-corruption organizations.

The council also approved the political legislative document of the GCC.

The council called for intensifying efforts in energy transformation and climate change, bolstering efforts in this regard under the umbrella of the green Middle East initiative.

The council affirmed that it adopted the main pillars for social, economic, and environmental transformations through implementing accords such as the UAE COP28 agreement, which came out of the conference held in Dubai in 2023 as well as the agreements which came out of the COP29, which was held in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The Supreme Council stressed the importance of stabilizing global energy economy, taking balanced policies that would not eliminate energy sources via innovation reducing emissions and leading to sustainable economic growth for all.

The council also lauded the member states' efforts in lower pollution, recycling, and reusing material, matters included in the Saudi green initiative, the Middle East green initiative, and national projects of each GCC country.

The Supreme Council welcomed the first Global Food Security Summit 2024, which was held in Abu Dhabi, UAE, on November 26-27, an event that saw international participation of world leaders and organizations.

The Supreme Council also lauded the UAE initiatives to face water and food scarcity on a global scale that offered life to millions from around the globe.

The council commended the UAE for its agriculture national initiative, which helped in supporting agriculture and food sustainability. The UAE, in partnership with the Gates Foundation, had offered USD 200 million to push for agricultural innovation globally, a matter appreciated by the council.

The Supreme Council welcomed the UAE's hosting of the UN conference for water in 2026, reflecting a strong commitment to future generations and international cooperation.

The council lauded International Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha, Qatar, an event, which drew the participation of 77 countries and the visiting of millions from across the globe.

The council approved the 21st joint defense council's proposals for military integration amongst GCC countries, commending security and defense training in 2024.

The supreme council approved proposals by the joint defense council to assign Major General Abdulaziz bin Ahmad Al-Balawa as commander of the unified GCC command.

The council approved decisions by the 41st meeting of the Interior Ministers held in Doha on November 20, 2024, welcoming a proposal on anti-money laundering for 2025 in addition to initiatives and projects concerning digital transformation of joint security services.

The council welcomed the efforts by the Interior Ministers committee in regards to the unified tourism visa and the project to develop traffic laws, tasking ministers to implement issues pertaining such affairs.

The council approved the GCC anti-narcotics strategy 2025-28 and formed a joint committee for such task.

The Supreme Council renewed commitment for a stable and secure region to reinforce cooperation and ties amongst Gulf citizens and achieve sustainable development.

The council affirmed its respect of sovereignty of each member country based on international laws and norms, expressing refusal to all external threats against GCC countries and reinforce notions of joint defense.

On the situation in the Gaza Strip, the council condemned the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip and the targeting of innocent civilians forced to be displaced and even killed if refusing to move.

The Supreme Council called for an immediate ceasefire and the uninterrupted entry of humanitarian relief aid to the war torn Palestinian region.

The council affirmed that the Israeli occupation must take full responsibility for the killing of tens of thousands of innocent civilians in the Gaza Strip, namely women, children, and elderly, which were all crimes against humanity.

The GCC Supreme Council expressed absolute rejection to any justifications or excuses to describe the Israeli occupation aggression on Gaza as "the right to defend itself," and urged the international community to take the necessary measures within the international law in response to the practices of the Israeli occupation's government and the collective punishment policy being implemented against Palestinians in Gaza.

The GCC Supreme Council strongly condemned the heinous and shocking crimes committed by the Israeli occupation in the Gaza Strip, under the context of genocide and ethnic cleansing, including killing, torturing, executing and displacing civilians, expressing its support to Palestinians and warned of displacing them, calling for protecting them.

They demanded the UNSC to form an independent international committee to investigate these crimes and take serious steps to prevent further crimes and hold those responsible accountable as well as providing the Palestinian with an international protection.

The GCC Supreme Council condemned the Israeli occupation's continuous destruction and storming of facilities throughout Gaza, in a blatant violation of the International Humanitarian Law.

The GCC Supreme Council condemned the Israeli occupation's continuous targeting of humanitarian and UN organizations in the Gaza Strip, and the continuous attacks of settlers on the humanitarian aid convoys, urging the Israeli occupation's forces to protect these convoys under the pretext of international law and let them be delivered to Gaza.

The GCC Supreme Council condemned the statements of Israeli Prime Minister and the attempts on justifying the continuous violations of international laws and conventions, and condemned their seize of the Philadelphia Corridor and closing down Rafah crossing. It stressed the importance of opening up all the crossings immediately without conditions, affirming GCC's stand alongside Egypt in facing their allegations while also warning of the consequences of the provocative statements.

The GCC Supreme Council welcomed the results of the Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 11 Nov 2024, to unify efforts and work on an end to the war on Gaza.

The GCC Supreme Council praised the efforts made by Qatar in mediating a ceasefire and facilitating the delivery of aid to the besieged Strip.

The GCC Supreme Council called on implementing resolutions 2735, 2712, and 2720 regarding a ceasefire in Gaza, the release and exchange hostages, return of civilians to their homes, actively and safely distributing the humanitarian aid in a wider range, and the withdraw of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip.

The GCC Supreme Council affirmed the importance of preparing a comprehensive plan to bring back Palestinian Authority to Gaza Strip and reject any measure to separate it from the West

Bank, noting that any suggestion about the Strip's future should be under the context of a unified Palestinian State, as well as going forward with implementing the two-state solution.

The GCC Supreme Council welcomed the International Court of Justice's resolution on 24 May 2024, that orders Israeli occupation of immediately stopping the military attack and/or any other attacks in Rafah crossing, stressing the importance of opening and allowing aid to enter to Gaza safely, as well as guaranteeing the safety of the entrance of any investigating committee about the genocide.

The GCC Supreme Council welcomed the UN Human Rights Council's adoption of a resolution calling on all states to stop selling, transporting and transferring of weapons, ammunition and other military equipment to the Israeli occupation, in order to prevent further violations of international law, and to stop supporting their authorities in its aggression against Palestinians.

The GCC Supreme Council welcomed the UK's declaration on 3 September 2024 of suspending license of exporting weapons to Israeli occupation to avoid its use in dangerous violations of the International Humanitarian Law.

The GCC Supreme Council welcomed President Emmanuel Macron of France proposal to refrain from handing weapons to the Israeli occupation in Gaza, noting that this is an important step to stopping the war.

The GCC Supreme Council praised South Africa's efforts in filing a case to the International Court of Justice to halt the attacks and genocide committed by the Israeli occupation in Gaza on the 26th of January 2024, which aimed at stopping any practices or statements that would lead to the genocide of the Palestinian people in Gaza. The Supreme Council also welcomed South Africa's added evidence submitted to the ICJ on the 28th of October 2024.

The GCC Supreme Council called on the UNSC to take measures against the Israeli occupation's forced displacement and genocide of the Palestinian people, under Chapter Seven of the UN Charter.

The GCC Supreme Council praised the outcomes of the Call for Action: Urgent Humanitarian Response for Gaza Conference, held in Jordan in coordination with Egypt and the UN on 11th of June, 2024.

The GCC Supreme Council commended the efforts of the GCC and Arab nations on their political stance to end the Israeli occupation's aggression in Gaza, the GCC's humanitarian relief to Gaza, and campaigns to aid the Palestinian people under siege in Gaza.

The council called for intensifying efforts in energy transformation and climate change, bolstering efforts in this regard under the umbrella of the green Middle East initiative.

The council affirmed that it adopted the main pillars for social, economic, and environmental transformations through implementing accords such as the UAE COP28 agreement, which came out of the conference held in Dubai in 2023 as well as the agreements which came out of the COP29, which was held in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The Supreme Council stressed the importance of stabilizing global energy economy, taking balanced policies that would not eliminate energy sources via innovation reducing emissions and leading to sustainable economic growth for all.

The council also lauded the member states' efforts in lower pollution, recycling, and reusing material, matters included in the Saudi green initiative, the Middle East green initiative, and national projects of each GCC country.

The Supreme Council welcomed the first Global Food Security Summit 2024, which was held in Abu Dhabi, UAE, on November 26-27, an event that saw international participation of world leaders and organizations.

The Supreme Council also lauded the UAE initiatives to face water and food scarcity on a global scale that offered life to millions from around the globe.

The council commended the UAE for its agriculture national initiative, which helped in supporting agriculture and food sustainability. The UAE, in partnership with the Gates Foundation, had offered USD 200 million to push for agricultural innovation globally, a matter appreciated by the council.

The Supreme Council welcomed the UAE's hosting of the UN conference for water in 2026, reflecting a strong commitment to future generations and international cooperation.

The council lauded International Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha, Qatar, an event, which drew the participation

of 77 countries and the visiting of millions from across the globe.

The council approved the 21st joint defense council's proposals for military integration amongst GCC countries, commending security and defense training in 2024.

The supreme council approved proposals by the joint defense council to assign Major General Abdulaziz bin Ahmad Al-Balawi as commander of the unified GCC command.

The council approved decisions by the 41st meeting of the Interior Ministers held in Doha on November 20, 2024, welcoming a proposal on anti-money laundering for 2025 in addition to initiatives and projects concerning digital transformation of joint security services.

The council welcomed the efforts by the Interior Ministers committee in regards to the unified tourism visa and the project to develop traffic laws, tasking ministers to implement issues pertaining such affairs.

The council approved the GCC anti-narcotics strategy 2025-28 and formed a joint committee for such task.

The Supreme Council renewed commitment for a stable and secure region to reinforce cooperation and ties amongst Gulf citizens and achieve sustainable development.

The council affirmed its respect of sovereignty of each member country based on international laws and norms, expressing refusal to all external threats against GCC countries and reinforce notions of joint defense.

On the situation in the Gaza Strip, the council condemned the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip and the targeting of innocent civilians forced to be displaced and even killed if refusing to move.

The Supreme Council called for an immediate ceasefire and the uninterrupted entry of humanitarian relief aid to the war torn Palestinian region.

The council affirmed that the Israeli occupation must take full responsibility for the killing of tens of thousands of innocent civilians in the Gaza Strip, namely women, children, and elderly, which were all crimes against humanity.

The Supreme Council reaffirmed the centrality of the Palestinian cause, the necessity of ending the Israeli occupation, and its support for the Palestinian people's sovereignty over all occupied Palestinian territories.

The Council called on all countries to complete the procedures for recognizing the State of Palestine and to take urgent collective action to achieve a lasting solution that ensures the establishment of an independent Palestinian state based on the June 4, 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Council emphasized the need to intensify international efforts to resolve the conflict in a manner that guarantees all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

The Supreme Council stressed the importance of the initiatives announced by King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa of Bahrain at the 33rd Arab Summit held in Bahrain, calling for an international peace conference to establish a secure, independent, and sovereign Palestinian state, and Palestine's full membership in the United Nations.

The Council also reiterated the summit's call to deploy international protection and peacekeeping forces under UN auspices in the occupied Palestinian territories until the two-state solution is implemented.

The Supreme Council expressed its support for Saudi Arabia's efforts to launch the Global Alliance for Implementation of the Two-State Solution in New York on September 26, 2024, in partnership with Norway and the European Union, and it seeks to set a timetable for establishing an independent Palestinian state and ending the Israeli occupation.

The Council welcomed the outcomes of the coalition's first meeting in Riyadh on October 30-31, 2024, with over 90 participating countries and organizations, as well as the second meeting held in Brussels on November 28, 2024, and the Council called on all peace-seeking countries to join the initiative.

The Council reaffirmed its support for the Saudi, European Union, and Arab League initiative to revive the Middle East peace process through a "Peace Day" effort in cooperation with Egypt and Jordan.

The Supreme Council praised the results of meetings held by the ministerial committee, led by Saudi Arabia, formed by the extraordinary joint Arab-Islamic summit to halt Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people.

It urged international action to support Palestine's efforts to gain further international recognition and achieve full UN membership.

**To be continued**



## Will Trump take it up?

## Before exiting, Biden heads to Africa to highlight own counter to China

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Dec 2, (AP): US President Joe Biden is finally making his long-promised visit to Africa this week, attempting to showcase a US-backed railway project in three countries that he has pushed as a new approach in countering some of China's global influence.

Biden's first visit to the continent as president - which he left to the very end - will highlight the Lobito Corridor railway redevelopment in Zambia, Congo and Angola. It aims to advance US presence in a region rich in the critical minerals used in batteries for electric vehicles, electronic devices and clean energy technologies.

That's a key field for US-China competition and China has a stranglehold on Africa's critical minerals.

The US has for years built relations in Africa through trade, security and humanitarian aid. The 800-mile (1,300-kilometer), \$2.5 billion railway upgrade is a different move and has shades of China's Belt and Road foreign infrastructure strategy that has surged ahead.

The Biden administration has called the corridor one of the president's signature initiatives.

Biden starts a three-day trip to Angola on Monday, yet Lobito's future and any change in the way the United States engages with a continent of 1.4

billion leaning heavily toward China depends on the incoming administration of Donald Trump.

"President Biden is no longer the story," said Mvemba Dizolele, the director of the Africa Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank. "Even African leaders are focused on Donald Trump."

The U.S. has committed hundreds of millions of dollars to the Lobito Corridor alongside financing from the European Union, the Group of Seven leading industrialized nations, a Western-led private consortium and African banks.

"A lot is riding on this in terms of its success and its replicability," said Tom Sheehy, a fellow at the United States Institute of Peace, a nonpartisan federal research institution.

He called it one of the flagships for the G7's new Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, which was driven by Biden and aims to reach other developing nations as a response to China's Belt and Road.

Biden promised to visit Africa last year after reviving the US-Africa Summit for the first time in nearly a decade in December 2022. The trip was kicked back to 2024 and delayed again this October because of Hurricane Milton, reinforcing a sentiment among Africans that their continent is still low



US President Joe Biden boards Air Force One at Joint Base Andrews, Md, on Dec 1, en route to Angola as he makes his long-promised visit to Africa. (AP)

priority. The last U.S. president to visit was Barack Obama in 2015.

"Africa never gets top attention," said Witney Schniedman, an expert on African economic growth at the non-profit Brookings Institution.

But many are optimistic that the Lobito project, which isn't due for completion until well after Biden has left office, will survive a change of administration and be given a chance. It goes

some way to blunting China, which has bipartisan backing and is high on Trump's to-do list.

"As long as they keep labeling Lobito one of the main anti-China tools in Africa, there is a certain likelihood that it's going to keep being funded," said Christian-Géraud Neema, who analyzes China-Africa relations.

The Lobito Corridor will be an up-

grade and extension of a railway line from the copper and cobalt mines of northern Zambia and southern Congo to Angola's Atlantic Ocean port of Lobito, a route west for Africa's critical minerals.

It's little more than a starting point for the US and its partners, because China is dominant in the mining in Zambia and Congo. Congo has more than 70% of the world's cobalt, most of which is heading to China to reinforce its critical mineral supply chain that the US and Europe have to rely on.

Lobito was made possible by some American diplomatic success in Angola that led to a Western consortium winning the bid for the project in 2022 ahead of Chinese competition, a surprise given Angola's long and strong ties with Beijing. China financed a previous redevelopment of the railway.

The Biden administration accelerated American outreach to Angola, turning around what was an antagonistic relationship three decades ago when the U.S. armed anti-government rebels in Angola's civil war. US-Angola trade was \$1.77 billion last year, while the US has a stronger stake in regional security through a strategic presence on the Atlantic Ocean, and Angolan President João Lourenço's role mediating in a conflict in eastern Congo.

In Angola, Biden will announce new

developments on health, agribusiness, security cooperation as well as the Lobito Corridor, White House officials said on a preview call with reporters.

The visit, the first by a sitting US president to Angola, will "highlight that remarkable evolution of the US-Angola relationship," Frances Brown, a special assistant to the president and senior director for African affairs at the National Security Council, said on a separate call.

It will also draw attention to a perennial challenge for America's value-based diplomacy in Africa. International rights groups have used Biden's trip to criticize the Lourenço government's authoritarian shift. Political opponents have been imprisoned and allegedly tortured, while security and other laws have been passed in Angola that severely restrict freedoms, throwing some scrutiny on Washington's new African partnership.

Those calling for more US presence in Africa say Angola and the Lobito spinoff show what might be achieved, even with China-facing countries, if the U.S. is willing to consistently engage. But they see signs for Africa when China has held a summit with African leaders every three years since 2000, while the US has had just two summits, in 2014 and 2022, and there are no plans for the next one.



Drivers take advantage of the lull between lake-effect snowfalls in Lowville, New York on Nov 30. (AP)

## Great Lakes region faces more snow

After US travelers battled through harsh weekend weather to reach home following the Thanksgiving holiday, residents of the Great Lakes region face the prospect of more snow through the week, forecasters said.

Snow was expected to fall in the region overnight into Monday morning and again Wednesday and Thursday, along with gusty winds and freezing temperatures, the National Weather Service said Sunday.

Several inches of lake-effect

snow fell over the weekend on upstate New York, including nearly 4 feet (1.2 meters) off Lake Ontario, and parts of Pennsylvania and Michigan.

Lake-effect snow is caused by warm, moist air blowing across a body of water and mixing with colder, drier air, creating narrow bands of often heavy snow on land.

Flinty fans scoffed at the flurries and numbing temperatures during Sunday's nighttime NFL game in Buffalo, New York, against the San Francisco 49ers. (AP)

## Trump slams move Biden pardons son Hunter despite previous pledges not to

WASHINGTON, Dec 2, (AP): US President Joe Biden pardoned his son, Hunter, on Sunday night, sparing the younger Biden a possible prison sentence for federal felony gun and tax convictions and reversing his past promises not to use the extraordinary powers of the presidency for the benefit of his family.

The Democratic president had previously said he would not pardon his son or commute his sentence after convictions in the two cases in Delaware and California. The move comes weeks before Hunter Biden was set to receive his punishment after his trial conviction in the gun case and guilty plea on tax charges, and less than two months before President-elect Donald Trump is set to return to the White House.

It caps a long-running legal saga for the younger Biden, who publicly disclosed he was under federal investigation in December 2020 - a month after his father's 2020 victory - and casts a pall over the elder Biden's legacy.

Biden, who time and again pledged to Americans that he would restore norms and respect for the rule of law after Trump's first term in office, ultimately used his position to help his son, breaking his public pledge to Americans that he would do no such



US President Joe Biden, wearing a Team USA jacket and walking with his son Hunter Biden, heads toward Marine One on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, July 26. (AP)

thing.

In a statement released Sunday evening, Biden said, "I believe in the justice system, but as I have wrestled with this, I also believe raw politics has infected this process and it led to a miscarriage of justice."

The president's sweeping pardon covers not just the gun and tax offenses

against the younger Biden, but also any other "offenses against the United States which he has committed or may have committed or taken part in during the period from Jan 1, 2014 through Dec 1, 2024."

In June, Biden categorically ruled out a pardon or commutation for his son, telling reporters as his son faced

trial in the Delaware gun case, "I abide by the jury decision. I will do that and I will not pardon him."

As recently as Nov 8, days after Trump's victory, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre ruled out a pardon or clemency for the younger Biden, saying, "We've been asked that question multiple times. Our answer stands, which is no."

In his final weeks in office, Trump pardoned Charles Kushner, the father of his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, as well as multiple allies convicted in special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation. Trump over the weekend announced plans to nominate the elder Kushner to be the US envoy to France in his next administration.

Trump, who has pledged to dramatically overhaul and install loyalists across the Justice Department after he was prosecuted for his role in trying to subvert the 2020 presidential election, said in a social media post on Sunday that Hunter Biden's pardon was "such an abuse and miscarriage of Justice."

Hunter Biden said in an emailed statement that he will never take for granted the relief granted to him and vowed to devote the life he has rebuilt "to helping those who are still sick and suffering."

## Pro-Western parties win Romania's poll

BUCHAREST, Romania, Dec 2, (AP): Pro-Western parties won the most votes in Romania's parliamentary election, data on Monday shows, and will look to form a coalition government as the European Union country sees a surge of support for far-right nationalists who made huge gains in the country's legislature.

The leftist Social Democratic Party topped the polls in Sunday's vote and the far-right nationalist Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, or AUR, came in second ahead of the National Liberal Party. The reformist Save Romania Union party, or USR, came in fourth place.

Several smaller far-right nationalist parties also got enough votes to enter parliament.

The election revealed widespread anti-establishment sentiment in the EU and NATO member country, which is due to hold a presidential runoff on Dec 8 between far-right populist **Calin Georgescu**, and Elena Lasconi of USR. The first round plunged Romania into political turmoil and led to allegations of electoral violations and Russian interference.

George Simion, the controversial 38-year-old leader of the AUR who is a vocal supporter of US President-elect Donald Trump, told the media that the anti-establishment gains on Sunday amounted to a "watershed moment" for Romania.

"It is a moment when, through our common will, Romania is reborn," he said. "We are here ... generation after generation, proving that nothing can defeat a united nation."

In 2020, the AUR party went from relative obscurity to gaining 9% in a parliamentary vote, allowing it to enter parliament. The party - which proclaims to stand for "family, nation, faith, and freedom" - doubled its support in Sunday's vote to 18.2%.

Cristian Andrei, a political consultant based in Bucharest, says the increased parliamentary seats for the far-right will make forming a majority government difficult for the pro-Western parties because they are historically opposition parties and could struggle to reach agreements.

"It's not a unified majority, it's a very fragmented one and full of hatred among the parties," he said. "The European side won a majority ... but a majority is very difficult to build, because all those pro-European parties are not enemies, but they fought a lot in the past."



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, (right), and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz attend a ceremony of honoring fallen soldiers near the People's Memorial of National Memory in Kyiv, Ukraine on Dec 2. (AP)

## Chancellor to announce deliveries

## Germany's Scholz visits Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine, Dec 2, (AP): German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited Ukraine for the first time in more than 2 1/2 years Monday, just weeks after he was criticized by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for having a phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

That call came at a time of widespread speculation about what the new administration of President-elect Donald Trump will mean for Ukraine as the incoming president has promised to end the conflict. In a major shift, Zelenskyy signalled Friday that an offer of NATO membership to territory under Kyiv's control could end "the hot stage of the war" in Ukraine.

Scholz's visit comes ahead of an early German election expected in February. As the campaign gets under way, Scholz has pointed to Germany's status as Ukraine's second-biggest weapons supplier while also highlighting his "prudence" in working to prevent the war escalating and refusing to deliver Taurus long-range cruise missiles.

Scholz has been cautious about talk of fast-tracking NATO membership for Ukraine. In recent months, he has emphasized the importance of finding a path to peace, while stressing that it must not be chosen over Ukraine's head.

Scholz said that in his meeting with Zelenskyy he will announce further military deliveries this month totaling 650 million euros.

"I would like to make clear here on

the ground that Germany will remain Ukraine's strongest supporter in Europe," he said.

Despite that, Scholz was criticized by Zelenskyy in November for speaking to Putin in what appeared to be the first conversation with the sitting leader of a major Western power in nearly two years. In that call, Scholz urged Putin to be open to negotiations with Ukraine but the Russian leader said any peace deal should acknowledge Russia's territorial gains and security demands, including that Kyiv renounce joining NATO.

Zelenskyy suggested the call to Putin risked opening "a Pandora's box" and would only serve to make Russia less isolated. He traveled to Berlin in October to meet Scholz to drum up support for his "victory plan" to end the war in Ukraine on a tour of European capitals.

The plan included a suggestion that Ukraine receive a formal invitation to join NATO and a request that Kyiv be given permission to use long-range Western missiles to strike at military targets inside Russia.

Some Western nations granted permission for Kyiv to carry out long-range strikes with their weapons in November. Following the decision, Putin said Russia launched a strike on Ukraine with an unstoppable intermediate range ballistic missile dubbed the Oreshnik. It marked the first time that such a missile was used in the war or in any other conflict.

## Chief of ICC lashes out at US and Russia over threats, accusations

THE HAGUE, Netherlands, Dec 2, (AP): The president of the International Criminal Court lashed out at the United States and Russia for interfering with its investigations, calling threats and attacks on the court "appalling."

"The court is being threatened with draconian economic sanctions by another permanent member of the Security Council as if it was a terrorist organization," Judge Tomoko Akane, in her address to the institution's annual meeting, which opened on Monday.

Akane was referring to remarks made by US Sen. Lindsey Graham, whose Republican party will control both branches of Congress in January, and who called the court a "dangerous joke" and urged Congress to sanction its prosecutor. "To any ally, Canada, Britain, Germany, France, if you try to help the ICC, we're going to sanction you," Graham said on Fox News.

This marks the first time the global court of justice calls out a sitting leader of a major Western nation.

Graham was angered by an announcement last month that judges had granted a request from the court's chief prosecutor Karim Khan to issue arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his former defense minister



Exterior of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands on June 26. (AP)

and Hamas' military chief for crimes against humanity in connection with the nearly 14-month war in Gaza.

The decision has been denounced by critics of the court and given only milquetoast approval by many of its supporters, a stark contrast to the robust backing of an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin last year over war crimes in Ukraine.

Graham's threat isn't seen as just empty words. President-elect Donald

Trump sanctioned the court's previous prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, with a travel ban and asset freeze for investigating American troops and intelligence officials in Afghanistan.

Akane on Monday also had harsh words for Russia. "Several elected officials are being subjected to arrest warrants from a permanent member of the Security Council," she said. Moscow issued warrants for Khan and others in response to the investigation into Putin.

## Bus crash kills two people, injures 33 in France



This photo provided on Dec 2, 2024 by the regional rescue brigade shows a bus that crashed on Dec 1 near a ski resort in the Pyrenees mountains in southern France. (AP)

MADRID, Dec 2, (AP): A bus crashed Sunday evening near a ski resort in the Pyrenees mountains in southern France, killing at least two people and injuring 33 others, local authorities said.

A total of 47 people including the driver were on the bus when it crashed near the ski resort of Porte-Puymorens, the regional administration said. Seven people were in critical condition.

Local authorities said a preliminary investigation showed the bus ran into a cliff, but the exact circumstances were not immediately clear.

Images released by the local firefighter service showed the bus pressed against the side of a cliff, its right side partially crushed and windshield apparently knocked out.

More than 120 individuals were involved in the rescue effort, including from neighboring Catalonia in Spain and Andorra. Helicopters were also deployed.



## INTERNATIONAL

## Police charge 13 people over record cocaine seizure in Australian history

SYDNEY, Dec 2, (Xinhua): Australian police said on Monday they have arrested and charged 13 people over a record cocaine bust in the country's history.

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) announced it has charged 11 adults and two juveniles following an investigation into a transnational criminal syndicate accused of attempting to import 2.34 tons of cocaine into the northeastern Australian state of Queensland by sea.

Officers from the AFP and Queensland Police Service (QPS) made the arrests on Saturday night and in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Those arrested included the crew of a vessel allegedly attempting to import the cocaine into Queensland and

multiple parties waiting on shore to collect the illicit drugs. The AFP will allege in court that one of the men is the vice-president of an outlaw motorcycle gang.

It marks the largest seizure of cocaine in Australian history, with an estimated street value of 760 million Australian dollars (493.6 million U.S. dollars).

"We know that criminals go to extreme lengths, and often risk their own lives, to smuggle drugs into Australia with no regard to the harm they cause to Australian communities," AFP Commander Stephen Jay said in a statement.

"This alleged attempt to collect more than two tons of cocaine from the ocean shows that criminals will

do anything for their own greed and profit," he said.

All 13 individuals have been charged with one count of conspiracy to import a commercial quantity of border-controlled drugs.

If convicted, they face a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

Jay and QPS Detective Acting Chief Superintendent Craig Morrow said at a press conference that the joint investigation began in November after receiving intelligence that a criminal syndicate was planning to import drugs into Australia.

They said that the AFP, QPS and Australian Border Force tracked a recreational fishing boat as it traveled to sea to allegedly meet a mothership to collect the cocaine before returning to Queensland.

The arrests were initiated after the boat became stranded at sea due to a suspected mechanical breakdown.

Jay said that investigations into the origin of the cocaine remain ongoing.

Meanwhile, a police manhunt is underway on Monday after two people were killed in a shooting in southeast Australia, police said.

Police in the state of Victoria said in a statement that a man and woman were found with gunshot wounds at a home in Rye, a beachside town 65 km south of Melbourne, shortly after 4 a.m. local time on Monday.

Emergency services were unable to revive the pair, and they were declared dead at the scene.

Victoria Police said that detectives believe a second man fled the scene.

"At this early stage in the investigation, it's believed the parties were known to each other," a spokesperson said.



Australian Federal Police officers stand with approximately 350 kilograms (770 pounds) of seized cocaine at a press conference at the AFP headquarters in Brisbane, Australia on Dec 2. (AP)



Residents walk on a flooded street after heavy monsoon rains in downtown Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia on Nov 29. (AP)

## 6 killed and 130,000 displaced in Malaysia floods

Flooding in Malaysia has claimed six lives as of Monday, with the latest deaths being two elderly individuals drowning in Kelantan state while monitoring livestock, authorities said.

Flood victims numbering 134,524 are being housed in 613 flood relief centers at 11 a.m. local time, according to the country's social welfare department.

The worst-hit states are Kelantan and Terengganu, both located on the country's east coast.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said that the government has allocated additional funds for post-flood follow-up measures, which are expected to begin in the middle of this month.

Separately, the Agriculture and Food Security Ministry said in a statement that it is studying the appropri-

ate types of assistance to ease the burden of farmers affected by floods, including the provision of financial assistance and post-flood recovery support.

Anwar said Friday that all Cabinet ministers were banned from going on vacation.

"All ministers have been told to go to the ground. Yes, leave has been frozen for them," Anwar was quoted as saying by national Bernama news agency.

His deputy, Ahmad Zahid Hamidi who heads the disaster response, said that floods this year were expected to be worse than 2014, when more than 250,000 people were displaced and 21 killed. He was cited by local media as saying that weather forecast indicated that heavy rainfall next month would likely affect more states. (Agencies)

Process could take weeks or months

## Impeachment complaint filed against Philippine VP after threatening Marcos

MANILA, Philippines, Dec 2, (AP): An impeachment complaint was filed Monday against Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte, who is facing a legal storm over a death threat she made against the president and her alleged role in extrajudicial killings of drug suspects, corruption and failure to stand up to Chinese aggression in the disputed South China Sea.

The impeachment bid filed by several prominent civil society activists in the House of Representatives accuses Duterte of violating the country's Constitution, betrayal of public trust and other "high crimes," including the death threats she made against the president, his wife and the speaker of the House of Representatives.

Duterte did not immediately issue any response to the impeachment bid, which accused her of about two dozen alleged crimes.

"We're hoping that with this complaint, we can end the nightmare that our vice president has brought to the people," said Rep. Percival Cendana, who gave the required endorsement of the complaint.

The vice president's threats showed the "extent of respondent's mental incapacity, her depravity and lack of mental fitness to continue

holding the high office of vice president of the Philippines," said a copy of the complaint seen by The Associated Press. "The same constitute not only betrayal of public trust but also a high crime which would warrant her immediate impeachment from office."

Duterte, a 46-year-old lawyer, was also accused in the complaint of having unexplained wealth and of allowing a continuation of the extrajudicial killings of drug suspects begun by her father, a former mayor of southern Davao City, when she held that position in the past.

The vice president's legal troubles have unfolded with the backdrop of her increasingly bitter political feud with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and his allies. She said in online news conference on Nov. 23 that she has contracted an assassin to kill Marcos, his wife and Speaker Martin Romualdez if she were killed, a threat she warned was not a joke.

She later said she was not threatening him but was expressing concern for her own safety.

The impeachment complaint will be scrutinized by the Philippine Congress, which is dominated by allies of Marcos and his cousin and key backer, Romualdez, who also has been politically at odds with the

vice president.

The process could take weeks or months. Congress is to start its Christmas recess on Dec 20 and resume on Jan 13. Many legislators will then start campaigning for reelection before May 12 midterm elections.

The House has been investigating

the alleged misuse of 612.5 million pesos (\$10.3 million) of confidential and intelligence funds received by Duterte's offices as vice president and education secretary. She has since left the education post.

She has refused to respond to questions in detail in tense televised hearings. Duterte also vehemently

protested when her chief of staff, Zuleika Lopez, was ordered temporarily detained for allegedly hampering the inquiry. Lopez has been released from hospital detention.

Philippine police have filed criminal complaints against Duterte and her security staff for allegedly assaulting authorities and disobeying orders in an altercation in Congress over Lopez's detention.

Duterte has accused Marcos, his wife and Romualdez of corruption, weak leadership and attempting to muzzle her because of speculation she may seek the presidency in 2028.

The National Bureau of Investigation subpoenaed Duterte to face investigators about her threats against them.

The police, military and the national security adviser immediately boosted the security of the Marcoses after the threats.

The president has said an impeachment of Duterte would waste time while the country faces other challenges, but her opponents have said they will proceed to foster accountability and the rule of law.

Marcos and Duterte won landslide victories as running mates in the 2022 election but have since fallen out over key differences. The

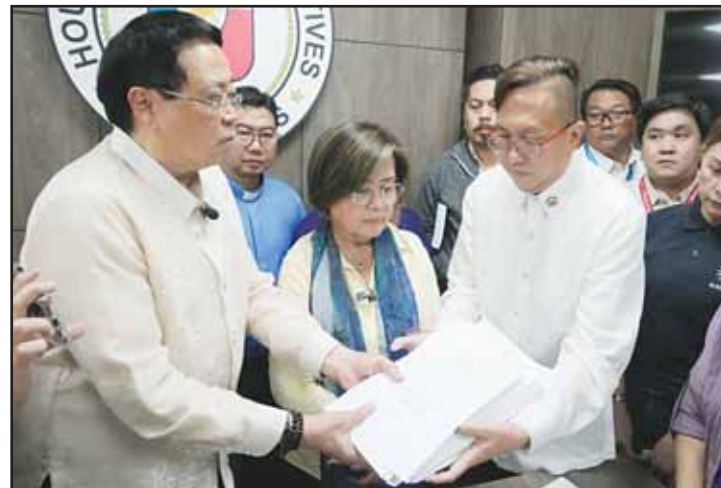
two offices are elected separately in the Philippines, which has resulted in rivals occupying the country's top political posts.

Marcos and Duterte differ on their approaches to China's territorial claims in the South China Sea and their views on the deadly anti-drug crackdown conducted by Duterte's father, Rodrigo Duterte, who was the previous president in addition to ex-mayor of Davao.

The complainants in the impeachment, including former military officers from a group called Magdalo, accused her of refusing to condemn Chinese aggressive actions against Philippine forces in the South China Sea. The complainants did not cite China by name.

The brutal drug crackdown left thousands of mostly poor suspects dead in killings mostly by police that are being investigated by the International Criminal Court as a possible crime against humanity.

The impeachment complaint cited a key witness to the killings, former police officer Arturo Lascanas, as saying that Sara Duterte allowed the extra-judicial killings of drug suspects to continue in Davao city when she served as its mayor. The drug crackdown was launched by her father when he was mayor.



House Secretary General, Reginald Velasco, (left), receives an impeachment complaint filed on Dec 2, against Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte by several prominent opponents and activists, including former senator Leila de Lima, (center), and Akbayan Partylist Representative Perci Cendana, (right), at the House of Representatives in Quezon City, Philippines. (AP)



Ambassador James Moriarty, former chair of the American Institute in Taiwan, (right), talks to media before a private discussion with Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te at the East-West Center on Dec 1 in Honolulu. (AP)

'China will closely monitor situation's development'

## Taiwan's president visits East-West think tank

HONOLULU, Dec 2, (AP): Taiwan's president visited a US State Department-funded think tank and educational institution Sunday on the second day of a two-day visit to Hawaii that's part of a Pacific island tour that has already triggered criticism from Beijing.

Lai Ching-te met and exchanged gifts with the president of the East-West Center, which is on the University of Hawaii's flagship Manoa campus. He spoke to an audience at the center but journalists were escorted out of a conference hall before he began speaking.

China's Foreign Ministry said it "strongly condemned" US support for Lai's visit and had lodged a complaint with the US. It also denounced a newly announced US weapons sale to Taiwan, a self-governing island that China claims as its own territory.

"China will closely monitor the situation's development, and take resolute and forceful measures to safeguard the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity," said the statement.

Hawaii was Lai's first stop on a weeklong voyage that will later take him to the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Palau. They account for three of the 12 countries that Taipei has formal diplomatic relations with.

Suzanne Puanani Vares-Lum, president of the East-West Center, said her institution is the perfect place for Lai to visit because it promotes relations among the United States, Asia and the Pacific.

She said it's not unusual for leaders from around the world to come to Hawaii given the state's location and what makes it special.

"There is something about Hawaii that allows us to really just see where

we connect on a human to human level," Vares-Lum said in an interview.

Lai's predecessor, Tsai Ing-wen, visited the East-West Center in 2019 and 2017.

On Saturday, Hawaii Gov. Josh Green hosted Lai at the state's emergency management agency where they discussed disaster preparedness. Green, who was an emergency room physician before becoming governor, posted on social media that he and Lai discussed how their experiences in health care informed their governance. Lai is also a physician by training and obtained a Master of Public Health degree from Harvard University.

"Together, we extended a warm aloha to Lai and his delegation, highlighting Hawaii's shared values of resilience and collaboration with Taiwan," Green said in an Instagram post.

## Lat/Am

**10 killed in Ecuador:** At least 10 people, including Ecuadorians and Colombians, were killed in an armed attack early Sunday in El Guabo, a town in the coastal province of El Oro in southern Ecuador, local media reported.

Witnesses said the armed assailants opened fire indiscriminately on several people sleeping in a rental house.

Initial investigations suggest the attack may be linked to ongoing conflicts between organized criminal groups, according to local police.

The incident was reported around 5:00 am local time (10:00 GMT) after residents heard gunshots and discovered several bodies along a nearby road.

El Oro province has been under a state of emergency since Oct 3, following a sharp rise in violence and insecurity. The measure, set to last 60 days, also applies to seven other regions of the country, including the capital, Quito, all grappling with escalating crime.

Since the beginning of the year, Ecuador has seen a surge in violence, including homicides, kidnappings, and extortion. In response, President Daniel Noboa declared an "internal armed conflict" in January against 22 criminal gangs labeled as "terrorist." (Xinhua)

## Mexico shooting kills 8:

Eight people are dead and two others are wounded after gunmen pulled up to a roadside stand in north-central Mexico and opened fire on customers and bystanders, authorities reported Sunday.

Prosecutors in the cartel-ravaged state of Guanajuato said the shooting occurred late Saturday in the town of Apaseo el Grande. (AP)

## Drone strikes by Mali military regime kill 8 Tuareg leaders in Tinzaouatine

BAMAKO, Mali, Dec 2, (AP): Drone strikes by Mali's military regime killed eight Tuareg rebel leaders in the town of Tinzaouatine in the north of the country, a rebel spokesman said Sunday. It was the first time since the start of the rebellion in 2012 that so many Tuareg leaders have been killed in a single attack.

"Several synchronized drone strikes martyred some Azawad leader on December 1, 2024 in Tinzaouatine, near the Algerian border," spokesman Mohamed Elmaouloud Ramadane said in a statement.

Azawad is the term used by the separatists for northern Mali. The statement from the separatists lists the names of eight Tuareg chiefs, the best known of whom is Fahad Ag Al Mahmoud, Secretary General of the Gataia, a Tuareg armed group.

Later Sunday evening, the General Staff of the Malian armed forces confirmed the deaths of the rebel leaders, whom it described as terrorists, "in a special operation." The military state-

ment was broadcast on Malian national television channel ORTM.

"Clearly this is a major loss to northern Malian groups since among the victims there are key leaders who have been influential in their communities," said Rida Lyammouri, senior fellow at the Policy Center for the New South, a Moroccan think tank. "However, it will further intensify the anti sentiment toward Bamako, and the setback doesn't mean the fight is over."

He said "the junta has demonstrated with these airstrikes that it is not afraid to use the air assets (drones) it acquired anytime it can."

The attack by Mali's military regime comes a day after the armed groups in the north announced they were merging into a single political-military entity, now called the Azawad Liberation Front. The new group's mission is "the total liberation of Azawad and the formation of the Azawad Authority," said Mohamed Elmaouloud Ramadane, a spokesman for the groups, in a press release dated Nov 30.



Leader of Mali's ruling junta Lt Col Assimi Goita, (center), attends an Independence Day military parade in Bamako, Mali, on Sept 22, 2022. (AP)







Recognition based on the program's impact on the outside world and innovation by introduction of new ideas

## NBK receives MERIT's Special Recognition for 'Developing Women Leaders'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) received MERIT's Special Recognition for 'Developing Women Leaders' on the sidelines of the MERIT Summit & Awards event held in Dubai for heads of HR and L&D from different industries and executive education leaders to share the challenges and explore solutions within an international professional community.

The recognition was awarded to the bank for its 'NBK RISE' - Global Women's Leadership Initiative, a first-of-its-kind program designed to create a conducive environment to develop women leaders and elevate them to higher leadership roles, which achieved remarkable success and significant impact in the business community in Kuwait. The award was received by Najla Al-Sager, Head of Talent Management and Learning, Group Human Resources at National Bank of Kuwait.

The program emphasizes the importance of diversity in leadership teams, recognizing that diverse perspectives lead to more robust decision-making, foster innovation, and enhance overall



Najla Al-Sager receiving the award.

all performance. Addressing the under-representation of women in executive roles, the program aimed to cultivate a more inclusive corporate environment where every individual can thrive and contribute to the organization's success.

NBK was selected based on a set of criteria including Impact - on the organization and its people; Innovation

- introduction of new ideas, methodology, or technology; Ideation - needs analysis, approach, design; and Implementation - stakeholder buy-in, engagement. Other criteria were also taken into consideration including the organization type and size as well as the geographical outreach of the initiative.



A photo taken during the award ceremony.

The inaugural cohort of the program attained remarkable success, and the second cohort was recently launched, welcoming new participants from Kuwait and beyond. Efforts will be made to invite participants from diverse sectors and to bolster the advancement of future female leaders within the industry towards higher leadership roles.

Graduates of the program will also mentor aspiring female candidates in the future, thus fostering a sustainable cycle for the program's continuity and impact.

The nine-month program comprised various modules, each tailored to a specific aspect of leadership. These modules were crafted to equip female

candidates for senior management roles, imparting essential leadership, strategic, and technical skills. The training units targeted the enhancement of leadership and strategic competencies, effective communication and interpersonal skills, and readiness for assuming top leadership positions within organizations.

The MERIT Summit is a unique forum for heads of HR and L&D of companies from different industries and Executive Education leaders. Further to our mission to empower people and organizations and elevate the state of corporate learning, 'The MERITS' have been designed to award impactful transformational initiatives.

MERIT is an initiative for corporate and L&D leadership, launched in 2016. Our mission is to create a community that brings together people and knowledge. Leveraging individual experiences, business intelligence, and academic and non-academic research, we aim to empower leaders and their organizations to reach strategic goals and make the most of in-house potential through learning, exchange and benchmarking.

## \$2.3 bln worth of additional market opportunities to insure Arab agricultural exports and financing, confirms Dhaman

\$39 billion deficit in the Arab agri trade balance for 2023 presents a chance to boost intra-Arab trade

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhaman) confirmed that the Arab region has untapped trade, finance and insurance potential thanks to its strategic location on global trade routes.

It estimated available additional opportunities at the market for insuring Arab agricultural merchandise exports and financing against political and commercial risks at more than \$2.3 billion, making up around 8% of the total Arab agricultural exports for 2023, estimated at \$29 billion.

In a working paper presented to the First Arab Conference on Agricultural Export Development, which concluded today in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, Dhaman explained that the insurance provided by Arab export credit insurers annually cov-

ers an average of 1% of the region's total merchandise exports to the world, amounting to more than \$1.4 trillion for 2023, compared to 9% coverage rate for Arab merchandise imports for the same year.

In its paper presented to the conference, co-organized by the Arab League and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, Dhaman added that Arab agricultural exports, estimated at roughly \$29 billion (not including animal products), represent only 2% of total Arab merchandise exports for 2023, and 4.4% of total global agricultural exports for the same products and the same year.

Dhaman revealed that the value of the deficit in the balance of trade in agricultural merchandise in the Arab countries for 2023, amounting to \$39 billion, represents an opportunity to increase the volume of intra-Arab trade in agricultural goods, estimated at about \$12 billion. This opportunity can be seized by exerting more efforts



to address the challenges of boosting agricultural exports, especially by providing finance for Arab exporters and insurance against political and commercial risks to that export transactions may be exposed to.

Dhaman underlined its willingness to provide insurance cover for Arab exports and imports of capital and strategic goods, including finance against political risks,

namely: expropriation and nationalization, currency inconvertibility & transfer restrictions, wars and civil disturbances, governments' breach of contracts with businessmen, as well as against commercial risks, including the importer's bankruptcy, insolvency or default. The corporation added that the volume of its guaranteed cumulative Arab trade operations since its

establishment until the end of 2024 amounted hit \$27 billion, benefiting exporters, importers and financial institutions for more than 100 Arab and foreign countries.

Considering that investment is one of the sources of financing projects, Dhaman provides FDI insurance services for Arab agricultural projects against political risks, as Dhaman-guaranteed FDI operations in the Arab countries since its establishment until the end of 2024 amounted to about \$5 billion, benefiting Arab and foreign investors in many sectors in the region.

Dhaman explained that the foreign agricultural projects in the region, which are estimated at 168 agricultural-related foreign projects and executed in the region with Capex of \$6.9 billion over the past 22 years, can benefit from the corporation's insurance services.

Dhaman also indicated that it provides a number of advisory and

information services to serve Arab exporters, most notably: periodic monitoring of the movement of Arab trade and changes in sovereign ratings and trade-related risk assessments. It also carries out investment, trade and finance insurance activities in Arab countries, coordinates with relevant local, regional and international bodies, and develops a database of the most important exporters and importers, distributed according to Arab countries and major merchandise groups.

Based in Kuwait, the Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhaman) was established in 1974. It comprises as members all Arab countries and four joint Arab financial institutions. It provides specialized insurance services against credit and political risks with a view to facilitating the inflow of foreign direct investments into Arab countries and promoting Arab exports and imports.

### EM rout pushes GCC index in the red

## Boursa Kuwait returned to growth in November

By KAMCO Invest

GCC equity markets declined for the second consecutive month led by a rout in emerging market indices across the globe. The decline reflected stronger than expected economic growth in the US coupled with higher than expected inflation figures for October-2024 led to speculations that interest rates in the US are expected to be remain elevated for a longer time in the near term.

This was reflected in the decline in probability for a rate cut in the December-2024 meeting and a forecast that the number of interest rate cuts next year could be less than 100bps.

On the other hand, softer growth in China continued to affect expectations for a revival in demand for oil in the near term, whereas growth in the euro zone remained subdued in the latest economic releases.

The MSCI GCC Index recorded a decline of 1.2% during the month that came after three out of the seven benchmarks in the GCC witnessed a decline during November-2024. Oman witnessed the biggest monthly decline of 3.9% during the month followed by Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi benchmarks with declines of 3.2% and 1.0%, respectively.

On the gainers side, Dubai continued to outperform with a gain of 5.7% followed by marginal gains for the remaining GCC indices. These declines pushed the broader GCC index deeper into the red with a fall of 2.4% in terms of YTD-2024 decline with Abu Dhabi seeing the biggest decline of 3.6% followed by Saudi Arabia and Qatari benchmarks with declines of 2.4% and 1.6%, respectively.

The GCC sector performance chart for the month showed a majority of the sectors in the red. The GCC Utilities index led the decline with a double-digit decline of 11.4% followed by Pharma & Biotech and Retailing with declines of 9.2% and 7.6%, respectively.

On the other hand Real Estate, Energy and Bank showed low single-digit gains during November-2024.

Boursa Kuwait returned to growth with all the four benchmark indices seeing gains during

the November-2024. The gains were mainly seen in mid-cap and small-cap stocks, with steady Q3-2024 quarterly earnings further added to investor optimism.

The Main Market Index outperformed the other indices on the exchange with a gain of 1.3% to close at 6,608.5 points. The Premier Market Index witnessed a slightly smaller monthly growth of 1.2% while the Main 50 index was up 1.1%.

The All-Share Market Index reported a monthly growth of 1.2% and closed at 7,246.0 points. In terms of YTD-2024 performance, all the market segments continue to remain in the green with the Main Market Index up by 18.7% followed by an 18.3% gain for the Main 50 Index.

The All-Share Market and the Premier Market Index advanced by 6.3% and 3.8%, respectively.

The monthly sector performance chart favored gainers with the Basic Materials index at the top during November-2024 with a double-digit gain of 10.8% followed by Consumer Discretionary and Utilities indices with returns of 6.4% and 5.8%, respectively.

On the decliners' side, the Consumer Staples index saw the biggest decline of 10.6% followed by Insurance and Real Estate indices with declines of 4.0% and 1.4%, respectively. Gains in the Basic Materials sector came mainly on the back of double-digit gain of 52.1% in shares of Al Kout for Industrial Projects Co.

The performance of the Consumer Discretionary index was supported by gains of 43.2% in shares of Oula Fuel Marketing Co. and 15.9% gain in shares of Kuwait Resorts Co. The Consumer Staples sector was dragged down by losses in both the constituent shares in the sector.

Large-cap indices like Banking saw moderate gain of 1.6% during the month after shares of four out of nine Kuwaiti banks declined. In the Telecom sector, shares of Zain registered a marginal gain of 1.1% during the month, while the remaining telcos posted declines.

Prominent monthly gainers included National International Holding, Al Kout for Industrial Projects and Kuwait Finance & Investment

Co. with gains of 57.1%, 52.1% and 49.8%, respectively. Prominent decliners included Palms Agro Production Co., KBT Real Estate Co., and Hayat Communications Co. with declines of 18.1%, 16.3% and 15.1%, respectively.

Trading activity declined with monthly volume traded sinking by 12.2% to 8.3 Bn shares during November-2024, while monthly value traded dropped 6.6% to KWD 1.6 Bn. Shares of KFH topped the value traded chart with value traded at KWD 149.8 Mn followed by NBK and KBT Real Estate at KWD 97.6 Mn and KWD 69.8 Mn, respectively. In terms of monthly volume, KBT Real Estate topped with 536.1 Mn shares followed by Inovest and Al Safat Investment at 423.3 Mn and 394.0 Mn shares, respectively.

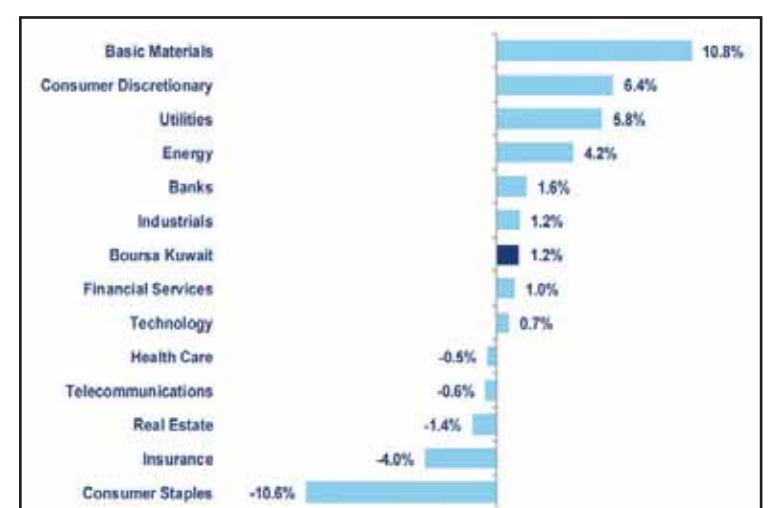
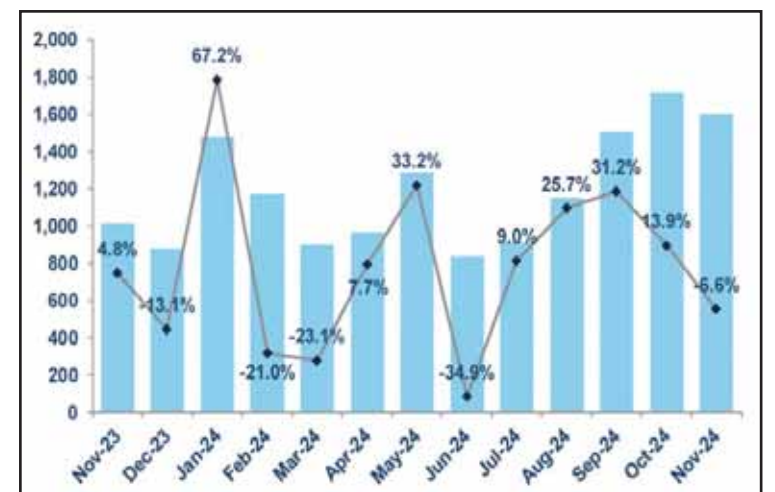
Saudi Arabia's TASI benchmark reported a decline during November-2024 and closed at the lowest point in more than four months at the end of the month. The decline reflected a fall in most of the sectors during the month after trading activity indicated local institutional investors sold shares in broader global emerging markets rout while foreign investors were net buyers. The benchmark peaked at a closing high of 12,130.8 points in the beginning of the month but mostly trended downward during the rest of the month to close with a decline of 3.2% at 11,641.3 points. The decline in November-2024 pushed the benchmark in the red in terms of YTD-2024 performance at 2.7%, the third-biggest decline in the GCC. In terms of main market activity, the month saw one listing during the month (Tamkeen Human Resource Co.) in Commercial & Professional Services sector, while Shatirah House Restaurant Co. moved from Nomu market shares to Main market to join Consumer Service Sector.

In terms of sectoral performance, the picture was skewed towards decliners after sixteen out of the twenty-two indices recorded declines during November-2024. The Utilities index witnessed the steepest decline of 17.4% after all the constituents of the index reported declines barring Saudi Electricity Co. with a gain of 1.3%. The Media and Pharma, Biotech

& Life Science indices were next with declines of 11.1% and 9.1%, respectively. On the gainer's side, the Software & Services index topped during November-2024 with a gain of 3.6% followed by Capital Goods and Energy indices with returns of 3.2% and 1.3%, respectively. Large-cap sectors like Banks and Energy reported monthly gains of 0.5% and 1.3%, respectively. In the banking sector, shares of most of the listed banks reported declines during the month. Large-cap banks like Al Rajhi Bank gained by 3.5% while shares of SNB dropped by 2.1%. The Telecom Sector was dragged down by losses in two of the constituent stocks including Zain KSA (-2.1%) and STC (-5.6%) while Etihad Etisalat Co. reported a gain of 6.6%.

The monthly gainer's chart was topped by MBC Group Co. with a gain of 26.7% followed by Riyadh Cables Group Co. and Naseej International Trading Co. with gains of 26.0% and 21.7%, respectively. On the decliner's side, Saudi Chemical Co. topped with a decline of 21.1% followed by ACWA Power Co. and Fourth Mills Co. with declines of 20.9% and 17.9%, respectively. In terms of the trading activity, total volume of shares traded during the month declined by 30.2% to 12.4 Bn shares compared to 17.8 Bn in October 2024. Value traded also decreased by 13.2% to reach SAR 125.6 Mn during November-2024 compared to SAR 144.7 Mn.

In economic news, The Saudi Ministry of Finance, approved the state budget for fiscal year 2025 with revenues projected to reach SAR 1.18 Trillion (USD 315.73 Bn) and expenditure at SAR 1.28 Trillion, leading to a deficit of SAR 101 Bn. The Finance Ministry forecasted Saudi Arabia's Real GDP growth to reach 4.6% in 2025, up from the 0.8% estimate for 2024. This growth is forecasted to be driven by non-oil sector. In terms of sector-specific expenditures, the military sector received the largest allocation at SAR 272 Bn, marking a 5% increase compared to the 2024 estimates. The health and social development sector followed with a 20.25% share amounting to SAR 260 Bn.





# Zain Group enters agreement to acquire remaining 70% of IHS Kuwait Limited



Left-right: Bader Al Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO and William Saad, COO of IHS Towers.



Left-right: Ossama Matta, Zain Group CFO; Bader Al-Kharafi; William Saad; & Kamil Hilali, Zain Group Chief Strategy Officer.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Zain Group (Bursa Kuwait: ZAIN), a leading telecommunications operator operating across the Middle East and Africa has entered a definitive agreement to acquire IHS Holding Limited's (NYSE: IHS) 70% interest in IHS Kuwait Limited, an independent licensed Tower Company that owns 1,675 sites and manages an additional approximate 700 sites in Kuwait.

Under the terms of the transaction, Zain has agreed to increase its 30% ownership of IHS Kuwait Limited to 100%, at an equity value for the remaining 70% stake of US \$ 134 million. IHS Kuwait Limited will continue to provide independent tower infrastructure services within the Kuwait market.

The transaction is subject to customary closing conditions, including government and regulatory approvals.

Commenting on the transaction, Bader Al Kharafi, Zain Vice-

■ IHS Kuwait Limited will continue to operate independently and provide passive tower infrastructure services in Kuwait

**Bader Al Kharafi:**

■ "This transaction will complement the 30,000 tower deal with Ooredoo, enhancing Zain's strategic regional expansion within the Digital Infrastructure space"

Chairman and Group CEO said, "This agreement will enhance Zain's Digital Infrastructure regional expansion strategy in creating capital efficiencies and driving shareholder value. It will also complement our ground-breaking deal with Ooredoo to acquire and merge approximately 30,000 towers. The aim of our sustainable and independent operating model is to provide passive infrastructure as a service, sup-

porting the reduction of MENA's carbon footprint and empowering the region's digital future."

For Zain Group, FTI Capital Advisors acted as exclusive financial advisors; PwC as M&A advisors; DLA Piper as international legal counsel and GLA& Company as local legal counsel.



CEO Stellantis Carlos Tavares speaks during the Paris Automotive Summit on the sideline of the Paris Auto Show, in Paris, Oct. 15, 2024. (AP)

**Q3 net revenues dip 27%**

## Stellantis CEO steps down as carmaker's sales slump

NEW YORK, Dec 2, (AP): Stellantis CEO Carlos Tavares is stepping down after nearly four years in the top spot of the automaker, which owns car brands like Jeep, Citroën and Ram, amid an ongoing struggle with slumping sales.

The world's fourth-largest carmaker announced that its board accepted Tavares' resignation Sunday, effective immediately.

Stellantis noted Sunday that the process of finding a new, permanent CEO is "well under way." In the meantime, the company says a new interim executive committee, led by chairman John Elkann, will be established.

As head of PSA Peugeot, Tavares took control of the Netherlands-based company in January 2021 - when it merged with Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, creating an automotive giant that is the parent to several well-known brands today. Beyond Jeep, Citroën and Ram, the company portfolio includes Dodge, Chrysler, Fiat, Peugeot, Maserati and Opel.

Stellantis' North American operations had been the company's main source of profits for some time, but struggles piled up this year, with the company citing rising competition and larger market changes. As a result of lofty sticker prices and fewer affordable options, many high-priced vehicles have been left unsold on dealers' lots.

**Net revenues**

For its third quarter, Stellantis posted 27% plunge in net revenues, as gaps in launching new products and action to reduce inventories also slashed global shipments of new vehicles by 20%.

The carmaker reported net revenues of 33 billion euros (nearly \$36 billion) in the three-month period ending Sept. 30, down from 45 billion euros in the same period last year. All regions except South America reported double-digit dips in revenues - led by North America, which plunged 42% to 12.4 billion euros (\$13.1 billion).

In recent months, Tavares had come under fire from U.S. dealers and the United Auto Workers union after the release of dismal financial performance reports. He also oversaw cost-cutting efforts that included delaying factory openings and laying off union workers - further straining the company's relations with the UAW, which filed several grievances against Stellantis and threatened to strike in recent

months.

The UAW welcomed Tavares' resignation with president Shawn Fain calling the move "a major step in the right direction for a company that has been mistreated for too long." He noted that thousands of UAW members had been calling for Tavares' firing for weeks for what Fain called the CEO's "reckless mismanagement of the company."

"Tavares is leaving behind a mess of painful layoffs and overpriced vehicles sitting on dealership lots," Fain said in a statement. He added that the union looks forward to sitting down with Stellantis' new chief executive and "will keep using all means available" to hold the company accountable.

**Walkout**

Beyond the U.S., Stellantis has faced pressure in Italy - where lawmakers questioned the former chief executive over the company's production plans in October, with the far-right government accusing the company of relocating assembly plants to low-cost countries. Tens of thousands of autoworkers in the country also held a one-day walkout, calling for more employment certainty and protections.

In efforts to revive sales, Stellantis previously made a number of leadership changes in October, which included naming new heads of operations in North America and Europe. At the time, the company expected Tavares to step down in early 2026, closer to the end of his five-year contract.

The company confirmed in September that it was searching for a CEO to eventually succeed Tavares, but it maintained those efforts were part of standard leadership transition plans.

In a statement Sunday, Stellantis' senior independent director Henri de Castries said that Stellantis' success is "rooted in a perfect alignment" between shareholders, the company's board and the CEO - but noted "different views" had emerged in recent weeks, resulting in the decision to approve Tavares' resignation.

Elkann, the chairperson of Stellantis' board, thanked Tavares for "his years of dedicated service and the role he has played in the creation of Stellantis" in an additional statement. He added that he looks forward to appointing a new CEO.

# Asian shares tick higher, powered by China's manufacturing growth

Oil prices climb, US futures edge lower

BANGKOK, Dec 2, (AP): Shares started the week higher in Asia, led by gains in China as monthly surveys showed improving conditions for manufacturing.

Oil prices rose and U.S. futures edged lower.

Both official and private sector surveys of factory managers showed strong new orders and export orders, possibly partly linked to efforts by importers in the U.S. to beat potential tariff hikes by President-elect Donald Trump once he takes office.

On Saturday, President-elect Donald Trump threatened 100% tariffs against the so-called BRIC bloc of nine nations if they act to undermine the U.S. dollar. The BRICs include Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates. Trump said he wants the bloc to promise it won't create a new currency or otherwise try to undercut the U.S. dollar.

"Asia's markets are riding a wave of optimism, catching a significant tailwind from Wall Street's record-setting day on Friday and buoyed further by emerging signs that China's economic funk might be easing," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

He noted that investors are also anticipating further moves by authorities in China to boost the economy ahead of Trump's inauguration next month.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 0.2% to 19,468.27, while the Shanghai Composite index jumped 1% to 3,360.38. Taiwan's TaieX surged 2.4%.

In Tokyo, the Nikkei 225 index



A person walks in front of an electronic stock board showing Japan's Nikkei index at a securities firm Friday, Nov. 29, 2024, in Tokyo. (AP)

surged 0.7% to 38,482.47.

Automaker Nissan Motor Corp.'s shares fell 1% as reports said the company's CFO, Stephen Ma, plans to step down as the company slashes jobs and production due to weakening sales in China and other markets.

In South Korea, the Kospi added 0.4% to 2,466.24, while Australia's S&P/ASX 200 edged 0.1% to 8,440.00.

In Bangkok, the SET was nearly unchanged.

Friday's half-day post-Thanksgiving session ended with the S&P 500 up 0.6% at 6,032.38, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average gained

0.4% to 44,910.65. The Nasdaq added 0.8% to 19,218.17.

Some retailers advanced as Black Friday unofficially kicked off the holiday shopping season, although retailers had been offering early deals for weeks. Macy's and Best Buy each gained around 2%.

Tesla shares rose 3.7% Friday and posted a monthly increase of more than 38%. The electric vehicle maker is expected to benefit from CEO Elon Musk's support of Trump.

Musk also gave a boost to Hasbro shares after he triggered takeover speculation when he asked in a post on X how much the toy and game

company was worth. Hasbro, which owns the role-playing game Dungeons & Dragons, rose 2%.

Apple rose 1.1%. The technology giant is hoping recently added artificial intelligence features are enough to entice consumers to treat themselves or their relatives to a new iPhone for the holidays.

Bitcoin, which has been nudging toward \$100,000, was trading at 96,911.32, according to Coin Desk.

In other dealings early Monday, U.S. benchmark crude oil gained 37 cents to \$68.37 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, picked up 40 cents to \$72.24 per barrel.

## Indian tycoon issues remarks after US bribery and fraud charges

# Conglomerate committed to compliance, says Adani



Indian billionaire and Chairman Adani Group, Gautam Adani presides over 51st Gems and Jewelry awards function in Jaipur, India, Saturday, Nov. 30, 2024. (AP)

NEW DELHI, Dec 2, (AP): Indian tycoon Gautam Adani said his conglomerate is committed to "world-class regulatory compliance" after being indicted in the U.S. on fraud charges and an alleged bribery scheme worth millions of dollars, his first remarks since the accusations surfaced.

Adani, 62, is one of Asia's richest men and perceived as close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He was thrust into the spotlight on Nov. 20 when U.S. prosecutors in New York charged him and seven of his associates with securities fraud, conspiracy to commit securities fraud, and wire fraud, as well as duping investors by concealing that his company's huge solar energy project on the subcontinent was being facilitated by bribes.

They were accused of allegedly paying or planning to pay about \$265 million in bribes to government officials to help secure contracts and financing amounting to

billions of dollars.

"This is not the first time we have faced such challenges. What I can tell you is that every attack makes us stronger. And every obstacle becomes a stepping stone for a more resilient Adani Group," Adani said late Saturday at an awards ceremony in the northern Indian city of Jaipur.

The businessman said roadblocks his group faces are "the price of pioneering."

"The more bold your dreams, the more the world will scrutinize you," he said. "In today's world negativity spreads faster than facts. And as we work through the legal process, I want to reconfirm our absolute commitment to world-class regulatory compliance."

The Adani Group, in a statement last week, said the allegations by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission against directors of Adani Green were baseless.



## Hollywood celebrates a moviegoing feast

# 'Moana 2' sails to a record opening, 'Wicked' holds strong

NEW YORK, Dec. 2, (AP) - Christmas came early at the box office this year.

"Moana 2" brought in a tidal wave of moviegoers over the Thanksgiving Day weekend, setting records with \$221 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday. That, combined with "Wicked" and "Gladiator II," made for an unprecedented weekend in cinemas and a confluence of blockbusters more like what's often found in late December.

Expectations were high for Walt Disney Co.'s "Moana 2," but the film - originally planned as a series for Disney+ before it was redirected to the big screen - blew predictions out of the water. Its five-day opening set a new record for Thanksgiving moviegoing. (The previous best was \$125 million for "Frozen 2" in its second week of release in 2019.) "Moana 2" added \$165.3 million internationally; with \$386 million worldwide, it's the second-best global launch of the year.

At the same time, the sensation of "Wicked" showed no signs of slowing down. The Universal Pictures musical brought in \$117.5 million over the five-day weekend, pushing its two-week global total to \$359.2 million. Not accounting for inflation, "Wicked"



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

is now the highest grossing Broadway adaptation over "Grease." (That 1978 film grossed \$190 million, but factoring in inflation would put it past \$900 million.)

"Gladiator II," meanwhile, also held well, dipping 44% from its opening weekend. Ridley Scott's sequel to his Oscar-winning best picture original collected \$44 million in its second

weekend. While its steep price tag of \$250 million will make profitability challenging, "Gladiator II" has swiftly gathered \$320 million worldwide.

Those three films drove the overall

box office to a record \$420 million in overall Thanksgiving weekend ticket sales, according to Comscore - more than \$100 million more than ever before. For an industry that has been battered in recent years by the pandemic, work stoppages and the upheaval caused by streaming, it was a triumphant weekend that showed the still-potent power of Hollywood's blockbuster machine. Before "Wicked," "Moana 2" and "Gladiator II" arrived in theaters, ticket sales were running about 25% behind pre-pandemic levels.

Michael O'Leary, president and chief executive of the National Association of Theatre Owners, said the weekend showed what's possible when "all the pieces of the puzzle come together" in compelling big-budget movies with marketing muscle.

"We're very optimistic that this weekend is the start of what we believe is a full-on charge into the future," he said. "The remaining quarter of this year looks very promising and then on into 2025 and 2026. We're hoping next year is the first kind of normal year this industry has had in a long time."

Like the last time such anticipated movies collided on the release calendar - 2023's much-ballyhooed "Bar-

benheimer" - the movie industry again could see evidence of a rising moviegoing tide lifting all blockbusters. In recent years, studios have typically tried to space out most of their biggest releases. Earlier this fall, "Venom: The Last Dance," for example, was the No. 1 film for three straight weeks, despite not being particularly successful.

"For a long, long time in Hollywood, there's been a belief that you don't put big blockbuster movies up against each other," said O'Leary. "But the truth of the matter is that competition is good. It's good for the movies. It's good for the studios. It's good for the theater owners. But it's particularly good for the moviegoing public."

"Moana 2" was the nexus of a strategy shift for Disney. When it first began development, it was fashioned as a series for streaming. But when Bob Iger returned as chief executive, he reconsidered the balance between theatrical and streaming. The original "Moana," after all, was the most streamed movie on Disney+ in 2023, with the added benefit of \$680 million in box office in 2016. Only in February this year did Iger announce the release of "Moana 2," with Auli'i Cravalho and Dwayne Johnson returning as the voices of Moana and Maui.

## Festival



In this image released on Monday, Dec. 2, *Evanescent* (2021) is an immersive public art installation based on the fleeting quality of time, seen on the opening day of Noor Riyadh 2024 on Thursday, Nov 28, 2024 in Riyadh. (AP)



Guests are illuminated by light installations on the preview day of Noor Riyadh 2024 on Tuesday, Nov 26, 2024 in Riyadh. (AP)



Guests interact with *Alone Together* (2024), an immersive installation that uses light beams to engage with the viewer in unexpected ways, on the preview day of Noor Riyadh 2024 on Tuesday, Nov 26, 2024 in Riyadh. (AP)



In this image released on Monday, Dec. 2, Daan Roosegaarde's *SPARK* (2022), a light installation composed of biodegradable luminous sparks that float in the air, seen on the opening day of Noor Riyadh 2024 on Thursday, November 28, 2024 in Riyadh. (AP)



In this image released on Monday, Dec. 2, *Aether* (2024), a performative artwork composed of 1,500 drones, is exhibited on the preview day of Noor Riyadh 2024 on Tuesday, Nov 26, 2024 in Riyadh. (AP)

## Noor Riyadh Light Art Festival returns

Noor Riyadh, the world's largest light art festival, has officially returned as part of the Riyadh Art Project. Running from November 28 to December 14, 2024, the festival is taking place across three iconic locations in Riyadh: the

King Abdulaziz Historical Center, Wadi Hanifah, and the JAX District. This year marks the fourth edition of the festival, themed "Light Years Apart." The event showcases over 60 large-scale light-based artworks,

created by 61 artists from 18 different countries. The installations explore the relationship between the physical and the metaphysical, transforming Riyadh into a "gallery without walls." (AP)

## Variety

**NEW YORK:** The Oscar-winning screenwriter **Marshall Brickman**, whose wide-ranging career spanned some of Woody Allen's best films, the Broadway musical "Jersey Boys" and a number of Johnny Carson's most beloved sketches, has died. He was 85.

Brickman died Friday in Manhattan, his daughter Sophie Brickman told The New York Times. No cause of death was cited.

Brickman was best known for his extensive collaboration with Allen, beginning with the 1973 film "Sleeper." Together, they co-wrote "Annie Hall" (1977), "Manhattan" (1979) and "Manhattan Murder Mystery" (1993). The loosely structured script for "Annie Hall," in particular, has been hailed as one of the wittiest comedies. It won Brickman and Allen an Oscar for best original screenplay.

In his acceptance speech (Allen skipped the ceremony), Brickman referenced one of the film's many oft-quoted lines, saying: "I've been out here a week, and I still have guilt when I make a right turn on a red light."

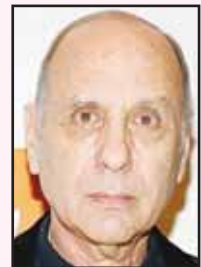
"If the film is worth anything," Brickman told Vanity Fair in 2017, "it gives a very particular specific image of

what it was like to be alive in New York at that time in that particular social-economic stratum."

Brickman and Allen had met in the early 1960s, when Allen was breaking through as a stand-up comedian. Brickman was brought on to write jokes for him. At the time, he had been playing banjo for the folk group the Tarriers. In one of the many twists of Brickman's career, it was an album he and his college roommate Eric Weissberg recorded that later made the soundtrack to 1972's "Deliverance," including "Dueling Banjos."

Brickman, born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was the son of Jewish socialists Abram (who fled Poland during WWII) and Pauline (Wolin) Brickman, who was from New York. They later moved to the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, where Brickman grew up. His start in show business, after graduating from the

University of Wisconsin with degrees in science and music, came with the Tarriers. He replaced Alan Arkin in the group.



Brickman

"One of the reasons I was asked to join was because they needed somebody to front the group and talk while everybody was tuning up," Brickman told the Writers Guild in 2011. "And so I started to develop little jokes and routines and stuff like that."

By the late '60s, Brickman was head writer for Carson's "The Tonight Show." There, one of his most enduring contributions were the Carnac the Magnificent sketches, during which Carson played a "mystic from the East" who could divine answers to unseen questions. Brickman's other TV stints included "Candid Camera," "The Dick Cavett Show" and "The Muppet Show." (AP)

**JOHANNESBURG:** The first stop of the "Belt and Road" International Handicraft Art Exhibition, themed "Dialogue with World Cultures," opened in South Africa on Friday.

The inaugural event, hosted by Shanghai University in China and the University of Johannesburg (UJ) in South Africa, will be displayed at the UJ Art Gallery until Jan. 25, 2025, after which it will travel to other destinations, including Kazakhstan, Sweden, Turkey, New Zealand, Australia, France and Italy, among others.

At the opening ceremony, Minister at the Chinese Em-

bassy in South Africa Li Zhigang said the exhibition will help foster cultural exchanges and mutual understanding.

"Intangible cultural heritage is a treasure of human civilization, a precious wealth accumulated from diverse cultures over the long course of history. Since ancient times, painting and handicrafts have been a typical medium of communication between people around the world," Li said.

Federico Freschi, executive dean of the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Johannesburg, said "handicrafts are not just objects but cultural treasures embodying history, tradition and creativity." (Xinhua)

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN:** A Filipino food festival kicked off on Friday and will run until Dec. 7, local media reported.

According to the local daily Borneo Bulletin, the festival showcases a diverse buffet of traditional Filipino dishes, from hearty balbacua to the comforting sweetness of halo-halo.

"We are delighted to present Barrio Fiesta and invite food enthusiasts as well as the local community to join us, where every bite tells a story and every moment is a celebration," said Miriam Wolber, general manager of the Radisson Hotel in Brunei. (Xinhua)





Elton John waves to the waiting media as he leaves the Royal Courts Of Justice in London, Monday, March 27, 2023. (AP)

Struggles to see new musical

## I have lost my 'eyesight': John

LONDON, Dec 2, (AP): Elton John says he struggled to watch his new musical because he has lost his eyesight after contracting an infection.

The singer-songwriter attended the opening night of "The Devil Wears Prada" in London on Sunday and told the audience that "I haven't been able to come to many of the previews because, as you know, I have lost my eyesight." "So it's hard for me to see it, but I love to hear it and, boy, it sounded good tonight," he said.

John, 77, disclosed in September that an infection had left him "with only limited vision in one eye." He wrote on Instagram that "I am healing, but it's an extremely slow process and it will take some time before sight returns to the impacted eye."

John wrote the score for "The Devil Wears Prada," a stage musical based on the 2006 movie about a young journalist navigating the glamour and egos of a glossy fashion magazine.

The production at London's Dominion Theatre stars Vanessa Williams as the fearsome editor Miranda Priestly, played by Meryl Streep in the film.

Sunday's gala, a fundraiser for the Elton John AIDS Foundation, was attended by celebrities and fashion-industry figures including designer Donatella Versace and former Vogue editor Anna Wintour, the rumored inspiration for the Priestly character.

Wintour described the musical as "entertaining."

## Film

### How Beatles took US by storm in 1964

# Film captures Fab Four's wild US trip

NEW YORK, Dec 2, (AP): Likely most people have seen iconic footage of the Beatles performing on "The Ed Sullivan Show." But how many have seen Paul McCartney during that same US trip feeding seagulls off his hotel balcony?

That moment - as well as George Harrison and John Lennon goofing around by exchanging their jackets - are part of the Disney+ documentary "Beatles '64," an intimate look at the English band's first trip to America that uses rare and newly restored footage. It started streaming Friday.

"It's so fun to be the fly on the wall in those really intimate moments," says Margaret Bodde, who produced alongside Martin Scorsese. "It's just this incredible gift of time and technology to be able to see it now with the decades of time stripped away so that you really feel like you're there."

"Beatles '64" leans into footage of the 14-day trip filmed by documentarians Albert and David Maysles, who left behind 11 hours of the Fab Four goofing around in New York's Plaza hotel or traveling. It was restored by Park Road Post in New Zealand.

## Interviews

"It's beautiful, although it's black and white and it's not wide-screen," says director David Tedeschi. "It's like it was shot yesterday and it captures the youth of the four Beatles and the fans."

The footage is augmented by interviews with the two surviving members of the band and people whose lives were impacted, including some of the women who as teens stood outside their hotel hoping to catch a glimpse of the Beatles. "It was like a crazy love," fan Vickie Brenna-Costa recalls in the documentary. "I can't really understand it now. But then, it was natural."

The film shows the four heartthrobs flirting and dancing at the Peppermint Lounge disco, Harrison noodling with a Woody Guthrie riff on his guitar and tells the story of Ronnie Spector sneaking the band out a hotel back exit and up to Harlem to eat barbecue.

The documentary coincides with the release of a box set of vinyl albums collecting the band's seven US albums released in '64 and early '65 - "Meet The Beatles!," "The Beatles' Second Album," "A Hard Day's Night" (the movie soundtrack), "Something New," "The Beatles' Story," "Beatles '65" and "The Early Beatles." They had been out of print on vinyl since 1995.

The Beatles' US visit in 1964 also included concerts at Carnegie Hall, a gig at the Washington Coliseum in Washington, D.C., and a visit to Miami, where the band met Muhammad Ali.



The Beatles, (from left), John Lennon, Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr and George Harrison, arrive at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York, on Feb. 7, 1964. (AP)



A box set collection of the first seven Beatles albums is displayed. (AP)



Japanese leaf-cutting artist, who goes by the name Lito, looks at his freshly cut work featuring a frog with an umbrella, during an interview in Tokyo Nov. 27, 2024. (AP)



Lito shows his work titled: "Thirty-six views of Mt. Fuji: The Great Wave off Kanagawa." (AP)

## A Japanese artist finds solace with intricate leaf-cutting

A frog holding a taro-leaf umbrella. A parade of frolicking animals. An Ukiyo-e style Mount Fuji. Giant waves. A Japanese artist who goes by the name Lito carves these delicate designs on fallen leaves, giving life back to them.

The world of Lito's delicate art, which he began in 2020 and posts on social media almost daily, has won fans from around the world. The leaf art has also given him solace after earlier struggles with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, and a

purpose in life - the joy of making people happy with his art.

He enjoys working at night. From a pile of leaves treated with a wrinkle-free chemical, he picks one and places it on a cutting board.

First, he outlines the design on the leaf with a pen in his right hand. Then he takes a design knife in his left hand and starts cutting the leaf carefully. Slowly, the leaf begins to take the shape of a frog carrying an umbrella - a simple design he demon-

strated in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

More complex, highly intensive work on a single leaf can take more than eight hours to complete.

His leaf-cutting works include titles such as "Scrolls of Frolicking Animals," "Leaf Aquarium," and "Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji: The Great Wave off Kanagawa." Each piece includes his own twists, and often uses animals. (AP)

# Ex-My Chemical Romance drummer Bryar dies at 44

LOS ANGELES, Dec 2, (AP): Bob Bryar, a former drummer with My Chemical Romance (MCR) who played on the band's career-defining rock opera, "The Black Parade," has died, according to the band. He was 44.

"The band asks for your patience and understanding as they process the news of Bob's passing," a spokesperson for My Chemical Romance said in a statement Sunday. The statement did not include any additional details.

Bryar replaced drummer Matt Pelissier in 2004 and left the band in 2010. Bryar moved on from the music business and later auctioned off a drum kit to raise money for an animal adoption center in Williamson County, Tennessee.

Next year, the band will embark on a 10-date North American stadium tour, where they will perform

"The Black Parade," released in 2006, in full.

My Chemical Romance formed in 2001 and released four studio albums across their career, first breaking through with 2004's "Three Cheers for Sweet Revenge."

They announced their breakup in 2013; a year later, they released a greatest hits collection titled "May Death Never Stop You."

In 2019, they announced a reunion, later revealing they'd privately reunited two years earlier.



Bryar

## Music

From Bach to Beyonce

# Church orchestra lifts up 'young musicians'

ANAHEIM, California, Dec 2, (AP): For over two years, Ebonie Vazquez searched to find a mentor of color for her son, Giovanni, now 11 and passionate about playing the violin. She has now found that space at a local church.

New Hope Presbyterian Church, a multiethnic congregation led by a Black female pastor in Anaheim, California, started a string orchestra in April, welcoming students, including those who may have trouble getting into and paying for music programs. It's located in Orange County, which is largely affluent.

The Rev. Chineta Goodjoin said her church had a smaller strings program for several years. When Goodjoin's daughter Nyla started playing violin with the Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles, founded in June 2009 by renowned conductor Charles Dickerson, the pastor grew determined to replicate the concept in Orange County with Dickerson taking the lead.

The church's orchestra now has about 18 members ranging in age from 9 to 20, playing violin, viola, bass and cello. The orchestra accepts all students without auditions, and it's free. Like the Los Angeles group, the orchestra is also powered by mentors who look like the young musicians they help guide.

Ebonie Vazquez says it is empowering for students "to see themselves reflected in their mentors and teachers."

"It's important they don't feel like outsiders, but are supported and feel like they belong," she said. "It has definitely helped my son connect more to the music and the craft."

During rehearsal, when Giovanni started talking about music, the boy's eyes turned dreamy and his arms became animated. Even as his words gushed out in child-like excitement, they reflected the aura of an old soul.

"I just want to be able to express myself in my music and show that I not only have talent, but I also take my time, and I practice," he said. "You can change one little thing, one note, and the music will be totally different. You make your own thing."

Giovanni said that in the church orchestra, he could play classical music or he could chill with Imagine Dragons. He also plays violin in his school orchestra and with Dickerson's Los Angeles group. He values being part of the church orchestra because "it's a piece of our community."

## Mentor

"They encourage young musicians of color and everyone gets a chance to play and maybe use it as a stepping stone to get better or even turn this into a career," he said.

Giovanni thinks it could be cool to play in Carnegie Hall. He pauses, then adds: "But honestly, I just want to play around people who listen to and value music. My favorite part is really to see people enjoy music."

Melissa Bausley, a cellist who works in finance and volunteers as a mentor, said she often found herself alone as a Black woman in this realm.

"I never had a teacher that was African American growing up and I didn't think it mattered or made a difference," she said. "But now, as an adult, I'd say there is absolutely value in being able to learn from someone who looks like you."

Dickerson said he started the Los Angeles orchestra when he was approached by a group of students who yearned to play in their city and neighborhood.

"They would have to drive long distances to be in these orchestras where they didn't know the other kids and felt like the odd ones," he said. "The young kids from our communities were always put in the back row and the back row was right next to the door."

"It's easy to walk out that door," he added, "when you don't really feel accepted and when you know you're probably not as skilled as the others who have a smattering of connections and have been playing since they were three."

Goodjoin said she and her husband, Reggie Goodjoin, a jazz musician and the church's music director, envision an orchestra where "African American kids play classical music and play it well."

"Not modified or watered down abridgements, but the real deal," she said. "I like to say they play everything from Bach to Beyonce. We want them exposed to all genres."

The children will play sacred and secular music as well as the work of Black composers, and the orchestra is open to children of all faith backgrounds, Goodjoin said.

"They learn the music of Count Basie and Duke Ellington and so many others who have forged the path - an experience they might not get in a mainstream school setting," she said.

She believes the church is a great place to start talking about equity in music.

"We value social justice and equity and we believe we are called to help the marginalized, to set the captives free," Goodjoin said. "And music is freedom."

The pastor is already getting positive feedback from parents. One boy who plays the upright bass was about to quit playing because no one in his school orchestra looked like him.



Johnathan Nealy plays the violin as part of a string music program at New Hope Presbyterian Church on Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024, in Anaheim, Calif. (AP)



## HEALTH

'Jabs not a quick fix'

## Weight-loss drug a new option to combat obesity

BEIJING, Dec 2, (Xinhua): A 58-year-old man surnamed Li, weighing nearly 100 kg, was among the first patients in China to use Semaglutide as a prescribed medication for weight loss.

Semaglutide is no stranger to Li, who has previously used it in another drug to manage his blood sugar levels.

Since Wegovy, a weight-loss drug with Semaglutide as its key ingredient, entered the Chinese market earlier this month, it has made headlines as a new tool for people like Li in the battle against obesity.

Li's doctor, Wang Cunchuan, recalled that just a day after Wegovy's launch, over 40 eligible patients came to the hospital in Guangzhou, south China, for consultations and appointments.

According to clinical data, Wegovy can achieve an average weight reduction of around 17 percent after 18 months of treatment. The drug is now available as a prescription medicine in hospitals and on multiple e-commerce platforms.

In addition to Semaglutide, Orlistat is another weight-loss drug available in the Chinese market.

Medication is among the approaches China's national health authority recommended in a recently released guideline for the multidisciplinary diagnosis and treatment of obesity.

The guideline, the first of its kind,

underscores China's commitment to tackling obesity, a growing concern in the world's second-largest economy.

Official data showed that over half of the adults in China were overweight or obese in 2020, and the rate could reach 65.3 percent by 2030.

China is projected to spend roughly one-fifth of its total medical expenses on overweight and obesity by 2030, according to a research report of the Global Health Institute of Xi'an Jiaotong University, which was published in The Lancet.

Li Xiaoying, director of the endocrinology department of Zhongshan Hospital affiliated with Fudan University, said that obesity is the origin of many chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and certain forms of cancer.

"If obesity is brought under control, these diseases can be effectively prevented and treated," Li said.

The mounting concern has prompted the government to take concrete measures to curb obesity. A nationwide campaign to combat obesity is well underway, with weight management clinics being established one after another in hospitals across the country.

In 2008, China designated Aug. 8 as its National Fitness Day, and the growing public awareness of health has resulted in a boom in both the fitness and light food industries.



A high school student uses a vaping device near a school campus in Cambridge, Mass., April 11, 2018. (AP)

Top court to review

## FDA cracks down on sweet vapes after youth use rises

WASHINGTON, Dec 2, (AP): The Supreme Court was to hear a vaping case on Monday, weighing federal regulators' decisions blocking sweet vaping products after e-cigarette use spiked among kids.

The high court is taking up an appeal from the Food and Drug Administration, which has denied more than a million applications to sell candy- or fruit-flavored products that appeal to kids.

Those decisions are part of a crackdown that anti-tobacco advocates say helped drive down youth vaping to a decade low after an "epidemic level" peak in 2019.

But vaping companies pushed back in court, arguing that agency unfairly disregarded arguments that their sweet e-liquid products aren't a big draw for kids but would help adults quit smoking traditional cigarettes.

The case comes shortly before the inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump, whose incoming administration could take a different approach

after he vowed in a September social-media post to "save" vaping.

Several lower courts rebuffed vaping company lawsuits, but the Dallas-based company Triton Distribution won at the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals. The court tossed out a decision blocking the sale of nicotine-laced liquids like "Jimmy The Juice Man in Peachy Strawberry" that are heated by an e-cigarette to create an inhalable aerosol.

The FDA was slow to regulate the now multibillion-dollar vaping market, and even years into the crackdown flavored vapes that are technically illegal nevertheless remain widely available.

The agency has approved some tobacco-flavored vapes, and recently allowed its first menthol-flavored electronic cigarettes for adult smokers.

The block on sweet vapes, combined with stepped up enforcement, has helped drive down youth nicotine use to its lowest level in a decade, the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids said.



First lady Jill Biden, speaks as President Joe Biden, (left), listens on the South Lawn of the White House during a ceremony to commemorate World AIDS Day with survivors, their families and advocates, Sunday, Dec. 1, in Washington. (AP)

Support pledged for 1.2m with HIV

## Biden displays AIDS Memorial Quilt at White House for World AIDS Day

WASHINGTON, Dec 2, (AP): President Joe Biden on Sunday displayed the AIDS Memorial Quilt on the White House South Lawn for the first time in observance of World AIDS Day.

Gathered with the president and his wife, Jill, were survivors, family members and advocates to memorialize the lives lost to the epidemic. The president emphasized the federal government's support for the 1.2 million people in the United States living with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which can lead to AIDS.

"This movement is fully woven into the fabric and history of America," Biden said. "For all the lives lost, for all those that are still alive, look at what you've already done to change the hearts and minds, to save lives across the country and around the world. That's the power of this movement."

There were 124 sections of the quilt on the lawn to commemorate people who died due to AIDS-related illnesses. Conceived in 1985, the quilt made its public first appearance in 1987. There was also a red ribbon, a symbol of support and awareness for those with HIV and AIDS, draped across the South Portico of the White House.

There are 40 million people around the world with HIV, according to the White House.

Introducing Biden was Jeanne White-Ginder, whose son, Ryan White, contracted AIDS through a tainted blood transfusion at the age of 13 and died in 1990 at the age of 18. She said her son's experience taught America that "we needed to fight AIDS and not the people who have it."

The Ryan White CARE Act became law in 1990 and White-Grinder

recalled being at the U.S. Capitol to speak for the measure and met Biden when he was a senator from Delaware.

The president also saluted Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top U.S. infectious disease expert until leaving the government in 2022. Fauci was in attendance at the event because of his work on HIV/AIDS, though he's known by much of the country for his efforts to address the coronavirus pandemic that made him a target of criticism by many Republican lawmakers.

The Biden administration has sought to make investments to stop the epidemic and the stigmas attached to people with HIV. Among other steps, it has worked to expand access to PrEP, or the pre-exposure prophylaxis, which at-risk populations use to prevent HIV infections.

## Philippines HIV cases to hit 215,400 by year-end

## AIDS deaths surging in Western Pacific

MANILA, Dec 2, (Xinhua): The Philippines' Department of Health (DOH) said Sunday that the number of HIV cases or people living with HIV (PLHIV) in the country was estimated to hit 215,400 before 2024 ends.

Of the estimated PLHIV, 131,335 cases have been diagnosed or laboratory-confirmed and currently living or not reported to have died, as of September, the DOH said.

Citing AIDS Epidemic Model's estimates, the DOH said the number of PLHIV in the Philippines could reach approximately 448,000 by 2030, "if prevention and interventions won't scale up."

To curb rising cases, the DOH said it has collaborated with the Philippine National AIDS Council to officially launch a campaign on Sunday in observance of the 2024 Philippine World AIDS Day.

Meanwhile, HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths are on the rise in the Western Pacific region, reversing years of progress in the fight against the epidemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Friday.

New HIV infections have risen by 8 percent and AIDS-related deaths by 10 percent since 2019, highlighting critical gaps in prevention, testing,

treatment and care services, particularly for key populations, according to the WHO regional office in Manila.

While 76 percent of people living with HIV in the region have access to life-saving antiretroviral therapy. "Experts agree that these disturbing trends show that much more needs to be done to stop the spread of HIV and prevent avoidable deaths," the UN health agency said in its media release.

The Western Pacific region faces significant challenges, with 2.3 million people living with HIV, 140,000 new infections and 53,000 deaths in 2023 alone, the WHO said.

"Every hour, 16 people are newly infected, and six people die from HIV-related causes in the Western Pacific region," it said.

In related development, "amid a chaotic struggle, a police officer was accidentally scratched by a drug dealer known to be HIV-positive," a university student retold the medical information he had memorized in just 30 seconds.

He continued, "In a race against time, the officer immediately started post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), following medical advice, and after completing a rigorous 28-day treatment, he tested negative for the virus."

This was part of the ninth National College Student AIDS Prevention Knowledge Competition, held at Beijing Forestry University on Saturday, one day before the 37th World AIDS Day on Dec. 1.

Established in 2016, the national knowledge competition aims to raise awareness among young people about HIV/AIDS. Since its inception, it has engaged 6,320 universities and reached a total of 17.42 million students, according to Sun Xinhua, president of the Chinese Foundation for Prevention of STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) and AIDS.

This competition is just one of many efforts China has made in its long-standing fight against the "incurable devil" over the past four decades since the country reported its first case in 1985.

The theme of this year's anti-AIDS campaign in China focuses on taking the right path to end AIDS and improve public health through a society-wide synergy. The campaign aims to address the public health threat and help achieve the goal of HIV/AIDS elimination by 2030.

HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, can often be controlled with early detection and treatment, preventing the progression to AIDS.

Cognitive gains

## Light exercise 'powers' brain

By Jonathan G. Hakun  
Penn State

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

□ □ □

Everyday physical activity, like going for a short walk or playing with the kids, may provide short-term benefits for cognitive health, equivalent to reversing four years of cognitive aging. That was a key finding for my colleagues and me in our new study, which was published in the journal *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*.

Prior to enrollment into a study of diet and dementia risk, we asked a diverse sample of 204 middle-aged adults to check in five times per day for a period of nine days, via a smartphone application.

Each check-in involved completing a brief survey that asked about their mood, dietary choices and whether they engaged in any physical activity in the roughly three and a half hours leading up to the survey. In addition, participants completed a few brief brain games - meaning performance-based cognitive assessments that lasted about one minute each - to assess mental speed and short-term memory.

My team found that performance on our measure of cognitive processing speed improved during check-ins when participants reported being physically active in the time leading up to the survey. While we didn't see improvements in our measure of working memory, the time taken to complete the memory task mirrored what we saw for the measure of processing speed.

## Activity

We observed these improvements in speed regardless of whether the activity was lighter intensity or moderate-to-vigorous intensity. This led us to conclude that movement, whether it took the form of intentional exercise or part of a daily routine, was the essential ingredient for achieving this benefit.

As a rule, we get slower, both physically and mentally, as we age. While research on exercise and living a healthy lifestyle has demonstrated the long-term cognitive and brain health benefits of remaining physically active, much of this work has focused on the moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity - or what most of us think of as exercise - recommended by the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.

Still, these guidelines and other experts recommend that adults move more and sit less.

My colleagues and I are interested in understanding how moving more can improve our cognitive health or reduce our risk of dementia as we age, at what time-scale these benefits show up, and what types of movement qualify.

Our study relied on participants to report whether they had been physically active during the time between each check-in. Even though participants were provided training on how to think about the intensity levels, it's possible that each participant had a slightly different perception of their activities.

For example, a participant may not have believed their recent walk actually qualified as a moderate-intensity activity. Physical activity monitors that can dissociate time and intensity might help future research unravel these associations more clearly. (AP)

MEDICAL CLASSIFIEDS

Take care of your health



To advertise in this page please call: (+965) 24813566 Ext.: 513 or E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

For your ads on this page

Call: 24813805 E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

www.arabtimesonline.com

مركز شفاء الجزيرة الطبي  
SHIFA AL JAZEERA MEDICAL CENTRE  
الفروانية FARAWANIYA

Dermatology - Cosmetology Dept.

Dr. Abdul Nazer  
MBBS, MD (DVD)  
Skin & Dermatology  
Specialist

Dr. Faizan Kalekhan  
MBBS, MD, DNB  
Dermatology,  
Venereology & Leprosy

Our Services  
PRP | Peels | Painless laser hair removal | Treatment for scars, acne scars, wrinkles, Aging, Skin Tightening, Stretch marks | Cellulite, fat, warts, moles, corn | Mesotherapy | Crystal Peel & diamond Microdermabrasion | Carboxytherapy | Dualpeel | Whitening treatment (Localized & Whole body) Botox | Fillers | Hair loss treatment | Nail surgeries | Skin biopsies | Cryotherapy | Dermapen

Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex & Opp. Police Station - Farwaniya  
www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw

Ph: 2473 4000



# Cavs end Celtics seven-game winning streak

## Clippers overcome Jokic's triple-double to beat Nuggets

CLEVELAND, Dec 2, (AP): Donovan Mitchell scored 20 of his 35 points in the fourth quarter as Cleveland Cavaliers ended Boston's seven-game winning streak with a 115-111 victory over the Celtics in the second intense matchup between the Eastern Conference's top teams this season.

Mitchell made all six field-goal attempts - including four 3-pointers - in the fourth as the Cavs overcame a 12-point deficit. The All-Star guard scored 30 points in the second half after going just 2 of 8 from the floor in the first.

### Clippers 126, Nuggets 122

In Inglewood, James Harden scored 39 points - making all 13 of his free throws - and Los Angeles overcame Nikola Jokic's triple-double to beat Denver.

Jokic finished with 28 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists for his eighth triple-double of the season.

Harden narrowly missed a triple-double of his own, finishing with nine rebounds and 11 assists.

### Magic 100, Nets 92

In New York, Franz Wagner had 20 points, nine rebounds, eight assists and two blocks, and the Orlando Magic claimed their sixth straight win, and second in three days over the Nets, with a 100-92 victory against Brooklyn.

Goga Bitadze added 12 points and 13 rebounds, Kentavious Caldwell-Pope had 16 points and Wendell Carter Jr. had 14 points and seven rebounds to help Orlando claim its 12th win in its past 13 games despite committing a season-high 22 turnovers.

### Grizzlies 136, Pacers 121

In Memphis, Jaren Jackson Jr. had 25 points, eight rebounds and three blocks as Memphis erased a 19-point



Los Angeles Clippers guard Norman Powell, second from left, shoots as Denver Nuggets forward Michael Porter Jr., left, guard Christian Braun, second from right, and forward Peyton Watson defend during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Inglewood, Calif. (AP)

first-half deficit and defeated Indiana.

Ja Morant finished with 19 points and eight assists, and Marcus Smart and Desmond Bane added 16 points each as Memphis won its sixth straight.

### Knicks 118, Pelicans 85

In New York, Mikal Bridges scored

31 points, Karl-Anthony Towns had 14 points and 19 rebounds, and New York beat injury-depleted New Orleans Pelicans.

Bridges, who was benched in the fourth quarter of Friday's victory at Charlotte, rebounded by shooting 12

for 19 from the field and 7 for 12 from 3 for the Knicks, who have won seven of their last 10 games.

### Raptors 119, Heat 116

In Toronto, RJ Barrett scored 37 points, Scottie Barnes had 23 points and 10 rebounds, and Toronto beat Mi-

ami Heat.

Jakob Poeltl had 17 points and 11 rebounds and rookie Ja'Kobe Walter scored 12 points as Toronto improved to 5-4 at home.

### Rockets 119, Thunder 116

In Houston, Fred VanVleet had

a season-high 38 points and Dillon Brooks made a go-ahead jump shot late to help Houston to a win over Oklahoma City.

The game was tied at 113 when Brooks hit the short jumper in the lane just before the shot clock expired to put the Rockets on top with 33.1 seconds to go.

### Lakers 105, Jazz 104

In Salt Lake City, Anthony Davis had 33 points and 11 rebounds, LeBron James added 27 points and 14 assists, and short-handed Los Angeles beat Utah.

After James missed a 3-pointer - his 10th attempt of the night - in the closing seconds, Utah had a chance to win the game but Collin Sexton fumbled the inbound pass and couldn't get a shot off before the buzzer.

### Mavericks 137, Trail Blazers 131

In Portland, Luka Doncic returned from a wrist injury and had 36 points in the Dallas Mavericks' victory over the Portland Trail Blazers.

Doncic, who missed five games, also had 13 assists in the Mavericks' fourth straight win.

The Mavs were missing Kyrie Irving, who had 30 points in a 106-94 win Saturday over the Utah Jazz, because of a sore shoulder. The Mavs were also without Klay Thompson (left foot), Dereck Lively II (right knee) and Naji Marshall (illness).

### Spurs 127, Kings 125

In Sacramento, Victor Wembanyama had 34 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists for his first triple-double of the season, and San Antonio beat Sacramento for their fifth win in six games.

Devin Vassell added 21 points off the bench for San Antonio. Chris Paul finished with 13 points.

DeRozan had 28 points to lead the Kings, who led by 17 points in the first quarter and were up 65-58 at halftime.

The Spurs used a 19-7 run to take a third-quarter lead, but the Kings responded to lead 97-92 heading into the fourth.

## Lacazette scores a hat trick for Lyon

### Marseille edges Monaco to move into 2nd

PARIS, Dec 2, (AP): Mason Greenwood's late penalty gave Marseille a 2-1 home win over Monaco and lifted the team over its rival into second place in the French league.

Greenwood placed the ball into the bottom left corner in the 89th minute for his ninth league goal of the season - level with Lille's Jonathan David and one behind Paris Saint-Germain's Bradley Barcola in the scoring charts.

Marseille moved above Monaco on goal difference, with both sides seven points behind leader PSG.

Monaco's defeat exposed shortcomings in coach Adi Hutter's young and talented yet error-prone team.

Monaco lost 3-2 at home to Benfica in the Champions League on Wednesday after leading that game 2-1 before conceding twice in the last six minutes.

After going unbeaten in its first 11 games in all competitions this season, Hutter's erratic side has had four defeats in the past seven matches - including at home to strugglers Angers and away to Nice after again taking the lead.

This time, Monaco scored first at Stade Velodrome when midfielder Aleksandr Golovin beat Gerónimo Rulli in the 41st minute with a slightly deflected strike after being set up by midfielder Denis Zakaria.

Brazilian winger Luis Henrique equalized for Marseille in the 53rd with a header from forward Neal Maupay's cross.

Earlier, Arnaud Nordin grabbed the equalizer in the fifth minute of second-half stoppage time as rock-bottom Montpellier earned a 2-2 home draw with Lille in an ill-tempered contest.

Moments after Nordin's goal, a player from each side was sent off. The incident happened when Montpellier forward Tanguy Coulibaly kicked the ball against Lille coach Bruno Genesio when it had already gone out for a throw in, prompting pushing and shoving from both sides. Coulibaly and Lille defender Mitchel Bakker were red carded.

Montpellier coach Jean-Louis Gasset had been sent off near the end of the second half and former Montpellier player Rémy Cabella - who plays for Lille - was involved

in heated incidents.

Canada striker Jonathan David scored a penalty in each half for Lille, which is unbeaten in 13 games in all competitions and remained in fourth place.

David's second penalty in the 54th was awarded following a long video replay after Cabella tumbled.

David slotted it into the top right corner to move to nine league goals and 99 in 205 matches overall since joining Lille four years ago.

While the penalty review was taking place, Cabella argued with Montpellier midfielder Téji Savanier and TV images showed Cabella shoving his forearm into Savanier's face. Both players received a yellow card.

A clumsy challenge from Jordan Ferri on Matias Fernandez-Pardo led to the first penalty, and David tucked it calmly into the left corner. Savanier's well-flighted corner from the right allowed defender Issiaga Sylla the chance to head the equalizer in the second minute of first-half stoppage time.

Cabella argued with some home fans after being substituted midway through the second half and was asked to stop remonstrating by the fourth official.

Veteran striker Alexandre Lacazette scored a hat trick as Lyon beat Nice 4-1 to move into fifth place.

Lacazette gave Lyon the lead and restored it later in the first half after midfielder Sofiane Diop had equalized for sixth-place Nice. Midfielder Jordan Veretout put Lyon 3-1 up before the break and Lacazette's penalty in the 70th put Lyon in total control.

The 33-year-old Lacazette is in his second spell with Lyon, having spent five seasons in the Premier League with Arsenal, and now totals 190 goals for the club.

Norway striker Joshua King and Vincent Sierro scored in midtable Toulouse's 2-0 home win against Auxerre, and midfielder Himad Abdelli netted as Angers won 1-0 at Le Havre to move out of the relegation zone.

PSG followed up its defeat against Bayern Munich with a tame 1-1 draw at home to struggling Nantes on Saturday.



PSG's Achraf Hakimi, left, and Nantes' Nicolas Cozza challenge for the ball during the French League One soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Nantes at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris, France (AP)

## Penarol secures league title

MONTEVIDEO, Dec 2, (Xinhua): Penarol claimed its 52nd Uruguayan top-flight title on Sunday with a 3-1 home victory over Fenix.

Eduardo Darías gave the host the lead in the opening minute before Guillermo Pereira gifted Penarol a second goal by inadvertently turning the ball into his own net.



Darías

Pereira made amends with a 28th-minute strike, but Leonardo Fernandez restored his side's two-goal lead with a stunning 30-yard free-kick from a difficult angle just after halftime.

The result at Estadio Campeón del Siglo meant Penarol finished Uruguay's Primera Division Clausura season with 38 points, two points ahead of second-placed Nacional.

"Everyone at this club played their part in this triumph," Penarol manager Diego Aguirre said after the match.

"I'm proud of this team because we enjoyed ourselves and made a lot of people happy. Knowing that gives us a great deal of satisfaction." Sunday's final day of matches confirmed Uruguay's participants in next year's continental tournaments.

Penarol, Nacional, Boston River and Defensor Sporting qualified for the Copa Libertadores, while Cerro Largo, Danubio, Racing and Montevideo Wanderers clinched berths in the Copa Sudamericana.

Meanwhile, Deportivo Maldonado, Fenix and Rampla Juniors were

relegated to Uruguayan football's second tier.

Michael de Oliveira scored two first-half goals as Flamengo ended Internacional's title hopes with a 3-2 home victory in their Brazilian Serie A clash on Sunday.

Leo Ortiz opened the scoring by heading home from a corner, before Michael doubled the host's lead with a first-time effort from five yards following Alex Sandro's cross.

Michael made it 3-0 on the stroke of halftime as he rifled home from just outside the six-yard box after Wesley Franca's driving run and cut-back from the right side of the penalty area.

But Internacional refused to surrender and Wesley Ribeiro reduced the deficit just before the hour with a powerful 20-yard effort into the top-left corner.

Enner Valencia added another goal for the visitor as he headed in at the far post following Alexandro Bernabei's cross.

But Flamengo survived a tense final half hour to secure its 19th win of the campaign and overtake Internacional in the standings.

The Rio de Janeiro outfit is now third with 66 points, seven points behind leader Botafogo with two match days remaining, while Internacional is fourth, a point further back.

In other Brazilian top flight fixtures on Sunday, Vitoria won 2-0 at home to Fortaleza, Fluminense drew 1-1 at Athletico Paranaense, Bragantino was held to a 1-1 home draw by Cruzeiro, and Gremio prevailed 2-1 at home to Sao Paulo.

The tournament is very difficult

## Saudi Arabian, Japanese and Chinese clubs setting pace in Champs League

RIYADH, Dec 2, (AP): Led by Cristiano Ronaldo, Riyad Mahrez and Aleksandar Mitrovic, Saudi Arabian clubs are dominating the western zone of the AFC Champions League Elite but, in the east, Japan is on top with Chinese clubs bouncing back after a difficult period.

Al-Ahli, Al-Hilal and Al-Nassr are first, second and third in the western zone group, the 24 teams in the tournament are divided into two groups of 12, and are already guaranteed a place in the Round of 16.

It has not been easy however. Like the European version, Asia's top tier tournament has expanded the number of group stage games from six to eight putting extra demands on even the cashed-up Saudi Arabian clubs.

"The tournament is very difficult, it is similar to the UEFA Champions League," said Al-Hilal boss Jorge Jesus. "If we want to succeed, we must manage in the required manner. Pressure and fatigue are the fate of big clubs that compete in all tournaments and we are up to the task."

With the domestic seasons in east Asia already over, there are fewer demands on clubs who are in action on Tuesday and Wednesday and the three Chinese teams are in the top eight with seven points each.

After years of financial problems and clubs folding, fans are enjoying the relative success of the clubs espe-

cially as the national team has won two of its last three qualifiers to keep hopes of the 2026 World Cup alive.

Shanghai Shenhua and Shanghai

Port are in the running as are Shandong Taishan.

"In the AFC Champions League, all our preparations are 100%, and our ef-

forts are also 100%," Tang Tian, Shandong assistant coach, said. "We will review and prepare for the away game against Kawasaki and strive for a satisfactory result."

Kawasaki Frontale is one of three Japanese clubs in the top four. Vissel Kobe is top and will seal its knockout stage place if it defeats South Korea's Pohang Steelers.

"When we looked at the competition in the beginning, it was always in our thinking that we would need three, four wins to go through," Kobe coach Takayuki Yoshida said. "Now we're close but we have an important game in Korea next."

Yokohama F. Marinos will be close to doing the same if it can defeat Central Coast Mariners of Australia. John Hutchinson spent ten years as a player at the A-League club and is now the fourth Australian to coach Yokohama, succeeding Harry Kewell in July who followed Kevin Muscat and Ange Postecoglou.

Under Hutchinson, Yokohama has won its last five games to climb into seventh in the J.League and third in the Champions League, following last week's defeat of Pohang.

"I'm happy with the boys and their performance," said Hutchinson. "We ended up with the three points and have our game against Australia's Central Coast Mariners next. We want to win that game to climb the table."



In this file photo, Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates after scoring a goal.



## Sula expresses desire to stay amid transfer offers

## Al-Qadsiya eyes victory over Al-Riffa to keep Gulf Clubs CL hopes alive

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Al-Qadsiya's Libyan professional, Mohamed Sula, has informed the club management of his intent to remain with the team despite receiving offers from Qatar's Al-Ahly and Algeria's Mouloudia Oran. Sula, who is under contract with Al-Qadsiya until the end of the current season, has already initiated discussions to renew his deal with the "Yellow" for a third consecutive season.

Al-Qadsiya's defensive woes are easing as captain Khaled Ibrahim has been declared fit to return for tomorrow's crucial Gulf Clubs Champions League match against Bahrain's Al-Riffa. The game will take place at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium in the fourth round of Group B.

Ibrahim missed the previous encounter against Al-Riffa due to a muscle tear, which significantly impacted the team's performance. Al-Qadsiya conceded two goals from defensive errors, highlighting the lack of synergy between Igor Rossi and Daniel Gibula, who replaced Ibrahim. The defender has since undergone an intensive rehabilitation program, and Coach Zeljko Petrovic expressed relief at his recovery.

Currently sitting in third place with two points, Al-Qadsiya needs a victory to keep its qualification hopes alive. Al-Riffa, with four points, occupies second place, while Saudi Arabia's Al-Ettifaq leads the group with nine points. Qatar's Al-Arabi remains at the bottom with one point.

The pre-match press conference for Al-Qadsiya and Al-Riffa is scheduled for noon today at the Millennium Hotel, followed by the coordination meeting for both teams.

The Asian Football Confederation has appointed a Chinese refereeing team, led by Shen Yin Hao, for the AFC Champions League Group D match between Kuwait Club and Jordan's Al-Hussein Irbid tomorrow. The officiating team also includes Guo Jingtao, Liu Zheng, and fourth referee Jin Jingyuan.

Kuwait Club, already eliminated from qualification with five points, sits third in Group D. Leader Shabab Al-Ahli of the UAE have 10 points, followed by Al-Hussein Irbid with nine, both having secured qualification. Nasaf Qarshi of Uzbekistan is in fourth place with four points. Despite the outcome being decided, Kuwait Club is preparing earnestly to secure a morale-boosting win in their final group match.



Sula congratulates Bader Al-Mutawa.

## Serie A title race loses significance after player 'collapses' on the field



Lecce's inside midfielder Hamza Rafia and Juventus's midfielder Khephren Thuram in action during the Serie A soccer match between US Lecce and Juventus FC at the Via del Mare Stadium in Lecce, Italy. (AP)

## Napoli maintains lead

MILAN, Dec 2, (AP): The Italian league title race didn't seem so important after a player collapsed on the field during a Serie A match.

League leader Napoli had won 1-0 at Torino earlier in the day and was waiting to see how its rivals would fare, especially Fiorentina and Inter Milan, which were playing each other later Sunday and were just four points behind.

However, Fiorentina midfielder Edoardo Bove fell to the ground in the 16th minute of the match, which was abandoned shortly afterward with the scoreline at 0-0.

The 22-year-old Italian was swiftly stretchered off to an ambulance and taken to hospital, where he is in a medically induced coma.

Fiorentina said initial tests have "ruled out acute damage to the central nervous system and the cardio-respiratory system" and that Bove will be re-evaluated in the next 24 hours.

Fiorentina players were distraught on the field and were comforted by staff members as well as Inter players. Several were openly sobbing before both teams filed off the field.

Napoli will end the weekend still top of a tight Serie A table.



An ambulance enters the field as Fiorentina's Edoardo Bove, injured, is surrounded by players during the Serie A soccer match between Fiorentina and Inter at the Artemio Franchi Stadium in Florence, Italy. The match was suspended and finally postponed as the injured appeared to be serious. (AP)

Scott McTominay scored the only goal of the match in the first half as Napoli pulled away from one of its closest rivals as Lazio lost 3-1 at relegation-threatened Parma.

Lazio stayed on 28 points along with Atalanta, Inter and Fiorentina, while Napoli moved onto 32. Atalanta visits Roma on Monday.

Juventus has 26 points after substi-

tute Ante Rebic leveled in stoppages to snatch a 1-1 draw for Lecce.

It was an entertaining match at Torino where Napoli broke the deadlock in the 31st minute. Khvicha Kvaratskhelia kept possession as he made his way into the area from the left before laying the ball off to McTominay for the Scotland midfielder to drive into the

near bottom corner.

Torino should have leveled almost immediately when Saul Coco just had to bundle the ball into an empty net from close range but somehow fell over it instead. Napoli had numerous chances to extend its advantage but Vanja Milinkovic-Savic was in impressive form in the Torino goal.

Lazio's run of seven straight wins had been brought to an end by a draw against Ludogorets in the Europa League midweek and it was worse on Sunday as it fell to its first loss since October.

Lazio had two goals disallowed and a penalty revoked after a VAR check in a frustrating first half for the visitors.

Parma inched four points clear of the drop zone with the win.

Patrick Vieira recorded his first win as Genoa coach with a 2-0 victory at Udinese, which played almost the entire match with 10 men.

Udinese defender Isaak Touré's match lasted just 120 seconds before he was sent off for elbowing Genoa's Alessandro Zanoli in the face.

Andrea Pinamonti fired Genoa in front in the 13th minute and an own-goal from Udinese defender Lautaro Giannetti in the second half all but sealed the result.

Vieira was hired during the international break to replace the fired Alberto Gilardino and his debut last week ended in a 2-2 draw against Cagliari.

## Kuwait Club eyes another win

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Kuwait Club aims to extend its winning streak in the Handball League as it faces Al-Sulaibikhat at 7:30 pm in the tenth round of the preliminary stage. The round will also feature two additional matches: Kazma takes on Burqan at 6:00 pm, and Al-Sahel faces Al-Nasr at 4:30 pm. All matches are scheduled at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Hall Complex.

In the opening match, Kuwait Club currently holds fifth place with 10 points, having won all its matches so far. The team seeks to maintain its perfect record and edge closer to the league leader. Some of Kuwait Club's and Kazma's matches were postponed earlier due to their participation in the Asian Championship, which concluded in Doha last November.

Al-Sulaibikhat enters the contest in sixth place, the final spot qualifying for the Premier League, also with 10 points. Despite the challenging task of facing the reigning champion of the past 12 seasons, Al-Sulaibikhat is determined to deliver its best performance and aim for a positive result.



Burqan hopes to continue its positive results.

The second match promises excitement as third-place Burqan (13 points) squares off against fourth-place Kazma (10 points). Burqan has lost only one of its eight games and drawn another, showcasing strong form as it looks to outplay the undefeated "Orange."

In the final matchup, Al-Nasr, currently 11th with 6 points, is favored to claim victory over Al-Sahel, who languishes at the bottom of the standings in 14th place without a single point.

## Nigerian John set for Al Arabi trial

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Al Arabi has initiated negotiations with Nigerian professional Christopher John, with the club's management recently meeting the player and his agent. John is set to undergo a trial and is likely to feature in a friendly match against Khaitan tomorrow.

Should an agreement be reached, John will replace Algerian player Ahmed Khaldi, who joined the team at the start of the current season. Khaldi failed to gain approval from the technical and administrative staff, struggling to make an impact in the eight rounds of the Zain Premier League and the Asian Challenge Cup.

The 23-year-old John was selected based on a recommendation from head coach Nasser Al-Shatti, who aims to bolster the team's attacking line with a fast and versatile player. Known for his agility and ability to perform in midfield and on the left flank, John previously played for Egypt's Al-Da-



Nigerian Christopher John

khliya Club and Iraq's Al-Zawraa.

In preparation for the upcoming phase, Al Arabi has announced plans for an external training camp in Qatar starting mid-December. The camp will feature a series of friendly matches to enhance the team's readiness.

## Best of the Rest

**Berterame fires Monterrey into semis:** Mexico international forward German Berterame scored twice as Monterrey advanced to the Liga MX semifinals on Sunday with a 5-3 victory at Pumas UNAM.

Berterame struck in the 32nd and 73rd minutes at Estadio Olimpico Universitario while Lucas Ocampos, Gerardo Arteaga and Oliver Torres were also on target for the visitor in the quarterfinal second leg.

Meanwhile, Guillermo Martinez scored either side of Ignacio Pussetto's 66th-minute strike for the host.

The result handed Rayados a 6-3 win on aggregate following its 1-0 victory in the first leg on Thursday.

Monterrey will meet San Luis in the semifinals after the latter held Tigres UANL to a goalless home draw on Sunday to complete a 3-0 win on aggregate.

The other semifinal will be contested by Cruz Azul and America, who completed respective victories over Tijuana and Toluca on Saturday. (Xinhua)

**Velez closes in on title:** Claudio Aquino scored a first-half winner as leader Velez Sarsfield edged closer to Argentina's Primera Division title on Sunday with a 1-0 home victory over Sarmiento.

Aquino converted from the penalty spot in the 41st minute at El Fortin after Ivan Morales was deemed to have handled the ball inside the area.

The host was in cruise control thereafter, dominating possession and squandering several chances to extend its lead as it secured its 13th win of the campaign.

The Buenos Aires outfit now has a five-point lead over second-placed Racing Club with two match days remaining in the season, although the latter has a game in hand. Sarmiento is 25th in the 28-team standings with 24 points from 25 outings.

In other Primera Division fixtures on Sunday, Independiente won 2-0 at home to Central Cordoba, and Boca Juniors registered a 1-0 home win over Gimnasia. (Xinhua)

**Mikautadze says he is fine:** Lyon striker Georges Mikautadze says he is fine amid reports he was robbed at his home after a French league match.

Mikautadze posted a message on social media on Monday to say he was not hurt and thanked his fans for their messages of support. (AP)

**Ex-snooker champ Griffiths dies:** Terry Griffiths, a Welsh snooker player who won the world championship as a qualifier and later became a coach to top players like Stephen Hendry and Mark Williams, has died. He was 77.

World Snooker announced Griffiths' death early Monday. His son, Wayne, wrote in a post on Facebook that his father died on Sunday, surrounded by his family, and had been battling dementia.

Renowned for his slow and methodical style of play, Griffiths was one of the most recognizable figures in British sport during snooker's heyday in the late 1970s and 1980s.

The undoubted highlight of his career was becoming world champion in 1979 after beating Dennis Taylor in the final at the Crucible Theatre, but he is also one of 11 players to win the so-called "Triple Crown" of major events after capturing the Masters in 1980 and the U.K. Championship in 1982.

"He is a legend of the game," top-ranked player Judd Trump said. (AP)

## Top-flight sides favorites, but will need to be careful in Cup

MADRID, Dec 2, (Xinhua): The second round of the Copa del Rey knockout competition kicks off on Tuesday with four teams from the Spanish top-flight in action.

Las Palmas visits the Barcelona neighborhood of Gracia to play the historic club CD Europa, which was founded 117 years ago.

Europa currently plays in the RFEF II, which is the fourth tier of the Spanish game, and an in-form Las Palmas is favorite to progress to the third round, especially after their weekend win away to city giants FC Barcelona.

Valladolid is without a first team coach for its short trip to play Real Avila after Pablo Pezzolano was sacked in the wake of Saturday's 5-0 thrashing at home to Atletico Madrid.

B-team coach Alvaro Rubio will be in the Valladolid dugout for a game which is close to being a derby and an Avila side pushing for promotion from its group may fancy its chances of an upset, against a rival that has other aims in mind for

the season. Espanyol claimed a big win in La Liga at the weekend as it defeated

Celta Vigo 3-1 and now has to play RFEF II side, Barbastro, who last season pushed FC Barcelona to the

limit in the third round of the tournament.

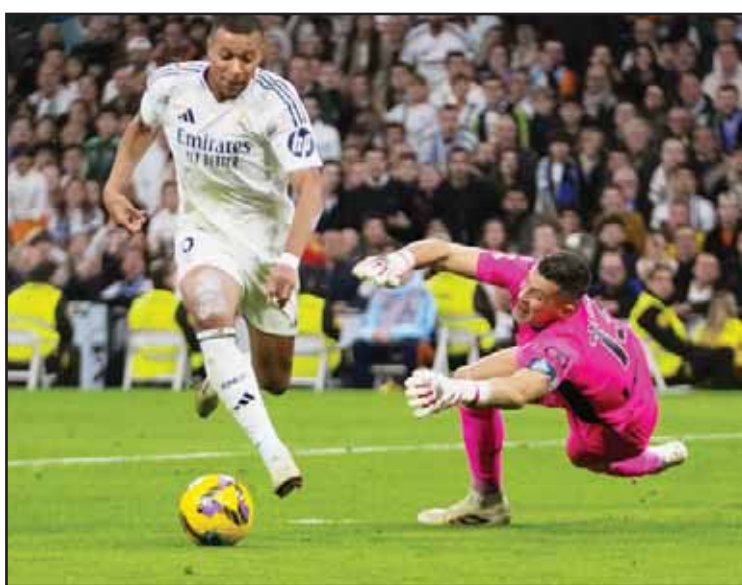
One of Espanyol's biggest problems will be the cold in a town situated in the foothills of the Pyrenees Mountain range.

Celta travels to play UD Salamanca (one of two clubs from the city) and another rival from the RFEF II.

Once again the side from La Liga is the favorite, but will have to be careful if coach Claudio Giraldez introduces too many rotations into his regular starting 11.

The second round is again without the presence of Cup winners Athletic Club Bilbao and beaten finalist, Mallorca, or La Liga champion, Real Madrid and runner-up Barcelona.

The four teams who will play the Spanish Supercup in early January, will use this week to play the La Liga games that were due to be played that weekend, with Athletic entertaining Real Madrid and Mallorca at home to Barca.



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe runs with the ball in an attempt to score during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Getafe at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid, Spain. (AP)





Liverpool's Mohamed Salah scores his side's second goal from the penalty spot during the English Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Manchester City at Anfield Stadium, Liverpool, England. (AP)

# Sports

## Verstappen wins action-packed Qatar GP

### Norris penalized

**LUSAIL, Qatar, Dec 2, (AP): From a smashed mirror and crashes to unusually severe penalties, there were plenty of hazards at the Qatar Grand Prix.**

Max Verstappen steered clear of them all to follow up his Formula 1 drivers' title with his ninth win of the year.

Lando Norris, Verstappen's closest title rival until he secured the championship last week in Las Vegas, was trying to overtake the Dutch driver for the lead until he was dropped to the back of the field by a penalty for failing to slow for yellow warning flags.

Verstappen, who secured his fourth consecutive title in Las Vegas last week, has won two of the last three races but hadn't won in dry conditions since June.

Verstappen disposed of another rival off the line, beating George Russell into the first corner. The Mercedes driver had been elevated to pole position in Verstappen's place after a contentious dispute in qualifying that got Verstappen a one-place penalty for driving too



Verstappen celebrates after winning the Qatar Formula One Grand Prix. (AP)

slowly.

Charles Leclerc finished second for Ferrari and Norris' McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri was third.

In a season of controversy over the rules and upheaval at the governing body, the stewards again played a crucial role. Norris had been chasing down Verstappen for the lead before his penalty. McLaren team principal Andrea Stella said Norris hadn't slowed down but argued the penalty was disproportionately harsh.

The stewards were busy, issu-

ing a wide range of penalties for offenses like causing collisions, but also two for Lewis Hamilton for a false start and pit-lane speeding, and one for Russell, who was judged to have dropped too far back in a safety car period. Russell said later he didn't know "when or how or why" he'd been penalized.

The safety car came out three times, first for crashes at the back of the pack on the opening lap, then for debris from a smashed mirror, and again when Nico Hulkenberg's Haas ended up in the gravel.

At one stage, it looked like McLaren could seal its first constructors' title since 1998 in Qatar as Norris and Piastri both eyed podium places.

After Norris' penalty, Ferrari cut McLaren's lead from 30 points to 21 with Leclerc's second place and a solid sixth for Carlos Sainz Jr. after a puncture seemed to have wrecked his race. The constructors' title will now be decided at the final race of the season in Abu Dhabi next week.

That's a boost to Ferrari's morale.

Russell was fourth, ahead of Pierre Gasly continuing Alpine's



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands leads at the start during the Qatar Formula One Grand Prix at the Lusail International Circuit in Lusail, Qatar. (AP)

recent good form, with Sainz sixth and Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso seventh.

Zhou Guanyu picked up his and Sauber's first points in eighth, ahead of Kevin Magnussen for Haas in ninth and Norris 10th after

having been dropped to 15th by the penalty.

Hamilton and Sainz both picked up punctures shortly after a discarded wing mirror on the track was shattered by Valtteri Bottas' Sauber. Carbon fiber and glass

were spread across the circuit, bringing out the safety car again, though it wasn't immediately clear if that or tire failure caused the punctures. It was a long, hard race for seven-time champion Hamilton, who finished 12th.



The Kuwaiti squash delegation.

### Kuwaiti squash team departs for Kuala Lumpur Int'l Open

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Kuwaiti squash team delegation has departed for the 16th Kuala Lumpur International Open for Juniors (singles), which begins today and runs through December 8.

The delegation is led by Assistant Secretary Hamad Al-Daghim, accompanied by coaches Ahmed Abdel-Aal and Ahmed Al-Sayed, and includes six players: Issa Al-Najadah, Salman Al-Saleh, Abdullah Mayouf, Khaled Al-Madhen, Abdulaziz Al-Masbahi, and Saqr Al-Kandari.

Al-Daghim expressed confi-

dence in the team's readiness, highlighting their strong technical and physical preparation. He emphasized that the players are exceptionally talented with promising futures and serve as key contributors to the national age-group teams.

He also disclosed that the national teams committee and technical staff have developed a strategic plan for significant international competitions. This initiative aims to enhance the players' global exposure and technical expertise by competing against top-tier players worldwide.

### 'The season starts now'

## Guardiola hits 'reset' with City floundering in EPL

LONDON, Dec 2, (AP): For Pep Guardiola, the season starts now.

Chastened. Relieved. Defiant. The Manchester City manager displayed a whole range of emotions after his latest ordeal at Anfield that plunged the out-of-sorts English champions to an unlikely low.

Make that seven matches without a win for a team which, not so long ago, never lost.

That's all in the past for Guardiola, though.

"Reset," he said after a 2-0 loss to Liverpool in the Premier League on Sunday. "There's a feeling we start from here this season."

How he intends to move on from the worst run of results in his managerial career remains to be seen. But it all starts Wednesday with a home game against Nottingham Forest.

"We are not used to this," Guardiola said. "Many, many things are happening. The teams are good and we can't handle it right now. I have to find the solution to be stable and solid."

"These players gave me a chance to lead maybe the best years of my life.



Manchester City's Erling Haaland controls the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Manchester City at Anfield Stadium, Liverpool, England. (AP)

All I can do is find a solution - in the right moment, the club will make the decision what is needed for this club to continue to be there."

Was he referring to making signings in the January transfer window? City's fatigued and injury-ravaged squad sure

needs some, especially in midfield.

Or was he referring to his own future? It's not the first time in recent days that Guardiola brought up how fragile his position could quickly become if City keeps on losing.

Moments before walking down the tunnel after the final whistle at Anfield, Guardiola held up one outstretched hand and an extra finger as a retort to taunts by Liverpool fans. It was a nod to the six Premier League titles he has won in eight full seasons at City.

No. 7 doesn't look likely this season. Not with City already 11 points behind Liverpool.

"Call me delusional or something like that," Guardiola said, "but I have the feeling we will try to build back our confidence to win games."

Indeed, Guardiola said he was taking some belief from recent training sessions. From the return to fitness of some players, such as Ruben Dias, Nathan Ake, Jack Grealish and Jeremy Doku. Maybe from a second-half display against Liverpool that, while hardly vintage City, at least showed some spirit and resolve, even if Liv-

erpool appeared happy to play on the break and never looked troubled.

It felt like Guardiola was relieved to come away from Anfield with the damage limited and City's hardest fixture of the season out of the way.

Yet his comments will sound so hollow if City goes on to lose to - or even draw with - sixth-place Forest, which is only one point and one spot behind and has a manager in Nuno Espirito Santo who has enjoyed some surprise results at City with former club Wolverhampton.

Guardiola's masterplan might include a change of role for Grealish, who could yet play more centrally as a No. 10 rather than as a winger. Or a first start since September for Kevin De Bruyne, who has had to settle for cameo roles off the bench as he struggles to fully overcome a groin injury.

Getting some energy into his midfield will be important as the absence of Rodri and Mateo Kovacic continues to bite hard and be City's biggest issue. That might come in the form of a new signing next month, unless Guardiola is working on a new plan on the training ground.



Dr. Thani Al Kuwari

### Asian Youth Games relocated to Bahrain by Oly Council of Asia

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Olympic Council of Asia has announced the relocation of the 2025 Asian Youth Games from Uzbekistan to the Kingdom of Bahrain.

This decision was made during a meeting of the Executive Office of the Olympic Council of Asia, chaired by Dr. Thani Al Kuwari, the Second Vice President of the Olympic Council of Asia.

## Al-Arabi and Al-Sulaibikhat battle for crucial points

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Two matches are set to take place in the sixth round of the Federation Volleyball Championship at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Halls Complex. Al-Arabi will face Al-Sulaibikhat at 5:00 pm, followed by a clash between Al-Yarmouk and Al-Nasr at 7:00 pm.

In the opening match, Al-Arabi enters ranked sixth with just 3 points from one victory and three defeats. The "Green" squad is determined to secure a win to stay



Al-Arabi looking for a second win.

in contention for a spot in the golden square, despite the challenging road ahead. Meanwhile, Al-Sulaibikhat sits in seventh place, still searching for its first points after five consecutive losses in the tournament.

The second match features a battle at the bottom of the standings between Al-Nasr, in eighth place, and Al-Yarmouk, in ninth. Both teams have yet to earn any points or secure a victory in the championship, making this matchup crucial for each side as they seek their first win and aim to climb out of the standings' lower tier.

### Best of the Rest

**Hassan, Tebogo named Athletes of Year:** Dutch long-distance runner Sifan Hassan and Botswana's sprint sensation Letsile Tebogo were named World Athletes of the Year at the 2024 World Athletics Awards in Monaco on Sunday.

With the Olympics serving as the pinnacle of the sporting year, Hassan and Tebogo's performances in Paris were pivotal to their recognition.

Hassan made history by becoming the first woman to win medals in the 5,000m, 10,000m, and marathon at a single Olympics. The 31-year-old clinched gold in the marathon with an Olympic record time of 2:22:55, just 37 hours after earning bronze in the 10,000m, and six days after her 5,000m bronze. This remarkable achievement places her alongside Emil Zatopek, who won medals in these three events at the Helsinki Games in 1952. (Xinhua)

**Spanish Vuelta to start in Italy:** The 90th edition of the Spanish Vuelta next year will start in the Italian region of Piedmont with the Alps as a backdrop, race organizers said Monday.

Italy will host the first three stages of the race, which starts on Aug. 23, before it returns to Spanish territory.

It will be the first time the Vuelta will start in Italy, but the sixth occasion that it kicks off outside Spain. Last year it began in Portugal and there have been previous starts in the Netherlands and Belgium. The 2026 edition will begin in Monaco. (AP)