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KUWAIT BIDS FAREWELL TO POLICE OFFICERS KILLED IN 'LINE OF DUTY'

— Details Page 3 —

Kuwait rolls back fees for 'over-60' workforce

One-year transfer for SME workers in effect: PAM

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The Public Authority for Manpower has announced the cancellation of the previous decision requiring expatriate workers over the age of 60 to pay an additional fee and submit a health insurance document, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Under the new directive, which is part of Ministerial Resolution No. (12) of 2024, expatriate workers will only need to pay the regular fees for issuing work permits, eliminating the additional financial burdens previously imposed.

This decision aligns with the directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, and are aimed at streamlining the procedures and improve flexibility in managing Kuwait's labor market.

The authority has emphasized that these changes are designed to support both expatriate workers and employers by ensuring a more balanced and efficient work environment.

In addition to the changes regarding work permits, the authority has also reduced the transfer period for workers within the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector from three years to one year.

Transfers are now allowed within the same sector, subject to approval from

the project owner in which the worker is registered.

Furthermore, a project owner can now transfer workers to another SME owned by them without waiting the full year, provided a fee of 300 Kuwaiti dinars is paid.

The new regulations also lift the ban on transferring workers outside the distinguished lists, providing employers with greater freedom to bring in workers from abroad or transfer them within the country more easily.

These updates aim to improve the market flexibility and efficiency, ultimately contributing to the broader goals of sustainable development in Kuwait.

The authority expressed its commitment to developing a work environment that supports both the market needs and the rights of expatriate workers. Kuwait has introduced a comprehensive overhaul of its residency laws for foreigners with the issuance of Amiri Decree 114/2024 last week.

Key reforms include the requirement for foreigners to possess valid passports for entry and exit, with GCC citizens exempted by using ID cards. The decree mandates that foreigners must use designated ports for travel and requires notification of authorities for births in Kuwait within four months.

Residency permits are necessary for those wishing to reside in Kuwait, and specific provisions allow Kuwaitis to sponsor non-Kuwaiti family members. Domestic workers' absences must be reported within two weeks, and their residency can be annulled if they leave the country for over four months without approval.



Crown Prince Diwan photo

HH the Crown Prince receives former US Secretary of State.

Kuwait's Crown Prince receives former US State Sec John Kerry

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Wednesday former US Secretary of State John Kerry and his accompanying delegation on occasion of visit to the country.

Attending the meeting were Head of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Retired Lieutenant General Jamal Al-Theyab and Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs at His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Mazen Al-Essa.



5 HH Crown Prince visits Sheikh Duaij Al-Khalifa's diwaniya



8 Kuwait Finance House honored by First Deputy Prime Minister for supporting Hackathon Kuwait and youth empowerment

Jan 1-2 set as New Year holiday in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4, (KUNA): The Cabinet has announced the suspension of work in all ministries, government agencies, public institutions, and bodies on Wednesday and Thursday, January 1 and 2, 2025, in observance of the New Year celebrations.

During its weekly meeting at Bayan Palace, the Cabinet clarified that Thursday, January 2, is designated as a holiday since it falls between two official holidays. Work will resume on Sunday, January 5, 2025.

The decision also noted that agencies with specialized functions will determine their holiday schedules based on directives from the relevant authorities, ensuring alignment with the public interest.



PM Diwan photo

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

Kuwait, FATF discuss fight against money laundering

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Minister of Family Affairs and Childhood Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah held talks on Wednesday with the secretariat of the international Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on backing Kuwait's efforts against money laundering and terrorism funding.

The minister said in a statement that the meeting was held in line with guidelines by the political leadership for boosting transparency, securing support for the National Committee for Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing, while stressing on the necessity of abidance by the instructions of the task force.

The statement said the two sides discussed means of employing FATF's expertise for holding workshops, training courses to sharpen national cadres' skills.

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Kuwait integral partner for int'l humanitarian efforts: Deputy FM

'Humanitarian diplomacy pillar of Kuwaiti foreign policy'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4, (KUNA): One of the important pillars of Kuwaiti foreign policy is humanitarian diplomacy, which the State of Kuwait considered as a moral obligation, said Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Wednesday.

This affirmation came in a speech by Sheikh Jarrah during the launch of the Global Humanitarian Overview 2025 in Kuwait "Collective Action in Humanitarian Diplomacy".

The event is organized by United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and attended by several diplomats, heads of missions and international organization coinciding with similar functions in Geneva, Switzerland, and Nairobi, Kenya.

The Kuwaiti official affirmed that his country was an integral partner for international humanitarian efforts, indicating that supporting countries to overcome crises represented to Kuwait a moral obligation in line with its membership in the UN Human Rights Council 2024-26.

He added that Kuwait would continue to carry out its responsibilities with regional and international partners to handle humanitarian crises and lessen the volume suffering facing millions in areas affected by armed conflict and humanitarian disasters, which affected the security and stability of many countries.

He said that the overview of humanitarian work in 2025 displayed the amount of challenges and suffering that faced the international community; however, this also provided a chance to boost humanitarian cooperation and assistance to help address challenges and vanquish threats directed towards humanitarian workers and people in need.

In this regard, the aggression against the Palestinian and Lebanese people perpetrated by the Israeli occupation should not be left unanswered, warned Sheikh Jarrah, saying that tens of thousands of innocent lives were lost and hundred of thousands were displaced as a result of blatant violation of humanitarian and international laws as well as UNSC resolutions.

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MoFA photo

Panel discussion during the launch of the Global Humanitarian Overview 2025 in Kuwait 'Collective Action in Humanitarian Diplomacy'.

Kuwait supports Palestine UN bid

NEW YORK, Dec 4, (KUNA): Kuwait called on UN member-states to support Palestine's request to receive a full membership in the UN.

The remarks were made by Kuwait's diplomatic attache Abdulaziz Al-Saedi, during the meeting of the UN General Assembly in New York, late Tuesday.

He noted that in 1947, the General Assembly took the responsibility to reach a just solution for the Palestinian cause, approving resolution number 181 on establishing two independent states.

Al-Saedi said that it is the task of the UN member-states, who recognized Palestine as an independent state, to call on other members who refrained from recognizing the country to do so.

The Israeli occupation is executing a genocide against Palestinians and denying them their basic rights, he added.

Continued on Page 5

Aviation chief calls for swift response to passenger issues

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4, (KUNA): Chairperson of the Directorate General for Civil Aviation Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Wednesday called for speeding up procedures regarding complaints for passengers rights.

This came in a statement to KUNA after Sheikh Humoud held a meeting with the complaints committee of the civil aviation, organized as part of the efforts to improve services at Kuwait International Airport.

Sheikh Humoud affirmed, according to the statement, the efforts for achieving "balance between passengers' rights and public interests." He also stressed on the necessity of facilitating the presentation of complaints to ensure speedy action against those responsible for irregularities.

The meeting focused on speeding up the procedures and boosting communications between the directorate general and the citizens.

Last month, Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Acting Chief Duaij Al-Otaibi affirmed it's commitment to enhancing aviation safety standards and ensuring a safer and more sustainable future for the aviation industry.

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

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

Iraq vows Kuwait issues resolution

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Two days after the 45th Gulf Summit, during which His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah urged Iraq to rectify the legal status of the agreement regulating maritime navigation in Khor Abdullah, resume technical team meetings, adhere to the 2008 Security Exchange Protocol and complete the demarcation of maritime borders beyond Marker No. (162) in line with international law and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Iraqi Ambassador to Kuwait Al-Manhal Al-Safi affirmed Iraq's commitment to resolving all related issues, including border demarcation.

Speaking on the sidelines of the UAE Embassy's National Day celebration, Al-Safi emphasized that negotiations are ongoing and will proceed under the directives of Iraq's political leadership.

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National Guard photo

Chief of KNG receives US ambassador to Kuwait.

KNG chief receives US ambassador

Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Wednesday received US Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Sasahara, where she congratulated him on attaining his position as

chief of the National Guard.

In a press statement, the KNG said that Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah praised the historical bilateral relations between the State of Kuwait and the US. (KUNA)

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Nationality sovereign matter, cannot be appealed in court'

"I WAS deeply moved by the statement published yesterday by the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, where he declared: 'Nationality is an act of sovereignty according to the rulings of the judiciary,'" columnist, Constitutional Expert **Dr. Mohammad Al-Moqatei** wrote for *Al-Jarida* daily.

"This statement resonated with me because it highlights that those responsible for managing the citizenship file and implementing its procedures are operating within a legal framework, guided by principles that also account for social and humanitarian considerations."



Dr. Al-Moqatei

"When the minister emphasized that 'citizenship is a sovereign act beyond the control of the judiciary,' as supported by verdicts issued by the Court of Cassation, it reassured me of the awareness and diligence of officials in addressing this sensitive matter."

"Their adherence to legal and sovereign principles underscores their commitment to the rule of law and their understanding of the boundaries of their executive authority."

"Recently, I read another statement from the same minister, where he mentioned that the Supreme Committee for Citizenship is meticulously reviewing presented files. He also assured that the government is committed to ensuring a dignified life for those whose citizenship has been withdrawn, providing financial and employment support to maintain their social stability — unless specific circumstances dictate otherwise."

"To better understand the legal context, I revisited judicial rulings on this issue. For instance, Ruling No. 2 of 1999 by the Constitutional Court affirmed that matters excluded from the jurisdiction of the Administrative Court, as per Law No. 20/81 (amended by Law No. 61/82), include issues of nationality, categorizing them as sovereign acts beyond judicial oversight."

"Similarly, the General Assembly of the Court of Cassation, in its decision on Appeal No. 2 of 2022 (dated 4/17/2022), reaffirmed that all matters concerning nationality — whether original or acquired — are acts of sovereignty and fall entirely outside the jurisdiction of the courts."

"These rulings demonstrate that nationality issues are sovereign matters integral to the state's existence, security and integrity, placing their responsibility firmly within the executive authority."

"This authority, as stipulated in Article 51 of the Kuwaiti Constitution, rests with His Highness the Amir and the government. Thus, claims suggesting the possibility of judicial appeals in nationality matters are unfounded in light of these definitive rulings by the Constitutional Court and the Court of Cassation."

"However, this legal clarity does not justify or excuse any potential injustice stemming from erroneous decisions. The government bears a responsibility to establish mechanisms for addressing grievances to ensure fairness and rectify mistakes."

"From what I have read, a committee has been formed for this purpose — a commendable initiative in a state governed by law and constitution, committed to safeguarding rights and promoting justice."

"Finally, I must emphasize the need for caution, thorough scrutiny and genuine consideration in handling such sensitive cases."

"Decisions must neither be superficial nor overly lenient, as justice requires fairness and attention to humanitarian and social dimensions."

"Resolving these issues can promote family unity and societal stability, which are essential for the well-being of our community."

Also:

"He said: 'I was in Beirut, soaking in the beauty of the city and enjoying the serenity near Al-Rawshah. That morning, I sat in a café by the beach, listening to the most exquisite Lebanese songs on the radio. Suddenly, the announcer interrupted the melodies with a segment of advertisements. The first announcement was about a concert featuring 'Nawal Al-Kuwaitiya' and Nabil Shuaib, promising an unforgettable night at a specific venue,'" columnist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"Hearing the announcer say 'Nawal Al-Kuwaitiya' filled me with immense pride. I thought to myself: Isn't Nawal Kuwaiti after all? Upon returning to Kuwait, I immediately penned an article for a local newspaper, titled 'Nawal...the Kuwaiti is Kuwaiti.' Not long after the article was published, news broke that Nawal had been granted Kuwaiti citizenship. The decision resonated beautifully with the public, especially Nawal's devoted fans."

"Nawal is no stranger to Kuwait. She is not an outsider, an opportunist, or someone disconnected from the nation. She was born in Kuwait, her mother is Kuwaiti, her husband is Kuwaiti and she has always sung for Kuwait with the soul of a true Kuwaiti artist. Yes, like any human, she may have made mistakes, but she remains a daughter of Kuwait."

a new phenomenon or something to boast about. It is a pragmatic recognition of their value. Saudi Arabia, for example, granted citizenship to Iraqi artists like Fouad Al-Mohandes and another Iraqi artist whose name escapes me, as well as the Yemeni legend Abu Bakr Salem.

"Qatar embraced Kazem El Saher, the celebrated Iraqi artist and Bahrain granted citizenship to Asala, the Syrian songstress."

"Globally, nations have long recognized the importance of art and its creators. Hollywood, the heart of global cinema and creativity, has welcomed countless international artists, many of whom earned American citizenship."

"Similarly, Egypt, the cradle of Arab art and culture, has naturalized numerous non-Egyptian artists, many of whom became cultural icons after receiving the honor of Egyptian citizenship."

"Did you know that the late Ibrahim Khan and Mohamed Reda were of Iranian origin? Or that several Egyptian artists of Turkish descent hold Egyptian citizenship? The list goes on, filling pages with stories of inclusivity and artistic acknowledgment."

"My message is simple: do not deny people their rights. Citizenship enriches art and art, in turn, enriches the nation that embraces it. Art is a global treasure and every country seeks to attract and celebrate the best artists."

"Kuwait, despite having a nearly century-long history of art and creativity, still lacks a robust pool of creators. Welcoming and supporting artists is not a moral failing; it is a sign of progress. Unfortunately, the so-called 'guardians of morality' — the bearded zealots, the turbaned traditionalists and others who oppose art and advancement — continue to push Kuwait into the shadows while the rest of the world races ahead."

"Nawal's citizenship was revoked. But Nawal did not lose — Kuwait did. Nawal stands at the gates of international fame, embraced by countries that celebrate her talent. She will remain proud of who she is, a beacon of artistry. In the end, Nawal won and Kuwait lost."

"The Kuwait Science Club is a non-profit scientific organization established in 1974 with the aim of spreading scientific culture and promoting innovation and development in technical and scientific fields in Kuwait," columnist and former Deputy Director-General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for *Al-Qabas* daily.



Iqbal Al-Ahmad

"The Science Club, at a certain period, was the pinnacle of activity and giving and an attraction for our children from their early years to absorb this type of knowledge and to protect them from wandering in the labyrinths of the teenage stage when it deviates from its correct path for many reasons, by supporting young people and those interested in the fields of science and technology by providing a stimulating environment."

"The Science Club provides the opportunity for individuals of all ages to join as members and benefit from its facilities and programs."

"Membership in the Science Club is open to students, professionals and families to benefit from workshops and courses in the fields of astronomy, renewable energy, robotics, electronics, programming, photography and the environment."

"The Science Club has supported innovative projects that have won local and international awards and hosted international scientific events to promote scientific cooperation."

"If you passed by the Science Club building today, you might notice its neglect, which certainly reflects on the events and activities inside it, which once nourished our children and youth."

"This important segment of our Kuwaiti society had the opportunity, with clear government sponsorship, to enter into modern, civilized fields. Kuwait was the first to offer them this opportunity... when the world surrounding us and close to us was absent from it."

"Certainly this situation did not come out of nowhere, but rather due to influential factors that led to the weakening of its role in Kuwaiti society. Perhaps the lack of governmental and private financial support as it was in the past, perhaps contributed greatly to its weakening, then the many challenges, which certainly leads to a decline in the quality of the club's services and programs."

"The lack of marketing and media promotion of the club's activities and programs also contributes greatly to the decline in awareness of its role and contributions."

"The Scientific Club needs serious attention from the government and encouragement from the private sector to invest in it as well, in order to restore its luster and brilliance and to re-embrace Kuwaiti youth from their early years to contribute to any future aspirations of Kuwait in the fields of space, technology and astronomy, which are all fields of the future and the era."

— Compiled by **PFX Fernandes**



Photo by Rizk Tawfiq
First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah follows as the slain police officers are taken for their final journey.

Kuwait bids farewell to police officers killed in 'line of duty'

Amir, Crown Prince, PM offer condolences to martyrs' families

By **Munif Naif**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah offered his condolences on Wednesday to the families of two police officers who were run over and killed while on duty, expressing his sympathies over the tragic incident.

In cables he sent to the families of deceased police lance corporals Bader Al-Azmi and Talal Al-Dossari, His Highness the Amir wished that they would find solace in this time of grief.

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His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah offered his condolences on Wednesday to the families of two police officers who were run over and killed while on duty, expressing his sympathies over the tragic incident.

In cables he sent to the families of deceased police lance corporals Bader Al-Azmi and Talal Al-Dossari, His Highness the prime minister wished that they would find solace in this time of grief.

In a solemn military ceremony held yesterday

afternoon at Subhan Cemetery, Kuwait bid farewell to the martyrs of duty Bader Al-Azmi and Talal Al-Dossari from the General Traffic Department. These two officers tragically lost their lives in a traffic accident while performing their duty on the Fahaaheel Expressway Tuesday evening.

The military ceremony and funeral was attended by the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf, the acting Chief of Staff Major General Captain Sheikh Sabah Al-Jaber, Head of Kuwait Fire Force Major General Talal Al-Roumi, and senior military leaders from the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Army, and Kuwait Fire Force, as well as a large crowd of citizens and residents.

In a statement to KUNA, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef conveyed the heartfelt condolences and sympathy of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah to the families and loved ones of the two fallen officers.

The minister stated that the two martyrs of duty lost their lives while performing their national duty, which reflects the true essence of loyalty and dedication to the homeland.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef said, "Our only consolation is knowing that we consider them martyrs in the sight of Allah Almighty."

On his behalf and on behalf of all employees of the Ministry of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef extended his sincere condolences and sympathy to the families of the two martyrs of duty and to the Kuwaiti people.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to grant them mercy and to give their families strength and patience, saying, "This is Kuwait, and we are all

ready to sacrifice for Kuwait."

Meanwhile, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf said, "The nation embraces its sons, the martyrs of duty, who gave their lives for the homeland's security. Such noble sacrifices will forever remain etched in the nation's memory, as they represent the highest values of loyalty and devotion."

He prayed to Allah Almighty to grant the two deceased His mercy, to place them in His eternal gardens, and to provide their families with patience and solace.

It is worth explaining that the two officers had stopped their patrol vehicle to assist a person whose vehicle had broken down on Fahaaheel Expressway near Salwa, when a speeding vehicle collided with them, causing their immediate death at the scene. The driver responsible for the accident - a Syrian expatriate - was arrested at Mubarak Hospital, and investigations are ongoing.

Senior leaders from the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Fire Force, and Emergency Medical Department were present at the accident scene.

In a press statement titled "May Allah have mercy on them", the Ministry of Interior mourned the passing away of the two martyrs.

It stated that the ministry, represented by the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, Undersecretary of the ministry Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf, all members, officers, non-commissioned officers, personnel, and civilians, mourns with deep sadness the loss of the two martyrs of duty - Corporal Bader Al-Azmi and Corporal Talal Al-Dosari from the General Traffic Department's Highways Division.

The statement read, "We pray that Allah Almighty grants them mercy, places them in His eternal gardens, and provides their families and loved ones with patience and comfort."



KFF photo
Firemen at the site of the laundry fire.

One hurt in Farwaniya blaze at laundry shop

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Fire engulfed a laundry shop in Farwaniya on Monday evening, resulting in injuries to an individual.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force, firefighting teams from Farwaniya and Subhan fire stations rushed to the location after receiving information about the laundry shop on fire.

They managed to control the fire before it spread further. The injured individual was referred to the nearest hospital for treatment.

Investigations have been launched to determine the cause of the fire.

Fire at university lab: Fire broke out in the Artificial Intelligence Lab at Shadadiya University on Monday evening. No casualties were reported but material losses had incurred.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force, the firefighting team from Shadadiya Hazardous Materials Center rushed to the location after receiving information about the fire in the lab. They extinguished the fire within a short time. Investigations have been launched to determine the cause of the fire.

1 month's jail, fine for parking at place reserved for disabled

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The Ministry of Interior (MoI) has urged drivers to "think carefully" before using parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a post on its official account on the X platform, the ministry highlighted Article 63 of Law No. 8 of 2010. The law

states that anyone who parks in spaces designated for individuals with disabilities without justification could face imprisonment for up to one month, a fine of up to 100 dinars, or both penalties.

This reminder underscores the importance of respecting the rights of people with disabilities and adhering to the law.



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Al-Mishari rejects chalet decision in Jahra project

Minister insists removal is crucial for progress

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The ongoing debate over the Jahra Waterfront Project took a new turn when Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Abdul Latif Al-Mishari, objected to the Municipal Council's decision to cancel the removal of chalets in the project area.

Al-Mishari stated that the chalets, which are state-owned, represent a significant obstacle to the project's implementation and that their removal was essential for its completion.

In a letter sent to the Municipal Council, Al-Mishari emphasized that the chalets were built under temporary contracts managed by the Ministry of Finance, which governs state property.

These contracts grant the state the authority to remove the chalets at any time. The Minister's objection stressed the need to remove the chalets in order to allow the project to move forward, aligning with the Ministry of Finance and the Public Environment Authority's positions.

Al-Mishari's objection will be discussed in the Municipal Council's main session on Monday, with the matter then referred to the Services Committee for further coordination between the Municipality and the Ministry of Finance to facilitate the chalets' removal.

According to legal sources, the Municipal Council does not have the authority to override the Minister's decision, as the project has already been approved and the inclusion of a clause preventing the removal of the chalets could hinder the project's progress.



KUNA photo
Chairman of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation Sheikh Hmoud Mubarak Al-Sabah meets with the French Ambassador to the country, Olivier Gauvin.

DGCA chief discusses boosting co-op with French Ambassador

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4, (KUNA): The Director General of the Kuwaiti Civil Aviation Authority Sheikh Hmoud Mubarak Al-Sabah discussed on Tuesday with the French Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Olivier Gauvin, ways to boost joint cooperation between the two countries.

A statement by the Civil Aviation Authority said that during the meeting, bilateral cooperation, and ways to develop them were discussed, including the best ways to achieve the desired economic feasibility.

The statement added that the importance of increasing flights and encouraging cooperation between airlines in the two countries were discussed, in addition to addressing the latest current projects at Kuwait International Airport.

The statement noted that the two sides stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation in the field of aviation as it represents a strategic step towards achieving common goals, enhancing trade exchange and tourism and facilitating the movement of passengers.

New guidelines for urban aesthetics

Municipal Council pushes public space beautification regulations

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Municipal Council members Sherifa Al-Shalfan and Abdullatif Al-Da'i submitted a proposal to issue a regulation aimed at beautifying public spaces throughout the country.

In the preamble to their proposal, they emphasized that public spaces are the most important urban components in successful cities, and play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life.

They highlighted the Municipal Council's pivotal role in shaping and organizing urban policy, particularly with regard to public places.

The regulation proposed by Al-Shalfan and Al-Da'i consists of eight articles:-

Article 1 allows individuals or public and private legal entities to beautify public spaces, provided they have a license issued by the municipality, in accordance with the provisions of the regulation.

Article 2 specifies the locations eligible for beautification, such as cities, islands, suburbs, regions, roads, streets, squares, bridges, sidewalks, and pedestrian paths (walkways).

Article 3 outlines the approved methods for beautifying these spaces. These include placing street furniture such as chairs, umbrellas, sculptures, sports equipment, planters, lights, and free

games for children. However, such items must be movable and not permanently fixed to the ground. They should complement the aesthetic of the surrounding area, avoid obstructing entrances or exits, and must receive approval from the relevant authorities for activities like painting, restoring walls, ceilings, floors, or planting.

Article 4 stipulates the formation of a committee, known as the Public Places Beautification Committee, based on a decision from the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

The committee will consist of five members, including engineers from the municipality, the College of Architecture, the National Council, and a representative nominated by the Union of Engineering Offices and Consultation Bureaus.

The committee's responsibilities include evaluating beautification initiatives that require a license from both an aesthetic and technical perspective. It will also coordinate with relevant authorities, such as the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation, the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources, and the Ministry of Interior, to secure approvals if the site to be beautified falls under their jurisdiction.

The committee will also work with the competent authority within the municipality to inspect the site in person and ensure it is free of

any obstacles before approving the license.

Article 5 of the regulation outlines the conditions for licensing the beautification of public spaces.

Article 6 establishes the requirement for setting a security deposit. The value of the deposit will be determined by the executive authority and will be refunded once the license expires, provided the street furniture is removed, the site is cleaned, and the area is restored to its original condition.

Article 7 emphasizes that licensees are required to remove street furniture, clean the site, and restore it to its original condition within a maximum of three weeks from the date of expiry of the license.

The concerned authority within the municipality must inspect the site to ensure its cleanliness before the security deposit is refunded.

If the licensee fails to remove the street furniture or clean the site, the municipality has the right to take administrative action and remove the items, as well as deduct the cost from the security deposit.

Article 8 grants the director general of the Municipality, or their designated deputies, the authority to amend or cancel the issued license at any time, in the interest of public welfare.

The licensee has no right to object or seek compensation from the municipality in such cases.

Education Ministry adopts unified state logo

By Abdulrahman Al-Shimmari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The Ministry of Education has issued a circular to all its sectors and affiliated departments to adopt the unified state logo across government institutions.

This directive comes in line with a letter from the Ministry of Information, aimed at standardizing the visual

identity of all governmental institutions.

The circular, a copy of which was obtained by Al-Seyassah, underscores the importance of using the unified logo in official correspondence, government documents, as well as in media, advertising materials, and any other materials related to the ministry's official activities.

It also highlights the need to download the logo through a QR code, with separate versions available for printed materials and digital use.



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KU student wins first place in 'Thesis in Three Minutes' competition

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Manal Sabah Aboud, a student at the College of Graduate Studies at Kuwait University undergoing a Master's degree program in Molecular Biology, won first place in the "Thesis in Three Minutes" competition hosted by Qatar University.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait University, the competition, which was supervised by Dr. Amani Mustafa Al-Adasani and Prof. Suzan Al-Bustan from the College of Science, featured participants from 12 universities in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. It marked the first initiative of its kind in the region.

The Dean of the College of Graduate Studies at Kuwait University Prof. Ahmed Abdullah Al-Makhial, and the Acting Assistant Dean for Planning and Development Dr. Muhammad Raif Al-Samawi attended the event to support the Kuwait University team.

The "Thesis in Three Minutes" competition challenges young researchers to present their theses in an innovative and concise manner in a competitive yet collaborative environment. It aims to highlight the outstanding research efforts of students in various disciplines and universities in the GCC.



Photo from the event

KM preps for Gulf Cup 2026 with comprehensive cleaning efforts

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Muhammad Sandan, Director of the Public Relations Department and official spokesman for the Kuwait Municipality, announced that cleaning teams have started field preparations in collaboration with relevant government agencies for the upcoming Gulf Cup Football Championship "Gulf 26," which will take place from Dec 21 to Jan 3, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, Sandan emphasized that the cleaning efforts will follow a comprehensive plan, focusing

on key areas including the Jaber Al-Ahmad and Jaber Al-Mubarak international stadiums, where the tournament matches will be held.

The plan also includes cleaning nine sports club stadiums designated for team training.

Additionally, inspection teams will remove abandoned vehicles and trucks from the parking areas surrounding the training and match venues, while ensuring that mobile sales carts do not occupy unlicensed spots around the stadiums and parking lots, to maintain smooth traffic flow.



KUNA photo
Cleaning campaign as part of Kuwait's preparations to host the Arabian Gulf Cup Football Championship.

An evening of insight and unity

HH Crown Prince visits Sheikh Duaij Al-Khalifa's diwaniya

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Tuesday evening was unlike any other at Sheikh Duaij Al-Khalifa's diwaniya in Jabriya. The atmosphere was especially warm and lively, as His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled made an unexpected visit, gracing the gathering as a special guest, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

His arrival brought an air of joy and excitement, which was evident in the smiles of the attendees and the warm welcome they extended to him.

After greeting the guests, who were delighted by his presence, His Highness Sheikh Sabah engaged in friendly conversation and offered kind compliments. This was followed by a lengthy discussion on a wide range of social and national issues, all focused on the well-being of the people and the best interests of the nation.

The informal meeting with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled provided citizens with a unique opportunity to hear the leader's insights on various local, regional, and international political matters that capture the attention of the nation, especially in a world that



His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled during his visit to the Al-Khalifa Diwan.

is constantly changing and rarely at peace before upheaval strikes again.

Such gatherings with the na-

tion's top officials and leaders highlight the importance of diwanis - with Sheikh Duaij Al-Khalifa's diwaniya serving as an

example - and demonstrate their valuable role in advancing both the state and society.

In addition, these occasions

serve as a daily reminder that Kuwait remains a united, loving, and supportive family.

May Almighty Allah continue

to bless Kuwait as a place of security and peace, protecting its people and leaders from all harm.



Ibrahim Al-Thuwaini, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah & Arab Times Ahmed Al-Jarallah, and Thabet Al-Muhanna.



Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah & Arab Times Ahmed Al-Jarallah and Sheikh Duaij Al-Khalifa.



A conversation between His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Ambassador Abdullah Bishara, and Dr. Fadhel Safar.



Major General (Ret.) Saber Al-Suwaidan, Lieutenant General (Ret.) Thabet Al-Muhanna, and Amer Al-Tamimi.



Anwar Al-Yassin, Lieutenant General (Ret.) Essam Al-Nahham, Major General Faisal Al-Jazaaf, and Saud Al-Farhan.



Dr. Fadhel Safar and Sheikh Faisal Al-Hamoud.

PAFN head discusses trade and certification with Poland, Serbia

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: In the context of enhancing cooperation, Chairman of the Board of Directors and Director General of the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) Dr. Reem Al-Fulaj met with the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Kuwait Mihai Holieva, and the Head of the Political and Economic Section at the embassy Anna Marta Godoy, reports Al-Anba daily.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed the strengthening of bilateral relations between Kuwait and Poland, particularly focusing on the requirements for accrediting agencies that grant halal and health certificates.

At the end of the meeting, Ambassador Mihai Holieva expressed his

gratitude for the warm reception he received, and wished for continued progress and prosperity in the bilateral relations between the two countries.

Meanwhile, Dr. Reem Al-Fulaj also met with the Chargé d'Affaires of the Republic of Serbia Filip Katic.

During their discussions, both parties exchanged views on expanding food trade between the two countries and explored potential avenues for cooperation in this area.

At the end of the meeting, Chargé d'Affaires Filip Katic thanked Dr. Al-Fulaj for the warm reception and expressed his hope for continued growth and prosperity in the bilateral relations between Kuwait and Serbia.

KFAED, UNICEF ink agreement to support health project in Yemen

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: On December 2, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) signed a grant agreement with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) under which KFAED will provide a grant of US\$ 1.5 million to support the vital primary health care services project in the Republic of Yemen, reports Al-Anba daily.

The agreement was signed by Acting Director General of KFAED Walid Shamlan Al-Bahar, and the UNICEF Area Representative for the Gulf region Eltayeb Adam.

The project aims to address the health challenges arising from the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crises in Yemen by providing operational support to primary health care centers. This includes maintenance, administrative expenses, equipment to meet daily needs, and ensuring the provision of minimum human resources for the centers' operations.

These centers offer basic health services, including maternal, infant, and child health, nutrition, non-communicable diseases, mental health, disease prevention, social and be-

havioral change, and medical waste management.

The project is part of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between KFAED and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom on September 3.

This agreement aims to provide joint emergency humanitarian assistance to populations affected by the conflict in Yemen.

Under the MOU, both the United Kingdom and the State of Kuwait, through KFAED, will each contribute \$1.5 million, for a total of \$3 million, to help finance the project. It is expected to directly benefit approximately 1.45 million people in Yemen.

This grant marks the eighth collaboration of its kind between the two institutions in the field of humanitarian support. Since 2017, the Kuwait Fund has provided about \$22 million to UNICEF to finance seven humanitarian projects. The most recent of these was concluded on April 21, 2022, with a \$2 million grant for the "Support for Mothers and Newborns in Conflict-Affected Areas" project in Yemen.

Kuwait, FATF

Continued from Page 1

The meeting also focused on the necessity of cooperation between the national and international parties to overhaul national procedures in tandem with global criteria.

The meeting was attended by the chief of the Kuwaiti financial inspections division, Hanadi Bou-Hemayed, the secretary of the National Committee for Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Mariam Issa, the head of the national team Salma Al-Baghli, the secretary of FATF's financial task group Miley Rodvich, and Abdul-Rahman Al-Herabi.

FATF is an intergovernmental organization founded in Paris in 1989. The 37-member organization works

in combating money laundering, terrorism funding, arms non-proliferation and financial integrity.

Kuwait supports

Continued from Page 1

He expressed Kuwait's strong condemnation of the occupation's expansion in building illegal settlements, noting that it is a violation of the international law.

Meanwhile, he expressed Kuwait's strong condemnation of the Israeli occupation attacks on Lebanon, that killed hundreds of innocent civilians.

He called on the UN Security Council to implement its Gaza ceasefire resolution, which includes the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces and the entry of humanitarian aid to the strip.

He underlined the efforts of the region's countries, including Kuwait, to

Authority unveils first vehicle auction market project with consulting tender

Deadline for bids set for February 2025

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The Public-Private Partnership Projects Authority announced the launch of practice No. 2 for the year 2023/2024 regarding the provision of consulting services for the project to build and operate a vehicle auction market, based on the tenders Law No. 49/2016 and its

executive regulations issued by Decree No. 30/2017.

In a statement, the authority explained that the project, which is affiliated with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, is the first of its kind in Kuwait. It will be located in an area between Abeerq, Na'em, and Liyah, covering 500,000 square meters.

The site will include an integrated technical services city for auctions and will offer services for customers for buying and selling used vehicles, ensuring that the bidding process is carried out directly and transparently.

The project aims to invite specialized consulting firms and alliances to submit technical and financial offers for providing consulting services to prepare the feasibility study and tender documents for the project, in accordance with Law No. 116/2014 regarding public-private sector partnerships and its executive regulations.

The project components include parking lots, auction lanes, and a support services building.

The authority announced that the tender date is December 1, and the final date for submitting bids is February 2, 2025. A preliminary meeting is scheduled for December 16, with submission details available on the authority's website.

Ahmadi Governor discusses strengthening bilateral ties with Chargé d'Affaires of Serbia

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at his office in the governorate's headquarters on Monday morning the Chargé d'Affaires of the Republic of Serbia to Kuwait Filip Katic.

According to a press release issued by Ahmadi Governorate, they exchanged greetings during the meeting, and discussed the strong bilateral relations between the two countries, as well as ways to enhance cooperation in all fields.

Katic expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the warm welcome he received, and praised the exceptional care given to the Serbian diplomatic mission and its citizens both officially and socially in Kuwait.

He affirmed that Serbia and Kuwait share deep-rooted and strong ties.



A moment during the meeting between Ahmadi Governor and Serbian Chargé d'Affaires.

achieve peace in Palestine and the region, through launching a number of initiatives, including that of Bahrain to hold an international conference for peace in the Middle East.

Al-Saeedi also mentioned Saudi Arabia's effort to launch the international alliance to implement the two-state solution last September, in cooperation with Norway and the European Union (EU).

The Kuwaiti diplomat also underlined the mediation of Qatar, Egypt and the US for ceasefire and delivery of humanitarian aid in Gaza.

Iraq vows

Continued from Page 1

He expressed optimism that bilateral meetings will commence before the end of the year, signaling significant progress in the discussions.

Regarding the upcoming "Gulf 26" football tournament, Al-Safi highlighted that extensive preparations are underway.

He noted that arrangements for Iraqi fans' entry are being coordinated through the Gulf Federation and the Kuwaiti and Iraqi Football Associations, expressing confidence in a successful event with strong audience turnout.

It is worth noting that the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council, in its concluding statement from the Kuwait-hosted summit, reiterated the importance of Iraq respecting Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as adhering to bilateral and international agreements, including UN Security Council Resolution No. (833) concerning the demarcation of land and maritime borders between Kuwait and Iraq.

'Humanitarian

Continued from Page 1

He reiterated the State of Kuwait's support of the Palestinian and Lebanese people and called on the international community to intensify its humanitarian support and hold those responsible to war crimes against the innocent peoples of both nations.

Sheikh Jarrah indicated that the root problems and important issues must be addressed through peaceful means be it climate change or economic justice, stressing that investing in sustainable solutions would lessen conflicts, create stability, and boost development.

The Kuwaiti official lauded UN and Secretary General Antonio Guterres for boosting international humanitarian efforts and supporting workers within this vital sector who carry out their tasks

under dangerous circumstances, sacrificing themselves for the betterment of others.

In her speech, Joyce Msuya -- Assistant Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator -- commended the State of Kuwait for its humanitarian efforts, stating, "Not only has Kuwait consistently ranked among the top donors of international assistance, but it has also placed itself at the center of efforts to broker peace in the region."

"As this year's Global Humanitarian Overview makes painstakingly clear, the world is gripped by one of the worst humanitarian crises of the modern era," indicated Msuya.

After 2024 was one of the most violent years in human history, the outlook for 2025 might be grimmer with the increase of conflicts and natural disasters both problems manmade and naturally occurring due to climate change, she added.

Internal debate over health of party comes at critical moment

Dems still don't agree on seriousness of political problem after election defeat

NEW YORK, Dec 4, (AP): Nearly a month after a devastating election loss that exposed cracks in the very foundation of their party, Democrats remain deeply divided over the extent of their political problem - or even if they have one.

million cast nationwide. "The glass is half full. It was close. If we get another 2% or 3% of American voters, it would have successfully led to victories from the presidency on down," says Colorado Gov. Jared Polis, who is leading a group called Governors Safeguarding Democracy.



Ben Wikler, chair of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin, waves to the crowd at a campaign event on Nov 1 in Little Chute, Wis. (AP)

the federal departments of health, education and justice, and major import tariffs that threaten to strain the U.S. economy and international alliances alike.

Democrats, even diminished and divided, stand as the only organized resistance to Trump and his emboldened MAGA allies. But for now, at least, the Democratic Party has no leader and no

agreement on the political problems that need to be fixed or how to fix them. Many Democratic groups and leaders are working through post-election analyses to better understand what went wrong on Nov. 5, but few are working together. And already, some fear that the disparate post mortems will produce competing recommendations likely to be lost in a rush to leave the pain of 2024 behind.

party's far-left wing, which is often ignored by establishment Democrats who control the party's messaging, strategy and policy platform. Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders irked some party leaders the day after the election with a scathing critique: "It should come as no great surprise that a Democratic Party which has abandoned working class people would find that the working class has abandoned them."



The Capitol is seen in the reflecting pool as lawmakers work into the evening in Washington on Sept 23. (AP)

UN aid chief vows to prioritize spending as funding for world's crises shrinks

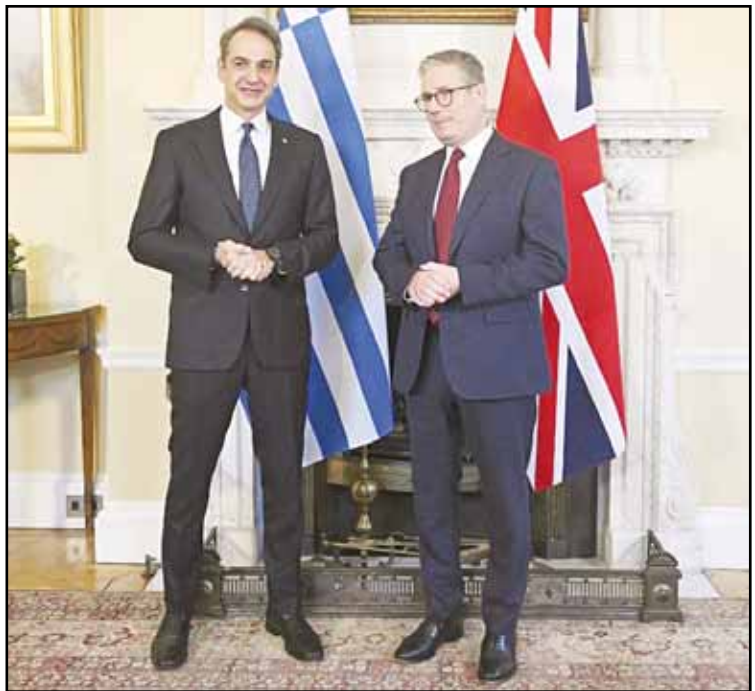
GENEVA, Dec 4, (AP): The new head of the UN humanitarian aid agency says it will be "ruthless" when prioritizing how to spend money, a nod to challenges in fundraising for civilians in war zones like Gaza, Sudan, Syria and Ukraine.

million worldwide need help. "The world is on fire, and this is how we put it out," he told reporters on Tuesday. The office and many other aid groups, including the international Red Cross, have seen donations shrink in recent years for longtime trouble spots like Syria, South Sudan, the Middle East and Congo and newer ones like Ukraine and Sudan.

Such funds go to U.N. agencies and more than 1,500 partner organizations. The biggest asks for 2025 are for Syria - a total of \$8.7 billion for needs both within the country and for neighbors that have taken in Syrian refugees - as well as Sudan at a total of \$6 billion, the "Occupied Palestinian Territory" at \$4 billion, Ukraine at about \$3.3 billion and Congo at nearly \$3.2 billion.



Tom Fletcher, under-secretary-general for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, attends a press conference at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland on Dec 3. (AP)



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer, (right), and Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, (left), pose for a photograph ahead of their meeting inside of 10 Downing Street in London, England on Dec 3. (AP)

UK's Starmer hosts Greece premier

LONDON, Dec 4, (AP): Greece's prime minister visited London on Tuesday for his first top-level U.K. meeting since a spat last year over the contested Parthenon Marbles, as the British Museum said talks with Greece on a deal over the antiquities are constructive.

Trump, GOP senators plan agenda for first 30 days

WASHINGTON, Dec 4, (AP): US President-elect Donald Trump dialed in to what was described as a "love fest" Tuesday with Senate Republicans as they begin laying the groundwork for control of government in the new year, and a potential first-30-days agenda.

Republicans want to notch an early accomplishment in the first 30 days after Trump's inauguration Jan. 20. Incoming Senate Republican leader John Thune of South Dakota outlined a potential roadmap ahead during the private retreat at the Library of Congress.

Trump's choice of Fox News anchor Pete Hegseth as defense secretary and hard-right FBI critic Kash Patel to lead the Federal Bureau of Investigation face potentially difficult confirmation hearings ahead. Hegseth, who met with senators late into Monday evening, was on Capitol Hill for a second day Tuesday.



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau rises during question period in the House of Commons on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Ontario, on Dec 3. (AP)

Trump jokes Canada could become 51st state, says Canadian Minister LeBlanc

TORONTO, Dec 4, (AP): US President-elect Donald Trump was joking when he suggested Canada become the 51st US state during a dinner with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, a Canadian minister who attended their recent dinner said Tuesday.

Earlier last week, the Republican president-elect threatened to impose a 25% tax on all products entering the US from Canada and Mexico unless they stem the flow of migrants and drugs. Trudeau requested the meeting in a bid to avoid the tariffs by convincing Trump that the northern border is nothing like the US southern border with Mexico.

Trudeau held a rare meeting with opposition leaders on Tuesday about U.S.-Canada relations and later said that opposition Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre shouldn't amplify the erroneous narratives that Americans are saying about the border.

Europe Pope Francis met Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban at the Vatican on Wednesday and discussed with him the war in Ukraine, focusing on the humanitarian situation and efforts to promote peace in the region.

35,000 Ukrainian refugees who remained in Hungary. Nearly 2.5 million refugees entered the eastern European country early on in Russia's invasion of Ukraine. (AP)

mandate ended. An Schoonjans, a spokesperson for the Brussels prosecutor general's office, told The Associated Press that an investigation was opened on former EU Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders in relation to "possible money laundering practices."

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| | SAUDI | - TASI | +0.60 | 11,886.86 | | | | | |
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Business

'Participation aligns with bank's ongoing efforts to foster a secure digital society'

Kuwait Finance House honored by First Deputy Prime Minister for supporting Hackathon Kuwait and youth empowerment

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, honored Kuwait Finance House (KFH) for its role as the strategic sponsor of Hackathon Kuwait 2024, a challenge organized by the National Cyber Security Center in cooperation with CODED Academy. Al-Yousef presented an honorary shield to KFH Acting Group Chief Executive Officer, Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood.

His Excellency Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef commended the sponsors and organizers of the Hackathon, expressing gratitude for their contribution to the challenge's success and the empowerment of national competencies.

During the closing ceremony, attended by Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Alomar and Acting Head of the National Cyber Security Center Dima Al-Sumait, he emphasized that cybersecurity has become a fundamental pillar for societal stability and the protection of individual and institutional data. He added that



Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood receives the honorary shield from Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah.

such events aren't just competitions; they drive creative thinking and innovation. Al Rushood said that KFH participated in the first Hackathon Kuwait to empower

AI Rushood:

Nurturing Young Innovators for a Safer Digital World

Kuwaiti youth and maximize their cybersecurity potential. This participation aligns with KFH's ongoing efforts to foster a secure digital society, enabling its members to enjoy the latest and best digital services and products.

He commended the innovative initiatives presented by young Kuwaiti participants in cybersecurity. The Hackathon was marked by intense competition, with winning teams demonstrating exceptional ingenuity in developing numerous solutions.

Al Rushood expressed its gratitude for the presence and participation of His Excellency Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef at the closing ceremony. His Excellency's presence underscores his keen interest in this important endeavor and his commitment to

empowering youth and enhancing national capabilities.

Al Rushood highlighted KFH's strong commitment to cybersecurity standards and customer data protection, recognizing its crucial role in digital advancement. KFH is committed to safeguarding the security of all digital products and services, actively educating customers, employees, and the public about e-fraud prevention through training programs and targeted awareness campaigns.

Al Rushood emphasized KFH's key role in the "Diraya" campaign, a CBK and KBA initiative to educate customers about their banking rights and responsibilities.

It's worth noting that the strategic partnership between KFH and CODED, initiated in 2018, underscores the bank's commitment to fostering innovation, driving digital transformation, supporting youth initiatives, and cultivating a generation of future leaders. This strategic partnership focuses on technological applications, programming, and other digital tools, the language of the present and future.

Figures represent a significant leap compared to previous years

CITRA achieves record-breaking revenues during first half of current fiscal year

By Mohammed Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) has announced record-breaking revenues exceeding KD 75 million during the first half of the 2024/2025 fiscal year from April to September.

It reported that revenues for the same period in the previous fiscal year of 2023/2024 amounted to KD 69 million, compared to KD 59 million in 2022/2023 and KD 47 million in 2021/2022.

According to informed sources, CITRA is targeting total revenues exceeding KD 121.5 million for the current fiscal year, based on budget forecasts.

This includes over KD 60 million from issuing and

renewing licenses and permits, and more than KD 26 million from leasing international circuits and internet services via submarine and land cables, and interconnections.

These figures represent a significant leap compared to previous years, underscoring the substantial growth in financial performance in recent years.

The sources affirmed that the authority's financial perfor-

mance has seen remarkable improvements, reflecting rapid growth.

They said CITRA, under the leadership of Chair of the Board of Directors Abdullah Al-Ajmi, is committed to continuously enhancing its financial resources and expanding services that keep pace with market demands for contributing to the national economy and strengthening the state treasury.

Kuwait's PMI hits 55.9 in November 2024, reflecting strong growth in non-oil sector

Purchasing activity & input stocks grew at the fastest pace

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Kuwait's Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for November 2024 rose to 55.9 points, up from 52.7 points in October, signaling continued improvement in non-oil business conditions for the third consecutive month, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to a study from S&P Global, this increase marks the strongest improvement in operating conditions since the survey began in July 2020, following the easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

The non-oil private sector experienced a rapid

pickup in business activity, primarily driven by a significant rise in new orders.

The purchasing activity and input stocks grew at the fastest pace on record and firms increased employment at the highest rate since the survey started in September 2018, matching the pace set in June.

The increase in new business was attributed to competitive pricing and effective advertising, with the pace of growth accelerating to the second-fastest rate since the survey's inception in 2018, following the peak in July 2020.

The business activity also showed strong results, with sales rising rapidly. Some companies mentioned that extended working hours were contributing to boosting activity.

Non-oil production has been rising for 22 consecutive months and the hiring of additional staff helped to meet increased workloads.

The job creation rate was the highest on record, matching the pace seen in June. Despite higher hiring, companies continued to experience a backlog of work, driven by the surge in new orders.

To manage the increased demand, firms ramped up their purchasing activity, with purchases of inputs rising at the fastest rate ever recorded in the survey.

However, the higher hiring levels and the push to meet demand led to an acceleration of inflation to a four-month high, with companies paying for overtime, contributing to higher hiring costs.

To be held for the first time in Kuwait

stc signs as platinum sponsor of NEXUS event in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced that it has signed as a platinum sponsor of the NEXUS- Technology, Innovation, and Startup Event, set to take place from December 5th - 7th, 2024, at The Arena, 360 Mall in Kuwait. The sponsorship comes under stc's comprehensive corporate social responsibility program, with a focus on supporting local entrepreneurs and start-ups, as well as empowering the younger generation. The event will be held under the patronage of His Excellency the Minister of State for Communications, Mr. Omar Saud Abdulaziz Al-Omar, and will gather over 60 leading companies, startups and experts to showcase the latest cutting-edge advancements in technology and innovation.

As a platinum sponsor of the event, stc aims to enhance its role in promoting technological growth and innovation in line with its ongoing strategy to enable digital transformation in Kuwait. The event will feature interactive exhibitions, conferences, and workshops on the latest developments and trends in sectors such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, fintech, and health tech. Through informative sessions, NEXUS will also serve as a platform for experts to share their views and opinions on various aspects related to the industry, while providing students with key information regarding some of the advanced technological solutions available in today's evolving digital world.

Through its participation, stc will have a dedicated booth at the event where it will showcase its latest innovations, cutting-edge technologies, and customer-centric solutions, highlighting its role as a leader in digital transformation. Attendees visiting the booth will have the opportunity to interact with stc's experts and learn more about the Company's strategic initiatives that aim to bridge the gap between technology and daily life.

Participation of stc's subsidiaries, solutions by stc and e-Portal solutions by stc, the specialized business arm of Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, will be showcasing its latest networking and connectivity solutions as part of its participation. This includes presenting smart solutions designed to support SMEs through its Maktabi bundled solutions, which offers flexible and cost-effective packages.

The packages enable startup owners to select from a range of services, including fixed and mobile internet, network solutions, interactive screens, and surveillance cameras to meet the comprehensive security needs within the workplace. Solutions by stc will also be highlighting its advanced cloud-management solutions through Modar, a solution that addresses all business requirements through secure network connectivity. This platform aims to enhance the customer experience with IT solutions through a centralized management system using Modar, along with high-quality wireless communication services. During the event, the connectivity team from solutions by stc will host daily workshops to demonstrate and discuss Modar and Maktabi in addition to a sharing valuable insights on different solutions. Additionally, stc will be participating



A flyer of the NEXUS event

in several discussions and workshops led by industry specialists to educate and inform attendees about emerging trends in telecom and ICT fields. These sessions will provide insights and practical knowledge, catering to a diverse audience ranging from students to industry professionals. One of the panel discussions will focus on the InspireU business accelerator and will feature the winners of the first season, participants of the second season, as well as the attendance of officials from the business accelerator program in Saudi Arabia.

The event will also feature the highly anticipated NEXUS Startup Challenge, where 100 startups will compete for a total prize pool of KD 30,000. The competition offers entrepreneurs a valuable opportunity to showcase their innovative ideas in front of over 30,000 attendees, gain exposure from a diverse audience of industry professionals, and connect with potential investors. A committee of 5 experts will shortlist the finalists, in which the first place winner will receive a KD 10,000 cash prize, second place will receive KD 7,500, third place will receive KD 5,000 and the 4th-6th winners will receive KD 2,500 each.

stc highlighted in a statement that its sponsorship in the event reflects its ongoing commitment to enable digital transformation and educate the community on the latest advancements in technology and innovation. The Company actively sponsors and participates in initiatives that promote development and knowledge in the community through sharing expert opinions and key sector insights. Additionally, the Company highlighted its advocacy role in supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Kuwait, as well as platforms that aim to educate the younger generation.

As an advocate for SMEs and entrepreneurs, stc has introduced a range of products and services that cater to this growing market in Kuwait, whether directly or through its subsidiaries. The Company has introduced and sponsored various platforms that support this segment in enhancing their operations through efficiency and digital transformation. stc also provided opportunities for business owners within this segment to grow their operations through value adding experiences and different forms of support, in line with the Company's strategic approach to empowering the younger generation and the startup ecosystem in Kuwait.

To find out more about stc's sponsorships, promotions, and events, follow stc's official social media platforms, visit one of stc's branches, download mystic mobile application, visit www.stc.com.kw or contact the customer service center by dialing 102 for around the clock assistance.

Kuwait's trade surplus dives 4.7 percent Y-on-Y during 1st seven months of 2024

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Kuwait's trade surplus decreased by 4.7 percent year-on-year during the first seven months of 2024, reaching 7.54 billion dinars (\$24.58 billion) compared to 7.91 billion dinars (\$25.79 billion) during the same period of 2023.

According to data from the Central Administration of Statistics, the surplus in July 2024 also saw a slight decline of 0.2 percent, falling to 1.092 billion dinars, compared to 1.094 billion dinars in July 2023.

The drop in the trade surplus for the first seven months of 2024 was largely attributed to a 4.08 percent decrease in Kuwaiti exports, which amounted to 14.10 billion dinars, down from 14.70 billion dinars in the same period

last year.

Meanwhile, imports totaled 6.56 billion dinars, reflecting a 3.39 percent decline from the 6.79 billion dinars recorded in 2023.

The overall volume of trade exchange during this period was 20.65 billion dinars, down 3.91 percent from the 21.49 billion dinars in the first seven months of 2023.

On a monthly basis, Kuwait's trade surplus in July 2024 decreased by 0.21 percent to 1.09 billion dinars.

This was despite a 2.95 percent increase in exports to 2.11 billion dinars, which was offset by a 6.13 percent rise in imports to 1.02 billion dinars.

The total trade exchange for July amounted to dinars 3.13 billion, up by 3.99 percent from 3.01 billion dinars in July 2023.

The primary drivers of exports in July were

fuel and lubricating oil, which accounted for 93.5 percent of the month's exports, valued at 1.92 billion dinars.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's imports were predominantly industrial supplies, which made up 23.2 percent of the imports, valued at 222.3 million dinars.

Notably, the UAE was the leading destination for Kuwaiti exports in July, receiving 33.9 million dinars worth of goods, followed by China (31 million dinars), India (29.9 million dinars), Iraq (28.1 million dinars) and Saudi Arabia (23.6 million dinars).

On the import side, China was the top supplier, with 188.4 million dinars worth of goods, followed by France (85.8 million dinars), the UAE (83.6 million dinars) and the United States (82.4 million dinars).

Renewed deposit underscores continued Gulf support for Cairo

Kuwait renews \$2 bln deposit with Egypt amid regional financial support dynamics

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The Central Bank of Egypt's report on the "External Position of the Egyptian Economy" has revealed that Kuwait has renewed a \$2 billion deposit for an additional year, extending the repayment deadline from April 2024 to April 2025, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Another tranche of \$2 billion remains due in September 2024, but the report did not specify whether this tranche has been renewed or paid.

The report highlights Egypt's upcoming financial obligations, including \$22.4 billion in

installments and interest payments on debts due over the next year.

By the end of June 2024, Egypt had repaid \$5.652 billion of medium- and long-term Emirati deposits, reflecting efforts to manage its external debts.

The total Gulf deposits held by Egypt's Central Bank decreased from \$14.9 billion in March to \$9.3 billion by the end of June. These deposits are now divided between Saudi Arabia (\$5.3 billion) and Kuwait (\$4 billion), after the repayment of Emirati deposits.

Egypt's financial ties with Gulf states extend beyond deposits. In February 2024, Egypt entered an agreement with the UAE to develop the Ras El-Hikma city on the Mediterranean Sea, a project valued at \$35 billion.

The deal also includes converting \$11 billion of Egypt's debt to the UAE into investments, showcasing a strategic approach to addressing financial obligations through development and investment partnerships.

This renewed Kuwaiti deposit underscores continued Gulf support for Egypt amid its ongoing economic reforms and financial challenges.

Markaz unveils key investment trends and opportunities in its annual 'Markaz 2025 Outlook' seminar

With the participation of leading financial sector experts from US and Europe



Ali H. Khalil, Markaz's CEO shares his welcome address.



Mr. Diraal Alghanim, Chairman at Markaz, and Mr. Ali Khalil, Markaz's CEO, and Mr. Abdullatif Al-Nusif, MD at Wealth Management and Business at Markaz, presenting a trophy to Mr. Ghanim Alghunaiman.



Deena AlRefai, EVP, Wealth Management and Business Development at Markaz.



Sheikh Humoud Salah Al Sabah, VP, Investment Advisory at Markaz speaking about the private markets.



Presentation on GCC markets by Mohammad Alsumaia, AVP, Wealth Management and Business Development at Markaz.



Presentation on the global economic landscape by Giovanni Leonardo, CFA, Head of Investment Management, Schroders and Executive Board Member, Schroders & Co Bank.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Reaffirming its leadership in asset management and investment banking in the region, Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" organized its annual seminar titled "Markaz 2025 Outlook: Investment Trends and Opportunities". The event took place on December 4, at the Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait, featuring insights from Markaz experts alongside leading financial experts from the United States and Europe. They presented the latest trends across various sectors and shaped perspectives on opportunities in both regional and global markets. Celebrating 50 years of industry leadership in 2024, the event reflected Markaz's legacy of delivering innovative financial solutions, empowering investors with insights, and guiding them throughout their investment journey.

The event included panel discussions on GCC equity markets, the real estate sector, fixed income, private credit, and related investment opportunities. Attendees also benefited from presentations covering overviews on global and regional markets, private markets, and the role of investment banking in enabling value creation in the market.

While the discussions were led by experts from renowned global institutions, the event highlighted Markaz's commitment to supporting investors with the tools and guidance they need to navigate complex investment landscapes confidently, backed by the expertise of a trusted partner.

Ali H. Khalil, CEO of Markaz, remarked, "Our annual outlook seminar reflects our commitment as a partner in wealth creation to supporting investors amidst the ever-changing financial and economic landscape and keeping them informed of market developments. The participation of Markaz experts and renowned global financial leaders facilitates the delivery of strategic insights and in-depth perspectives to identify emerging investment opportunities and provide our clients with access to these opportunities through Markaz. Over the past 50 years, we have adopted balanced risk-return investment strategies and research-driven decision-making approach, driven by the expertise of our dedicated team, to create innovative investment solutions. We look forward to offering more opportunities that meet our clients' investment objectives in 2025."

Abdullatif Al Nusif, Managing Director, Wealth Management and Business Development at Markaz, stated, "At Markaz, our clients are the cornerstone of everything we do. By providing timely insights and actionable strategies, we help them seize valuable opportunities. We are dedicated to understanding their unique goals and delivering bespoke solutions that align with their aspirations. As their trusted partner in wealth creation, we leverage our advisory expertise to provide tailored professional guidance and focus on building enduring relationships through innovation and expertise."

Global Market Overview

The seminar featured a presentation by Mr. Giovanni Leonardo, CFA, Head of Investment Management and Executive Board Member at Schroder & Co Bank AG, titled "Market Overview: Global economic landscape". He provided attendees with insights into anticipated economic trends and policy shifts for 2025 and shed light on critical factors, including interest rates, geopolitical challenges, valuations and technology trends.

GCC Markets Perspective

Mr. Mohammad F. Alsumaia, Assistant Vice President of Wealth Management and Business Development at Markaz, shared insights on the GCC markets, emphasizing the key drivers of regional growth in 2025 and the factors that position GCC countries as attractive investment destinations. These drivers include robust economic growth rates, a strategic focus on economic diversification, a young and dynamic demographic profile, and the stability of the region's banking sector, currencies, and financial reserves.

The first panel discussion, titled "GCC Markets Out-

look 2025: Real Estate, Equities, and Fixed Income" explored key trends in the GCC markets, with key focus on equities, real estate and fixed income sectors, highlighting the outlook and the emerging opportunities.

Mr. Fahad S. Al-Rushaid, Senior Vice President of MENA Equities at Markaz, shed light on the GCC markets, stating: "We have a positive outlook for the stock markets, given the clarity on interest rates and controlled inflation levels. In the region, we expect continued economic growth in most GCC markets, with Saudi Arabia experiencing a boom that began in previous years. Banks are currently achieving double-digit growth in their lending portfolios, which is a very important indicator for the markets. The UAE economy is expected to grow by over 3.5%. We have also seen several IPO announcements in Saudi Arabia and the GCC, adding more depth to the markets and allowing us to be more selective in stock picking. Our investment strategies aim to capitalize on the positive performance of the region's markets to deliver solid distributions with risk-adjusted returns."

Ms. Rasha Othman, Executive Vice President of Investment Banking (Fixed Income & Capital Markets) at Markaz, said: "Fixed income typically depends on two key factors – interest rates and economic growth which in turn affects the credit risk of bonds. We expect a slower pace of interest rate cuts, which will positively impact

fixed income. We have also seen an upgrade in the credit ratings of Saudi Arabia and Oman, and we expect continued economic growth. Under these conditions, active management of investments is crucial. We focus on the medium-term for bonds with strong credit ratings and aim to seize the right opportunities to meet investors' needs."

Commenting on the real estate sector in the region, Mr. Khaled Ahmed Al-Mubarak, Senior Vice President of Real Estate Investment for MENA at Markaz, said: "There are several factors that will reshape the real estate sector in 2025, including the mortgage law, the real estate developer law, land taxation, and private housing regulations. These factors will influence supply and demand trends. We expect the investment and commercial sectors to grow, while the residential sector will continue to experience correction. Companies will benefit from the BOT projects launched by the government, and individuals can capitalize on the rising demand in both the investment and commercial sectors. At Markaz, we are focused on seizing these opportunities for the benefit of investors, and on providing advisory services that align with their investment goals."

Private Markets and Credit Trends and Opportunities

Sheikh Humoud Salah Al Sabah, Vice President of Investment Advisory at Markaz, delivered a presentation titled "Opportunities in Private Markets" emphasizing

key factors driving growth in this segment. He pointed out that Markaz is a pioneer in the private markets sector and has a long history of providing innovative solutions in this sector.

Another session, "Assessing Risk, Opportunities, and Returns in Private Credit," featured an esteemed panel of industry leaders to explore the strategies to navigate risks and maximize returns in private credit markets.

Mr. Lawrence Golub, Chief Executive Officer at Golub Capital stated: "One of the ways to control risk in direct lending is to run a strong business with sustainable competitive advantages that enable you to deliver consistent premium returns over long periods of time. We have built our business over 30 years to incorporate these competitive advantages that make the private equity firms and companies that want to borrow from us willing to work with us in a way where we can have great selectivity and pick companies that have greater resiliency in all market environments."

In addition, Mr. Jean Christophe Rey, Head of International Private Credit Strategy at BlackRock EMEA highlighted: "We believe market forces, technology, and regulation are consistently moving financial activity to where it can be done most efficiently, making private credit a structural growth segment. BlackRock expects the private debt market will more than double to \$4.5 trillion by 2030. The duration, returns, and yield characteristics of private credit match the needs of clients with long-dated capital, including insurance companies, pensions, sovereign wealth funds, wealth managers, and other qualified investors saving for retirement."

Commenting on his participation, Mr. Joost de Pauw, Partner of European Direct Lending at Ares Management said: "I was very pleased to take part in the panel discussion about private credit at Markaz's 2025 Outlook seminar. There is continued interest in the private credit asset class, and it was enjoyable to discuss the current state and attractive outlook of the European Direct Lending market."

Reflecting Markaz's strategy, Sheikh Humoud Salah Al Sabah emphasized the importance of manager selection and diversification to successfully navigate market cycles. The panel was moderated by Mr. Kashish Tandon, Executive Vice President of Investment Advisory at Markaz, and his key takeaway for investors is: "Private credit will always play an important role as core allocation in a well-diversified investment portfolio and will continue to offer durable premium over traditional fixed income."

Investment Banking Insights

In the realm of investment banking at Markaz, Ms. Fay Al-Bader, Assistant Manager of Investment Banking (Advisory and M&A) at Markaz, and Ms. Wadha Al Hajraf, Analyst of Investment Banking (Capital Markets) at Markaz, delivered a presentation titled "Enabling Value Creation and Regional Prosperity", highlighting the roles of governments, the private sector, individuals, and international investors in fostering a robust financial ecosystem. They also emphasized the strategic role that investment banking institutions play in driving development and growth within the financial sector.

Expertise and legacy over 50 years

The seminar highlighted Markaz's pivotal role in supporting businesses by providing tailored financial solutions to help them build a foundation for sustainable growth. With a focus on key solutions essential for the investment journey, Markaz showcased offerings that are designed to address every stage of wealth creation. The event also reinforced Markaz's strategic direction for 2025, anchored in its 50-year legacy of trust, reliability, and expertise. The "Markaz Outlook for 2025" conference serves as a key platform for knowledge exchange within the financial community, fostering the sharing of expertise, insights, and anticipated opportunities. This reinforces Markaz's role as the partner in wealth creation.



Markaz 2025 Outlook seminar attendees.



Fay Al-Bader, Assistant Manager, and Wadha Al Hajraf, Analyst, in the Investment Banking department at Markaz presenting their views on enabling value creation and regional prosperity.



From Left: Deena AlRefai, Khaled Al-Mubarak, Fahad Al-Rushaid and Rasha Othman, on the panel discussion on the 2025 outlook of the GCC markets, focused on real estate, equities, and fixed income.



International industry experts from Golub, BlackRock, and Ares Management speaking on the panel discussing risks, opportunities and returns in private credit.

Partnership between Zain, Nestlé, and INJAZ to foster sustainable entrepreneurship

Sustainability Heroes initiative kicked-off to develop Kuwaiti youth skills

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Zain has announced a partnership with Nestlé Kuwait, INJAZ Al-Arab, and INJAZ Kuwait to kick-off the Sustainability Heroes initiative. The program aims to empower Kuwaiti youth and university students to excel in the field of entrepreneurship, with a focus on addressing social and environmental challenges to create a sustainable future.

The partnership was announced during a press conference held at Zain's headquarters in Shuwaikh, attended by Waleed Al-Khashti, Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer at Zain Kuwait; Salam Abdel Baki, General Manager of Nestlé Kuwait; Laila Al Mutairi, CEO of INJAZ Kuwait; and senior executives and teams from all three partners.

The Sustainability Heroes initiative will enable 200 university students to acquire essential knowledge and skills for success in entrepreneurship, with a focus on sustainable ventures. The program offers youth unique opportunities to explore innovative solutions to pressing environmental and social challenges.

The initiative is being launched in line with the Company Program, organized by INJAZ to empower aspiring Kuwaiti youth. Zain has supported this competition annually as part of its nearly two-decade-long strategic partnership with INJAZ, dating back to the association's inception in 2005.

Over the years, Zain has supported various academic and training initiatives led by INJAZ, investing in the potential and creativity of Kuwaiti youth, helping them pursue their ambitions in entrepreneurship, and equipping them with the skills needed to thrive in the job market.

Commenting on the partnership, Waleed Al-Khashti said: "Our long-term partnership with INJAZ continues to bring tangible outcomes each year through innovative programs and initiatives that achieve our shared vision of empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs and investing in the talents and creativity of Kuwaiti youth, who consistently demonstrate



Group picture of officials from the three companies.



Waleed Al-Khashti, Laila Al-Mutairi, and Salam Abdel Baki at the press conference.

Waleed Al-Khashti:

"This partnership fulfills our shared vision of empowering the next generation of Kuwaiti entrepreneurs, and we look forward to sharing our passion for digital innovation with the participants"

Salam Abdel Baki:

"Nestlé is committed to helping young people develop the skills necessary for fulfilling careers or to start their own businesses."

Laila Hilal Al-Mutairi:

"Fostering sustainable entrepreneurship is a main goal of this initiative, which enables students to find innovative solutions that address environmental and social challenges."

excellence in all fields."

He added: "Today, we welcome Nestlé to this partnership—a step that will undoubtedly open new doors and opportunities for ambitious Kuwaiti youth to gain firsthand experience and

skills from our pioneering expertise in technology and nutrition. Together, we will show participants how we harness innovation to drive sustainable growth, and we look forward to nurturing their talents and sharing our passion for digital innovation throughout the pro-

gram."

Salam Abdel Baki said: "We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our partners for their invaluable support of Sustainability Heroes, which falls under our Nestlé Needs Youth initiative. This program is vital for empowering lo-

cal youth and nurturing Kuwaiti talent, demonstrating Nestlé's commitment to helping young people develop the skills necessary for fulfilling careers or to start their own businesses."

Laila Hilal Al Mutairi, CEO of INJAZ Kuwait, stated: "One of the main objectives of this initiative is to foster sustainable entrepreneurship. This initiative enables students to explore innovative solutions that address environmental and social challenges within our community, through their participation in the INJAZ Company Program, which equips students with the necessary skills to establish successful business. This ensures a more sustainable future for upcoming generations, drives economic growth, and creates future job opportunities."

As part of this partnership, the Sustainability Heroes initiative by Nestlé and the Company Program competition by INJAZ will transform classrooms into platforms for launching startups. Students will develop entrepreneurial and business management skills while gaining insights from experienced business leaders from Zain, Nestlé, and INJAZ. Participants will also receive tailored training and men-

torship from Nestlé teams.

The annual Company Program competition equips students with a hands-on experience in establishing and managing their startups. Throughout the competition, expert volunteers from various private-sector institutions in Kuwait train participating students on fundamental business skills.

Through these real-world experiences and mentorship opportunities, students acquire critical management skills and tools for building successful ventures, enhancing their qualifications for the job market. Participants will also benefit from interview sessions for internship opportunities at Nestlé Kuwait and Zain, providing them with real-life exposure to dynamic work environments.

Through this partnership, Zain seeks to empower youth passionate about developing their ideas and projects into reality. This is achieved through year-round training programs, including the Company Program competition and Sustainability Heroes, continually striving to provide an inspiring environment for youth creativity and innovation in Kuwait.

The participation underscores the bank's responsible role in supporting global efforts to combat desertification

NBK attends COP16 of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) participated in the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) that took place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from 2 to 13 December 2024, to discuss global efforts to combat desertification and land degradation.

NBK's participation in this key event underscores its commitment to supporting global efforts to find urgent solutions for desertification, land degradation and drought.

COP16 is the largest-ever meeting of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), with an action-packed agenda to drive multilateral action on land degradation, drought and desertification. Dignitaries, policymakers, global institutions, businesses, NGOs and key stakeholders are arriving in Saudi Arabia's capital ahead of a critical conference to accelerate global land restoration and drought resilience initiatives.

Bolstering global drought resilience is a focal point of COP16Riyadh, as it hosted the high-level One Water Summit to address global water scarcity and water challenges, as well as to enhance global water governance.

COP16 represents a game-changer, marking a renewed global commitment to accelerate investment and action to restore land and boost drought resilience for the benefit of people and planet.

The UNCCD COP16 involves a number of high-profile summits, ministerial dialogues, and announcements to address the pressing challenges associated with land degradation and drought, accelerate international action on drought resilience, and ensure a more cohesive and proactive global approach



NBK Tower

to tackling drought.

COP16 in Riyadh is the first UNCCD conference to be held in the Mid-

dle East region, the first to feature a Green Zone and the largest multilateral conference ever hosted by Saudi Arabia. According to the UNCCD, land degradation affects nearly 40% of the planet and impacts the lives of over 3.2 billion people. Every year 100 million hectares of land are degraded, with drought frequency and intensity has increasing by nearly a third since 2000.

NBK's participation in this pivotal global event, as well as its recent participation in the 29th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29), held in Baku, Azerbaijan, underscore its commitment to promoting unified action across both the public and private sectors to effectively combat climate change and desertification.

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

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

Asian stocks slide, Kospi down 1.4% as South Korea's political drama settles

Shares of Samsung Electronics fell 1.1%

HONG KONG, Dec 4, (AP): Asian markets retreated Wednesday after overnight political drama in South Korea added to regional uncertainties, though the Kospi in Seoul fell less than 2%.

U.S. futures and oil prices rose. South Korea President Yoon Suk Yeol was facing possible impeachment after he suddenly declared martial law on Tuesday night, prompting troops to surround the parliament. Yoon accused pro-North Korean forces of plotting to overthrow one of the world's most vibrant democracies. The martial law declaration was revoked about six hours later.

On Wednesday, South Korea's main opposition party called for President Yoon to resign immediately or face impeachment.

Yoon's move initially caused the won to plummet to a two-year low against the U.S. dollar, with losses of up to 2%, the sharpest one-day drop since the market's seismic reaction to Donald Trump's 2016 election victory. The won recovered some of those losses on Wednesday. The dollar was trading at 1,409.87 won, down from Tuesday's peak at 1,443.40.

South Korea's Kospi closed 1.4% lower to 2,464.00. Shares of Samsung Electronics, the country's biggest company, fell 1.1%. Meanwhile, the country's financial regulator said they were prepared to deploy 10 trillion won (\$7.07 billion) into a stock market stabilization fund at any time, the Yonhap news agency reported.

Elsewhere in the region, in a further step toward an outright trade war, China announced Tuesday it was banning exports to the United States of gallium, germanium, antimony, and other key high-tech materials with potential military applications. Beijing took the measure after the U.S. expanded its list of Chinese companies



A currency trader passes by a screen showing the Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI), left, and the foreign exchange rate between U.S. dollar and South Korean won at the foreign exchange dealing room of the KEB Hana Bank headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2024. (AP)

subject to export controls on computer chip-making equipment, software, and high-bandwidth memory chips.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng dipped 0.2% to 19,713.02, while the Shanghai Composite was down 0.7% to 3,356.80.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 rose 0.1% to 39,276.39. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 dropped 0.4% to 8,462.60.

On Tuesday, U.S. stocks tipped to more records, tacking a touch more onto what's already been a stellar year.

The S&P 500 edged up less than 0.1% to 6,049.88, setting an all-time high for the 55th time this year. The Dow Jones Industrial Average slipped 0.2% to 44,705.53, while the Nasdaq composite added 0.4% to 19,480.91, hitting its own record set a day earlier.

Treasury yields held relatively steady after a report showed U.S. employers were advertising slightly more job openings at the end of October than a month earlier. Continued strength there would raise optimism that the economy could remain out of a recession that many investors had earlier worried was inevitable.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury

rose to 4.23% from 4.20% from late Monday.

Yields have seesawed since Election Day on worries that Trump's preferences for lower tax rates and bigger tariffs could spur higher inflation. But traders are still confident the Federal Reserve will cut its main interest rate again at its next meeting in two weeks.

They're betting on a nearly three-in-four chance of that, according to data from CME Group.

Lower rates can give the economy a lift but also tend to fuel inflation.

A report this week that could guide the Fed's next move will be Friday's jobs report, which will show how many workers U.S. employers hired and fired during November. It could be difficult to parse given how much storms and strikes distorted figures in October.

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude added 20 cents to \$70.14 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, gained 25 cents to \$73.87 a barrel.

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar rose to 150.02 Japanese yen from 149.59 yen. The euro cost \$1.0519, up from \$1.0510.

Regional economic growth forecast to rise from 1.9% to 4% in 2025

GCC economies to accelerate in 2025 despite global headwinds

DUBAI, Dec 4: The GCC economies will more than double their growth rate from 1.9% in 2024 to 4% in 2025, according to the latest ICAEW Economic Insight report prepared by Oxford Economics. This acceleration comes despite the extension of OPEC+ oil production cuts and positions the GCC to significantly outperform global GDP growth, which is projected to increase modestly from 2.7% in 2024 to 2.8% in 2025.

Strong Energy and Non-Energy Sector Performance

The GCC's energy sector is set for a strong rebound in 2025, with growth of 4.2% following the gradual unwinding of oil production cuts. Meanwhile, the non-energy sectors will maintain their robust performance, with consistent expansion near 4% in both 2024 and 2025. Regional PMIs remain firmly in expansionary territory, with Saudi Arabia's PMI reaching a six-month high of 56.9, demonstrating strong business confidence and domestic activity.

UAE: Record Investment and Diversification Success

The UAE economy is set to grow from 3.7% in 2024 to 4.5% in 2025, though non-energy sector growth is expected to moderate slightly from 4.5% to 4.3% due to capacity constraints in key sectors. The country's success in attracting investment is evident in its \$16bn of greenfield foreign direct investments, maintaining its global leadership position in FDI relative to GDP. Tourism continues to drive growth, with Dubai visitor arrivals increasing 6.3% year-on-year in the first nine months of 2024.

Saudi Arabia: Strong Recovery and Transformation

Saudi Arabia's economic growth is projected to accelerate from 1.4% growth in 2024 to 4.4% in 2025, supported by robust non-energy sector expansion of 5.8%. The Kingdom has shown significant recovery, with GDP growing 2.8% year-on-year



Scott Livermore, ICAEW Economic Advisor and Chief Economist and Managing Director at Oxford Economics.



Hanadi Khalife – Head of Middle East

in Q3 2024, following four consecutive quarters of decline. The tourism sector's ambitious \$800bn investment programme over the next 10 years, alongside major events like Expo 2030 and FIFA World Cup 2034, underpins the country's diversification efforts.

Fiscal Position and Monetary Policy

Despite challenges posed by lower oil revenues, the GCC continues to maintain an overall budget surplus, with Qatar and the UAE emerging as leaders in fiscal strength. Saudi Arabia, while anticipating budget deficits, benefits from low government debt levels, ensuring the flexibility needed to pursue strategic investments. The UAE's projected 4.1% budget surplus in 2025 demonstrates its strong fiscal management.

GCC inflation is expected to rise moderately from 1.8% in 2024 to 2.3% in 2025, remaining well-controlled across the region. Following the US Federal Reserve's 75 basis points rate cuts in September and November this year, GCC central banks have mirrored these adjustments, with further reductions likely to boost real estate and private-sector investment.

Hanadi Khalife, Head of Middle East, ICAEW, said:

"The business landscape across the GCC continues to evolve and mature, creating new opportunities for growth and innovation. As professional services advisors, we see firsthand how businesses are adapting to change and investing in their future.

"The role of chartered accountants remains crucial in supporting organisations as they navigate this dynamic environment and pursue sustainable business practices."

Scott Livermore, ICAEW Economic Advisor, and Chief Economist and Managing Director, Oxford Economics Middle East, said:

"The GCC's projected 4% growth in 2025 highlights the success of the region's diversification efforts amid global challenges.

"As the region continues to expand its tourism, real estate and financial sectors, managing capacity constraints in these high-growth sectors, as well as navigating global uncertainties, will be key to sustaining momentum and long-term economic stability."

DJ Gem bags Pinoy Arabia ME DJ Quest 2024 grand prize

Pinoy Arabia Barrio Fiesta 2024 a huge success

By Michelle Fe Santiago

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Pinoy Arabia ME, the leading and only Filipino online radio station and only Filipino social media platform duly licensed in Kuwait by the Kuwait Ministry of Information marked its 10th anniversary on Nov 15, 2024 with "Pinoy Arabia Barrio Fiesta 2024" and awarding of the "DJ Quest 2024" winners at the City Hypermarket in Salmiya. The fun-filled day was a huge success and attended by hundreds of Filipinos including other expatriates of various nationalities.

Now on its 10th year, Pinoy Arabia ME continues to sizzle and conquer the airwaves with its new programs to inform and entertain its over almost half a million organic followers. Broadcasting live from the Ooredoo Tower in Kuwait, Pinoy Arabia ME, since its launch on October 30, 2014 at Marina FM, has generated a sensational following and a great number of listeners not only in Kuwait but in the GCC countries and beyond. Pinoy Arabia ME has carved its niche as a reliable source of information for Overseas Filipinos and a venue of pure entertainment.

The momentous event was graced by Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) Administrator Arnell Ignacio as the Guest of Honour along with Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Jose Cabrera III and Labor Attache Manuel Dimaano. Present also were Consul Alex Vallespin, Vice Consul Jordan Ysabel Morales, Assistant Labor Attaches Cathrine Duladul and Sofia Matote as well as Welfare Officers Genevieve Ardiente and Emmanuel Santiago Diaz. Spotted also were City Hypermarket Kuwait executives namely City Hyper COO Ajay Goel, Operations Manager Nitish Dey, Senior Marketing Executive Riem Elghalban and City Hyper Salmiya Store Manager Allan Salonga and his team.

Ignacio highlighted the vital role played by Pinoy Arabia in disseminating the correct information to the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in Kuwait – a decade of providing pure entertainment and verified news and information to Overseas Filipino Workers in Kuwait, the Middle East and across the globe.

"Congratulations to Pinoy Arabia on its 10th anniversary. Thank you for being OWWA's partner in serving the OFWs in Kuwait. Wishing you more years," quipped Ignacio on stage.

Cabrera also thanked Pinoy Arabia in his speech for supporting the embassy's programs and activities.

"I hope that Pinoy Arabia having survived 10 years, having succeeded after 10 years will continue on this path of success by innovating and making the necessary creative effort

to be able to continue to stand out in the community, not just in Kuwait but in the Middle Eastern region. Once again, congratulations to Pinoy Arabia and we wish many, many more years of success," stated Cabrera.

Dimaano outlined the vital contributions of the media citing Pinoy Arabia's 10 years of public service.

"Mabuhay and congratulations Pinoy Arabia," he stated.

The event with the "Barrio Fiesta" theme commenced with a Christian prayer and Islamic prayer led by Julieciousa and Ustadz Mansour Jaen respectively, showcasing the rich and colorful culture of the Philippines.

The audience was treated to the powerful performances of multi-awarded singing champ Jennifer Uy with prolific composer of Pinoy Arabia jingles Rhondee Quito as they sang the new Pinoy Arabia jingle and the well-applauded surprise duet of Uy and Ignacio. Other performers included Pinoy Arabia's Denzil who serenaded the audience with his OPM acoustics medley; svelte singer Ivy Laughton; Sing Galing champ Jonathan Lobo; Birrit to the Max champ Charvin Molalo and groovy saxophonist Jericho.

There was also the Philippine Embassy Consular and MWO-OWWA Mobile Services for OFWs and free blood pressure and blood sugar test by the Pinoy Ambulance Nurses in Kuwait at the venue.

For the DJ Quest 2024, DJ Gem bagged the grand prize and took home KDI,000 cash and a round-trip to Manila courtesy of Gulf Air. On the other hand, the runners-up were JC Summer (1st runner-up), Mr. O (2nd) and Buddy Jake (3rd). Special awards were given to Christina Morena (Most Promising Social Media Personality and Magic Jigz (Mr. Comical Energy).

The event was filled with games and raffle draw with fabulous prizes at stake such as two round-trip tickets to Manila, cash prizes, electronic items and gift vouchers. As part of its community service, Pinoy Arabia also handed down a donation of KD500 to the Kabayan Cancer Support Group to help Filipino cancer patients in Kuwait.

The Pinoy Arabia Barrio Fiesta 2024 was fully supported by the Philippine Embassy and Migrant Workers Office-OWWA Kuwait and sponsored by City Hyper Kuwait, Ooredoo, Gulf Air, Al Muzaini Exchange, X-Cite, Bazooka Fried Chicken, Nail It Salon Season 19, Al-Rashed International Travel, Worldwide Connections Kuwait, Kout Food (Burger King & Pizza Hut), Dadabhai Travel, Alzoba Co. W.L.L., Al Alamia International Manpower Services, Grand Majestic Hotel, Yaazeemir International Manpower Agency, X-7 Saloon & Spa for Men, ICOSA, Vinta Restaurant & Café, Sty-



Ceremonial cutting of the cake (left to right) Asst. Labor Attache Sofia Matote, Asst Labor Attache Cathrine Duladul, Welfare Office Genevieve Ardiente, Labor Attache Atty Manuel Dimaano, Ambassador Jose Cabrera III, OWWA Administrator Arnell Ignacio, Pinoy Arabia Media Director Maxxy Santiago, City Hyper Kuwait COO Ajay Goel, City Hyper Operation Manager Nitish Dey, City Hyper Senior Marketing Executive Riem Elghalban and Welfare Officer Emmanuel Santiago Diaz.



Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Jose Cabrera III.



DJ Gem (12th from left) bags the DJ Quest 2024 grand prize.



OWWA Administrator Arnell Ignacio with some OFWs.



Dadabhai Travel General Manager hands the air ticket to the raffle draw winner.

listics Salon, Al-Ghanim & Al-Maya Gen.Trading Co., Time House, Etha Marzouk Al-Azmi Office, Dampa Kuwait & Chautari Restaurant, Judeng Production, Mados Beauty Salon, Dr. Emerlita Grantos Clinic, Cheys the

Look Salon, Arabica Coffee House, Wok N Go Sushi Kuwait, Future Nutrition, Soom Lite, Smart Educational Academy, Marissa Fernandez, Dr. Artermio Usana, Lush and Baking Studio, Pinoy Arabia Barrio Fiesta 2024

powered my Maximax Digital Solutions was hosted by Maxxy Santiago, Mark the Spark, Red, Kris, Erika, Mark Neil, Julieciousa, Rosie and Denzil.

"On behalf of the Pinoy Arabia team, thank you very much for all your

love and support. Pinoy Arabia ME's core value is public service at its finest – the heart that propels Pinoy Arabia ME to do what it does best for a decade and beyond," stated Mark the Spark, Pinoy Arabia Program Director.



Maternity Hospital project staff honored by American Concrete Institute.

Maternity Hospital wins award of excellence 2023

ACI Kuwait hosts annual awards ceremony

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Kuwait Chapter of American Concrete Institute held its Annual Awards function on Tuesday, 3rd December, 2024 in the College of Engineering and Petroleum (South Campus), Kuwait University, Sabah Al Salem University City. His Excellency the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Ministry of State for Housing Affairs, Eng. Abdulatif Hamad Al-Meshari gave his address, and emphasized on his and Kuwait Municipality's commitment to supporting, regulating and promoting the quality of design and construction industry in Kuwait.

ACI-Kuwait Chapter is a non-profit professional organization, affiliated to American Concrete Institute International of USA. The Chapter's objective is to develop and share technical knowledge and information for improving quality of concrete and related construction practices in Kuwait. This is done through technical seminars, training courses, conferences, publications, webinars and other informative activities.

During the well-attended grand event, ACI-Kuwait Chapter presented two prestigious annual awards, one for a deserving project and the other to a distinguished personality for life long service to the engineering profession and higher education in Kuwait.

The event and ceremonies, which took place in the beautiful auditorium of the College, the Chapter's Vice-President read out a message from the current President, Mr. Ghassan Alghawas. Thereafter, His Excellency the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Ministry of State for Housing Affairs, Eng. Abdulatif Hamad Al-Meshari gave his address, and emphasized on his and Kuwait Municipality's commitment to supporting, regulating and promoting the quality of design and construction industry in Kuwait.

His Excellency's address was followed by the award formalities, which commenced with the Award of Excellence 2023, which was given to the New Maternity Hospital project. Mr. Aziz Mamouji, Chairman of the Awards Committee, gave a presentation about the project in which he explained that the project was selected for being 'anaesthetically pleasing and sustainably designed special-ized medical facility that combines complex concrete engineering and



Aziz Mamouji (left) and Minister Al-Mishari.

structural design with state of the art electro-mechanical systems'.

The Ministry of Public Works was given the award as the Developer of the project, and the trophy was received on the Ministry's behalf by the Assistant Undersecretary for Planning and Development, Eng. Ahmed Saad Al Saleh. Pace of Kuwait were recognized for being the concept design and supervision consultants, and the award was collected by Mr. Tarek Shuaib, CEO of Pace.

Impresa Pizzarotti, were the General Contractor and Main Concrete Supplier, and on their behalf the award was received by the Company's Representative, Dr. Salvatore Lorenzano, and Eng. Khaled Al Khezi of Group Four, their local sponsor in Kuwait.

Mr. Mamouji then announced the honoree for the Award of Achievement 2023. The award was presented to Dr. Rana Al Fares, who was honored for her 'dedication and commitment to academic and professional development, and contribution to enhancing the built environment in Kuwait'.

The ceremonies and event concluded with dinner, which was served in the main event hall of College of Engineering and Petroleum (South Campus).

Bank offers exclusive benefits

Weyay teams up with Flare Fitness for youth wellness

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Weyay Bank, the first to provide digital banking services in Kuwait, has signed a partnership with Flare Fitness gym, promoting health, well-being, and active lifestyle among the youth community.

All Weyay customers gain access to an array of exclusive benefits, including:

- 30% discount, plus a free training program: recognizing the importance of maintaining their fitness regimen at competitive membership prices. Weyay Bank offers all its allowance customers who hold the SELECT card an exclusive 30% discount on all memberships in addition to a one-month free program whenever they use the Flare Fitness' Burn Training.
- Free membership for two months, exclusively for female allowance customers: as part of Weyay Bank's initiatives to empower female students to commit to their goals, the female allowance customers holding their SELECT card receive additional two-month membership when they buy a membership for three months.
- 25% discount: the Bank provides all its debit and prepaid cardholders a 25% discount on all types of memberships.

"At Weyay, we understand the importance of encouraging a healthy, active lifestyle, especially among the youth. With this collaboration, we are giving them an opportunity to stay fit,

all while enjoying exclusive savings in one of the best fitness destinations in Kuwait," said Fawaz AlNakib, Campaign and Partnership Manager at Weyay Bank, during the partnership signing ceremony.

Saleh Jamal Al Mousherji, Co-founder and Marketing Manager at

Flare Fitness commented, "we are excited to embark on this partnership with Weyay Bank, which aligns perfectly with our mission to empower young individuals in their pursuit of personal growth in all aspects."

All the information about Weyay Bank's latest rewards and offers is available on www.weyaybank.com or in the Weyay app that can be downloaded from the App Store or Google Play.

Weyay Bank is the first digital bank in Kuwait, designed with the unique needs of the youth in mind. It provides a range of financial services that combine innovation and flexibility. With an emphasis on simplicity, accessibility, and empowerment, Weyay Bank constantly aims to revolutionize how customers manage their finances and live a financially secure future.

Flare Fitness is a premier gym in Kuwait that offers a wide range of programs designed to meet the needs of fitness enthusiasts at all levels. Known for its state-of-the-art facilities and expert trainers, Flare Fitness is committed to helping individuals achieve their health and wellness goals.





Canadian film director and screenwriter David Cronenberg receives an homage award during the Marrakech International Film Festival, in Morocco, Monday, Dec. 2, 2024. (AP)



Sudanese actress Shajian Suliman gestures while attending the screening of Sudan Remember Us movie, during the Marrakech International Film Festival. (AP)



American actor and film director Sean Penn speaks to the press during a conference at the Marrakech International Film Festival, Morocco, Tuesday, Dec. 3. (AP)

'Oscars are limiting imagination and diversity'

Penn accuses Academy of cowardice at Marrakech Fest

MARRAKECH, Morocco, Dec 4, (AP) — Sean Penn on Tuesday blasted the organizers of the Oscars for being cowards who, in effect, limit the kinds of films that can be funded and made.

The 64-year-old actor said at the Marrakech Film Festival that he gets excited about the Academy Awards only on the rare occasion that films he values are nominated.

"The producers of the academy have exercised really extraordinary cowardice when it comes to being part of the world of expression and, in fact, have largely been part of limiting the imagination and limiting different cultural expressions," Penn said at the festival, where he received a career achievement award this week.

"I don't get very excited about what we'll call the Academy Awards," he

said, noting exceptions when certain films grace the ceremony, including Sean Baker's "The Florida Project," Walter Salles' "I'm Still Here" and Jacques Audiard's "Emilia Perez."

Penn's remarks dovetail longstanding criticisms of The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for lacking diversity both within the ranks of its members and in terms of the films that they elect to promote and celebrate with awards.

The institution has in recent years tried to adopt more proactive steps to reform and rebrand itself, but has faced criticism for not going far enough to make meaningful changes.

Penn also lauded Iranian-Danish director Ali Abassi and his latest film "The Apprentice" about President Donald Trump. It faced difficulty finding an

American distributor in the lead-up to the US election in November.

"It's kind of jaw dropping how afraid this 'business of mavericks' is when they get a great film like that with great, great acting," he said. "They too can be as afraid as a piddly little Republican congressman."

As part of a career tribute, the Marrakech Film Festival is screening four of Penn's films this week in Morocco's tourism capital. Local media in Morocco reported several audience members exiting a screening of "Milk" during a scene that depicted two men in bed. Homosexuality is illegal under Morocco's penal code, although cases are not frequently prosecuted.

The actor, whose 2023 film "Superpower" documents war in Ukraine, also voiced support for President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and called himself a "patriot in crisis" in response to a question about the American political landscape.

Battled cancer

Film

Eminem's mother Nelson dies at 69

LOS ANGELES, Dec 4, (AP) — Debbie Nelson, the single mother of rapper Eminem whose rocky relationship with her son was known widely through his hit song lyrics, has died. She was 69.

Eminem's longtime representative Dennis Dennehy confirmed Nelson's death in an email on Tuesday. He did not provide a cause of death, although Nelson had battled lung cancer.

Nelson was born in 1955 on a military base in Kansas. Her fraught relationship with her son, whose real name is Marshall Mathers III, has been no secret since the Detroit rapper became a star.

Eminem has disparaged his mother in songs such as the 2002 single "Cleaning Out My Closet." Eminem sings: "Witnessin' your mama poppin' prescription pills in the kitchen. ... My whole life I was made to believe I was sick when I wasn't."

In lyrics from his Oscar-winning hit "Lose Yourself" from the movie "8 Mile," his feelings seem to have simmered, referencing his "mom's spaghetti." The song went on to win best rap song at the 2004 Grammy Awards.

Defamation

Nelson brought and settled a pair of defamation lawsuits over Eminem's statements about her in magazines and on radio talk shows. In her 2008 book, "My Son Marshall, My Son Eminem," she attempted to set the record straight by providing readers details about the rapper's early life, writing that Eminem had forgotten the good times they had.

"Marshall and I were so close that friends and relatives commented that it was as if the umbilical cord had never been cut," she wrote.

She also detailed her own childhood, describing a violent home life in which her dad's mother, who she spent summers with, was "the one woman in my large dysfunctional family to show us kids love."

In 2004, she was dragged from her car on Eight Mile Road, the street in a Detroit suburb made famous by "8 Mile," by a 16-year-old who was later sentenced to more than four years in prison. She suffered bruises and a broken foot.

The highly acclaimed rapper Eminem won for best hip hop act at the 2024 MTV EMAs and was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2022.

He announced in October that he was going to be a grandfather, saying his daughter Hailee Jade is pregnant by way of a touching music video that is a tribute to their relationship.

ATLANTA: The long-running gang and racketeering trial that led Atlanta rapper Young Thug to plead guilty in October ended on Tuesday with the last two defendants found not guilty of racketeering, murder and gang-related charges.

Deamonte Kendrick, who raps as Yak Gotti, was acquitted of all charges and Shannon Stillwell was found guilty only of gun possession. The verdicts came nearly two years after jury selection began and a year after opening statements in a trial plagued with problems.

The original, sweeping indictment used song lyrics and social media posts as evidence and charged 28 people with conspiring to violate Georgia's Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act. Young Thug, a Grammy-winning artist whose real name is Jeffery Williams, was set free on probation after he pleaded guilty in October to gang, drug and gun charges.

Kendrick and Stillwell were charged in a 2015 drive-by

shooting outside an Atlanta barbershop that killed Donovan Thomas Jr., also known as "Big Nut," who prosecutors said was in a rival gang. Stillwell also was charged with fatally shooting Shymel Drinks at a red light in 2022, allegedly in retaliation for the killings days earlier of two associates in a gang known as YSL, which prosecutors said was co-founded by Young Thug. (AP)

LONDON: An artist whose work exploring her Scottish Sikh identity includes a vintage Ford car draped in a crocheted doily won the UK's prestigious Turner Prize on Tuesday, during a ceremony picketed by pro-Palestinian demonstrators.

Jasleen Kaur was awarded the 25,000-pound (\$32,000) prize by actor James Norton at the Tate Britain gallery in London.

Kaur used her acceptance speech to express support for scores of demonstrators outside. She is among signatories

to a letter demanding Tate, which runs several major British art museums, cut ties with donors who are linked to Israel over its war in Gaza.

"This is not a radical demand," Kaur said. "This should not risk an artist's career or safety." "We need a proper ceasefire now," she said.

The Israel-Hamas war has killed more than 43,000 Palestinians, according to Hamas health officials in Gaza. Israel launched the war in response to the militant group's Oct. 7, 2023 cross-border attack that killed some 1,200 Israelis and took more than 250 hostages.

A jury led by Tate Britain director Alex Farquhar praised the way 38-year-old Kaur "weaves together the personal, political and spiritual" through "un-

expected and playful combinations of material." Her winning exhibition mixes sculpture, print, everyday items - including family photos, a Ford Escort car and the popular Scottish soda Irn Bru - and immersive music to reflect on her upbringing in Glasgow's Sikh community.

Three other finalists - Pio Abad, Claudette Johnson and Delaine Le Bas - received 10,000 pounds (\$12,670) each.

Named for 19th-century landscape painter J.M.W. Turner and founded in 1984 to reward young artists, the prize helped make stars of shark-pickling artist Damien Hirst, potter Grayson Perry, sculptor Anish Kapoor and filmmaker Steve McQueen.

But it has also been criticized for rewarding impenetrable conceptual work and often sparks debate about the value of modern art, with winners such as Hirst's "Mother and Child Divided," which consists of two cows, bisected and preserved in formaldehyde, and Martin Creed's "Lights On and Off" - a room with a light blinking on and off - drawing scorn from sections of the media. (AP)



This image released by Vertical shows Jude Law, (from left), Jurnee Smollett and Tye Sheridan in a scene from 'The Order.' (AP)

'The Order' revisits FBI manhunt for white supremacist leader

Law, Hoult lead true crime thriller

LOS ANGELES, Dec 4, (AP) — Forty years ago, on Dec. 8, 1984, one of the largest manhunts in FBI history came to an explosive end on Whidbey Island in Puget Sound. The person they were after was Robert Jay Mathews, the leader of a white supremacist group committing armed robberies to finance plans to overthrow the government. The standoff lasted more than 30 hours.

It's a dramatic episode in history that's chronicled in the new film "The Order," in theaters Friday, a 1970s-styled thriller starring Jude Law as an FBI agent who connects the dots of the violent crimes arising in the Pacific Northwest and Nicholas Hoult as the enigmatic Mathews. The group, responsible for the murder of Jewish radio talk show host Alan Berg, and that infamous showdown, also continues to resonate with some on the far right, who make pilgrimages to Whidbey Island this time of year for "Martyr's Day."

Neither the English stars nor the Australian director Justin Kurzel were familiar with the history of the group when they first read Zach Baylin's script, based on Kevin Flynn and Gary Gerhardt's nonfiction book "The Silent Brotherhood." But it felt full of potential for an entertaining, complex movie, with car chases, bank heists, shootouts and pathos.

"It just reminded me of the great old heist films from the '70s, with a Sidney Lumet, William Friedkin kind of feel about it," Kurzel said. "Even though it's a period film, it's so incredibly present and sort of dangerously still relevant."

That relevance would soon become even clearer. Three months after Kurzel got the script, he watched the Capitol riot unfold on Jan. 6,

2020, and spotted someone holding a copy of "The Turner Diaries," one of Mathews' major inspirations. And yet it would be an uphill battle to get the film both made and into theaters, now a semi-miracle for an independent production.

"It's always been a battle to get this kind of film made. You really need to find champions for it," said Law, who also signed on to produce with his company Riff Raff. "The historical story is all wrapped up in this film in a genre. It's got a very crowd-pleasing energy to it. It's edge of your seat, cat and mouse. It harkens back to those incredibly successful films in the '70s and '80s that people would go to and be seen as kind of blockbusters ... it's funny that those films don't always necessarily get the budget they should nowadays."

Qualities

One of Law's favorite qualities of the script was that it was written with neither empathy for nor judgement of Mathews or his followers. But that's not to say that bringing him to life was straightforward. For Hoult, it was a daunting task.

"To play a character like that, you have to try and understand them as best as possible," Hoult said. "To do that, you have to figure out their way of living and also what made them the way they are. That means taking in a lot of the information that they would have taken in that shaped their ideology and beliefs, which is a horrible place to go to because it's not stuff that you necessarily want filling your every day and to have those thoughts flowing through your

head." But Hoult felt safe with Kurzel, a director he'd worked with on "The True History of the Kelly Gang." He was also looking forward to collaborating with Law, though they weren't exactly hanging out during the shoot. Kurzel asked Law and Hoult to stay away from one another until their characters meet in the film to add a dynamism to that scene.

"It was an adrenaline that you can't fake," Hoult said. Unbeknownst to Hoult, Kurzel also told Law to follow him around one day in Calgary - a tactile assignment that he knows sounds a little crazy but that sometimes unlocks real things for actors.

"It wasn't hugely eventful," Law laughed, but he saw its benefits. "Justin writes up for his actors manifestos and sets them tasks. He's not precious about it. He says, do it or don't do it. I think we both found them really interesting and really helpful ways in to just kind of embodying these people that you've got to become."

As with all independently made films, they didn't always have the time or money they would have liked, but they made it work.

"Each bank heist or armored truck robbery was basically done in a day," Hoult said. "The speed you're going and the frantic energy of that is helpful for creating what ends up on the screen, the chaos of that."

And up until the last minute, they were even contemplating rewriting the famous final showdown. There was a total fire ban in Alberta because of wildfires, but it lifted just in time.

"We were very lucky," Kurzel said of the showstopper moment.



Kaur

Mothers, metaphors and dyslexia

How language sheds light on child's learning challenges

By Jenna Abetz
College of Charleston

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.



Alarm bells. Red flags. A labyrinth. These are just a few of the metaphors that mothers of children with dyslexia use to describe the journey from noticing their child's literacy challenges to receiving a diagnosis and then advocating to secure services to help their children succeed. By paying attention to the images used in these metaphors, teachers and administrators can better understand the difficulties parents and children face and learn to be more responsive.

In 2021, as my child entered third grade, I was sure she had dyslexia - a learning disability that can affect reading, writing, spelling, memory and organization. For advice and encouragement, I turned to an online support group for parents of children with dyslexia, which affects between 3% and 7% of the population worldwide. I noticed that when the mothers in the group described their experiences in social media posts, they frequently used metaphors.

As a communication researcher, I wondered what lessons about this experience could be drawn from this use of metaphors - a figure of speech that makes an implied comparison, such as "heart of gold" or "a roller coaster of emotions." I decided to find out. It turns out, the mothers' metaphors not only reveal much about the challenges these parents face, but how to help them overcome those challenges as well.

Over a six-month period in 2022 and 2023, I analyzed 579 posts by members of the online support group. The posts, all

written by mothers, were selected from thousands by eliminating those that simply shared resources or motivational quotes.

The mothers who posted were often overwhelmed by their child's diagnosis. They wrote of learning to cope with the pain of seeing their child struggle and the difficulty of working with school systems to get their child needed support. They used metaphors to make sense of their emotions surrounding the dyslexia diagnosis, their interactions with schools and their identity as advocates.

The metaphors provide clues to improving the way schools work with children with dyslexia - and other learning disabilities - and their families. For instance, knowing that many mothers describe the process of obtaining support for their child as a "labyrinth," schools could focus on reducing bureaucratic barriers and providing clearer, more accessible pathways to intervention.

Diagnosis

Mothers often describe the early stages of this journey - before a child's diagnosis - as knowing something is wrong but being unable to put a name to it. "Looking at his spelling and reading with him is setting off my alarm bells," one mother commented. Said another, "Are these red flags or just me reading too much into things?"

Once the mothers had a word - dyslexia - to identify the cause of their child's difficulties, they dove headfirst into research, seeking resources to help their child succeed. Many compared this experience to being "caught in a whirlwind" of new information.

"I am in overdrive googling, reading, watching videos and reaching out," said one mother. Another called the diagnosis an eye-opener. "We are beating ourselves up for the times we saw his refusal to do spelling words or writing as being lazy or not

caring." Mothers encouraged one another to trust their instincts. One admitted, "I knew in my bones something was wrong." Another mother commented: "Stick to your gut. If you have any inkling that your child is off track, do not wait for anyone else to step up - be your child's champion."

Although children with a diagnosed disability are entitled to an individual education plan, or IEP, getting help from the school district for a child with dyslexia, or another learning disability, is often difficult. Many mothers compared this experience to navigating a maze or a labyrinth in which they encountered numerous obstacles. They commonly characterized the complicated, tiring series of steps required for securing an IEP as "a lengthy journey," "jumping through hoops," "a charade" and an "uphill battle."

They often viewed the educational system as intimidating and unyielding. The maze metaphor emphasizes the confusion many parents feel when trying to understand the jargon and legal terms they must use to secure educational support.

The resistance mothers encountered largely reflects the high costs of special education services, which, coupled with a lack of funding, spreads school resources thin. While schools will conduct an evaluation to determine if a child qualifies for additional help, they do not provide a detailed diagnosis, and such evaluations often take place after a child has fallen behind academically.

Evaluation

An educational psychologist can provide a diagnosis of dyslexia after an extensive evaluation process, but this testing is expensive, costing as much as US\$5,000, depending on the location and the specialist selected. To further complicate the situation, a private diagnosis does not guarantee support from the school district.

The mothers' language serves as a guide on how to approach the process. They warn each other not to delay raising concerns: "Do not get buried in the wait-and-see approach, this is a wait-to-fail approach," urged one mother. Another mother advised, "You have to be the squeaky wheel - squeak with data and the law under your belt."

Research shows that providing supports for children with dyslexia is more than a request for an accommodation; it is a battle for educational equity. Children whose dyslexia is not recognized may be viewed as less intelligent and less motivated by teachers and other children.

As a result, dyslexic children may not thrive socially, emotionally or academically.

Mothers use metaphors of distance to convey that dyslexia is a long-term journey that requires sustained effort, patience and endurance.

"This is a marathon, not a sprint, and we are on the right course," wrote one mother. "It's a tough, long slog, do not forget to celebrate the small victories along the way," said another.

The language shows the difficulties that mothers face not only in securing vital support services for their children, but also in learning to support and accept their child and the way dyslexia impacts them.

Focusing on the whole child, instead of the child's limitations, can help mothers see that dyslexia is just one aspect of their child's identity. "We can't fix them because they are not broken," wrote one mother.

Despite the challenges, many moms agreed that "dyslexia is a gift not opened in school." While traditional classrooms may overlook their children's talents, they noted their children's creativity, resilience and "outside the box" thinking. They hold onto the hope that their children will find places where they can flourish. (AP)

1 in 4 injured

'Child amputees' at record in Gaza

GAZA, Dec. 4, (Agencies): Gaza now has the highest number of child amputees per capita in the world, the UN agency for Palestine refugees said on Tuesday.

Many children in Gaza are "losing limbs and undergoing surgeries without even anesthesia," Philippe Lazzarini, commissioner-general of The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), said on social media platform X.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated in September that more than 22,500 people, or one in four people injured during the war in Gaza, sustained life-changing injuries and will need rehabilitation services "now and for years to come".

"During this war, people needing special care have suffered in silence. Their stories rarely told. But the war has also caused an epidemic of traumatic injuries with no rehabilitation services available," Lazzarini said.

Israel has been conducting a large-scale offensive against Hamas in the Gaza Strip to retaliate against a Hamas rampage through the southern Israeli border on Oct. 7, 2023, during which about 1,200 people were killed and about 250 taken hostage.

Vaccination: Social media users are misrepresenting a Vermont Supreme Court ruling, claiming that it gives schools permission to vaccinate children even if their parents do not consent.

The ruling addressed a lawsuit filed by Dario and Shujen Politella against Windham Southeast School District and state officials over the mistaken vaccination of their child against COVID-19 in 2021, when he was 6 years old. A lower court had dismissed the original complaint, as well as an amended version. An appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court was filed on Nov. 19.

But the ruling by Vermont's high court is not as far-reaching as some online have claimed. In reality, it concluded that anyone protected under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act, or PREP, Act is immune to state lawsuits.

Protecting children or limiting free expression?

Australia banning social media for teens: Could this work elsewhere?

SYDNEY, Australia, Dec 4, (AP): It is an ambitious social experiment of our moment in history - one that experts say could accomplish something that parents, schools and other governments have attempted with varying degrees of success: keeping kids off social media until they turn 16.

Australia's new law, approved by its Parliament last week, is an attempt to swim against many tides of modern life - formidable forces like technology, marketing, globalization and, of course, the iron will of a teenager. And like efforts of the past to protect kids from things that parents believe they're not ready for, the nation's move is both ambitious and not exactly simple, particularly in a world where young people are often shaped, defined and judged by the online company they keep.

The ban won't go into effect for another year. But how will Australia be able to enforce it? That's not clear, nor will it be easy. TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram have become so ingrained in young people's lives that going cold turkey will be difficult.

Opportunity

Other questions loom. Does the ban limit kids' free expression and - especially for those in vulnerable groups - isolate them and curtail their opportunity to connect with members of their community? And how will social sites verify people's ages, anyway? Can't kids just get around such technicalities, as they so often do?

This is, after all, the 21st century - an era when social media is the primary communications tool for most of those born in the past 25 years who, in a fragmented world, seek the common cultures of trends, music and memes. What happens when big swaths of that fall away?

Is Australia's initiative a good, long-term-coming development that will protect the vulnerable, or could it become a well-meaning experiment with unintended consequences?

The law will make platforms including TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, Reddit, X and Instagram liable for fines



A teenager uses his mobile phone to access social media in Sydney, Nov 13, 2024. (AP)

of up to 50 million Australian dollars (\$33 million) for systemic failures to prevent children younger than 16 from holding accounts. "It's clear that social media companies have to be held accountable, which is what Australia is trying to do," said Jim Steyer, president and CEO of the nonprofit Common Sense Media.

Leaders and parents in countries around the world are watching Australia's policy closely as many seek to protect young kids from the internet's dangerous corners - and, not incidentally, from each other. Most nations have taken different routes, from parental consent requirements to minimum age limits.

Parents

Many child safety experts, parents and even teens who have waited to get on social media consider Australia's move a positive step. They say there's ample reason to ensure that children wait.

"What's most important for kids, just like adults, is real human connection. Less time alone on the screen means more time to connect, not less," said Julie Scelfo, the founder of Mothers Against Media Addiction, or

MAMA, a grassroots group of parents aimed at combating the harms of social media to children. "I'm confident we can support our kids in interacting in any number of ways aside from sharing the latest meme."

The harms to children from social media have been well documented in the two decades since Facebook's launch ushered in a new era in how the world communicates. Kids who spend more time on social media, especially when they are tweens or young teenagers, are more likely to experience depression and anxiety, according to multiple studies - though it is not yet clear if there is a causal relationship.

What's more, many are exposed to content that is not appropriate for their age, including pornography and violence, as well as social pressures about body image and makeup. They also face bullying, sexual harassment and unwanted advances from their peers as well as adult strangers. Because their brains are not fully developed, teenagers, especially younger ones the law is focused on, are also more affected by social comparisons than adults, so even happy posts from friends can send them into a negative spiral.

'Mystery disease' probed after 143 deaths in Congo

KINSHASA, Congo, Dec 4, (Agencies): A flu-like disease that has killed dozens of people over two weeks is being investigated in southwestern Congo, local authorities said.

The deaths were recorded between Nov. 10 and Nov. 25 in the Panzi health zone of Kwango province. Symptoms include fever, headache, cough and anaemia, provincial health minister Apollinaire Yumba told reporters over the weekend.

The deputy provincial governor, Rémy Saki, told The Associated Press on Tuesday that between 67 and 143 people had died.

"A team of epidemiological experts is expected in the region to take samples and identify the problem," he added.

Yumba advised the population to exercise caution and refrain from contact with dead bodies to avoid contamination. He called on national and international partners to send medical supplies to deal with the health crisis.

Congo is already plagued by the mpox epidemic, with more than 47,000 suspected cases and over 1,000 suspected deaths from the disease in the Central African country, according to the World Health Organization.

WHO is aware of the unidentified disease and has a team on the ground working with local health services to collect samples, according to an organization employee who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to talk to the media.

Bird flu: The high pathogenic type of bird flu recently confirmed in a New Zealand egg farm was not H5N1 strain that people are most worried about and would pose low risk for public health, virologists and public health experts said on Wednesday.

The detection of H7N6 at the farm in New Zealand's South Island was not H5N1 strain that has been causing deaths in poultry, wild birds, and mammals worldwide, according to the Ministry for Primary Industries.

Jemma Geoghegan, virologist from the University of Otago, said the H7 subtype, while it has infected humans before, does not spread very easily between

them so this is low risk for public health.

Usually the H7 subtype is low pathogenic and is found in wild birds without causing disease. On some rare occasions, these viruses can spill over to poultry and evolve to become high pathogenic where they cause severe disease, she said.

AIDS: Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health has registered 200 new cases of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)/HIV among citizens in 2024, a state-run news agency Bakhtar reported on Wednesday.

Eight treatment centers and 61 diagnostic centers for HIV/AIDS are active in Afghanistan, and health services for individuals with HIV/AIDS are being provided throughout the country, the ministry was quoted as saying.

According to the ministry's spokesperson Sharafat Zaman Amarkhail, a total of 3,700 HIV cases have been reported in Afghanistan since 1989. At present, 1,400 people infected with the virus are receiving medical treatment across the country.

Polio: Pakistan confirmed three more polio cases increasing the total number of cases in the country in 2024 to 59, the National Institute of Health (NIH) said late Monday night.

According to a statement, the Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the NIH verified the detection of the Wild Poliovirus Type 1 (WPV1) in three children in different areas of the country.

The NIH added that one case was reported from northwest Dera Ismail Khan district and the other two cases were confirmed in southern port city of Karachi and southern district of Kashmir, respectively.

Pakistan is responding to an intense resurgence of WPV1 by utilizing its all-out efforts, said the NIH, adding that of the confirmed cases, 26 are from southwest Balochistan province, 16 from northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, 15 from southern Sindh province, and one each from eastern Punjab province and the country's capital Islamabad.

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Second-innings specialist Taijul gets five wickets

Bangladesh beats West Indies by 101 runs to tie short test series

KINGSTON, Jamaica, Dec 4, (AP): Bangladesh won a test in the Caribbean for the first time in 15 years by beating the West Indies by 101 runs inside four days at Sabina Park.

Bangladesh set West Indies 287 to win in five and a bit sessions and the West Indies managed to bat less than two sessions, all out for 185.

The Bangladeshis had lost their last seven tests in the Caribbean, including the first one of this series in Antigua last week. They have tied the short series.

"This was enjoyable," Bangladesh stand-in captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz said. "We were not thinking negatively. The boys bowled especially well. Nahid (Rana) in the first innings, Taskin (Ahmed) and Hasan Mahmud. Second-innings specialist Taijul (Islam) got five wickets. He was excellent. He has been very good for the last 10 years, more than 200 wickets for us."

On a pitch offering some grip and the odd low bounce, spin came into play and left-armer Taijul took advantage with 5-50, his best overseas figures in 2 1/2 years and his

best figures in the West Indies since his test debut on the same ground in 2014.

As West Indies wickets began to tumble - the last six for 42 runs - Jaker Ali's innings for Bangladesh grew in importance. Jaker made a career-best 91 and was last man out in the visitors' second innings just before lunch.

That gave West Indies a target of 287, which was gettable, but on a ground where the highest successful run chase was 212. That record remains.

"The batting group needs consistency," West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite said. "Consistency in hard work as well. I believe we have the talent."

Brathwaite led a positive start to the chase but couldn't sustain a partnership.

Mikyle Louis fell to Taijul on the stroke of lunch, and Keacy Carty nicked Taskin behind.

Brathwaite, with just one half-century in 18 months, reached 43 off 63 balls when he was out defending against Taijul. The ball grazed his glove and Mahmudul Hasan Joy

made a diving close-in catch.

Taijul then bowled Alick Athanaze through the gate and West Indies hopes were resting on Kaven Hodge.

Hodge reached tea on 49 and West Indies was still in the chase at 133-4, needing 154 more.

Hodge, who debuted in January, achieved the West Indies' first half-century of the test, 50 off 64 balls, but just when the chase was half done he was out.

Taijul struck again. Hodge played back to a ball coming in from outside off and was pinned for 55 off 75.

Still needing 144 more runs, the West Indies fell over from there.

Taskin, Hasan Mahmud and first-innings destroyer Nahid Rana got among the wickets, while Taijul got his 15th career five-for when he trapped Joshua Da Silva.

The morning was all about Jaker. He scored 62 of Bangladesh's 75 runs.

Bangladesh resumed on 193-5 with a competitive lead of 211 and Jaker on 29.

He was hit flush on the helmet by pacer Alzarri Joseph. Jaker passed a head check but lost partner Taijul soon after to another Alzarri Joseph bouncer.

Mominul Haque, the usual No. 3 batter who didn't play on Monday because of an illness, came in at No. 8 but lasted only four balls.

With his side seven down, Jaker was prompted to lash out. His first six, a pull behind square leg off Alzarri Joseph, gave him a fifty off 80 balls, and a third half-century in three tests.

A boundary over the slip cordon was followed by a hooked six over fine leg, and he passed his previous highest test score, 58 in October on debut against South Africa.

As West Indies pacer Kemar Roach cleaned up the tail, Jaker hit Roach high over the long-on and long-off boundaries, pulled Shamar Joseph twice to the fence, and hit Alzarri Joseph over cow corner.

Jaker went down swinging, pulling Alzarri Joseph to deep midwicket, on 91 off 106 balls, including five sixes and eight boundaries.

Khan misses out

Pakistan recalls Abbas after 3 yrs for test matches in SA

ISLAMABAD, Dec 4, (AP): Pakistan recalled fast bowler Mohammad Abbas after three years for test matches while Shaheen Shah Afridi will play only white-ball cricket in South Africa.

Abbas has taken 90 wickets in 25 test matches but hasn't played red-ball cricket for Pakistan since the Jamaica test in 2021. He has been in impressive form of late, picking up 31 wickets in five premier domestic four-day tournament matches.

"Shaheen Shah Afridi's exclusion from the test squad is a strategic decision to ensure he remains physically and mentally fresh for the Champions Trophy," selection committee member Aaqib Javed said in a statement on Wednesday.

Naseem Shah, who missed the last two home test matches against England, Khuram Shahzad and left-armer Mir Hamza are the pace bowlers named to the test squad.

Pakistan begins its tour of South Africa next Tuesday with three T20s, followed by three ODIs and two test matches at Centurion and Cape Town.

"We have adopted a horses for courses policy to ensure all three squads are well-balanced and capable of performing strongly in South Africa," said Javed, who was also appointed interim white-ball coach ahead of Pakistan's tour to Zimbabwe.

"Our focus in ODIs is to continue building momentum ahead of the Champions Trophy, while the T20 series provides a platform to blend experience with emerging talent."

Off-spinner Sajid Khan missed out on the test team despite claiming 19 wickets in the last two test matches against England at Multan and Rawalpindi. Noman Ali, who picked up 20 wickets in those two memorable victories for Pakistan, won the selectors' nod ahead of Sajid.

"Leaving out Sajid Khan, despite his stellar performances against England, was an extremely tough and difficult decision," Javed said. "However, considering the pace-friendly conditions at Centurion and in Cape Town, we opted for Mohammad Abbas instead, who is an outstanding exponent of seam bowling."

Former all format captain Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan, Saim Ayub and Salman Ali Agha were



Pakistan's Saim Ayub and Omair Bin Yousuf during the second T20 cricket match between Zimbabwe and Pakistan at Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. (AP)

named to all three squads.

The selectors have kept faith in youngster Sufiyan Muqem for T20s and ODIs after the left-arm wrist spinner claimed eight wickets in two T20s against Zimbabwe. Sufiyan also recorded Pakistan's best-ever T20 figures of five wickets for three runs at Bulawayo on Tuesday that routed Zimbabwe for its lowest T20 score of 57 all out.

Squads:
Tests: Shan Masood (captain), Saud Shakeel, Aamer Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Babar Azam, Haseebullah Khan, Kamran Ghulam, Khuram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Abbas, Mohammad Rizwan, Naseem Shah, Noman Ali, Saim Ayub and Salman Ali Agha.

ODIs: Mohammad Rizwan, Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Haris Rauf, Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Hasnain, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Sufiyan Muqem, Tayyab Tahir and Usman Khan.

T20s: Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Haris Rauf, Jahad Khan, Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Hasnain, Irfan Khan, Omair Bin Yousuf, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Sufiyan Muqem, Tayyab Tahir and Usman Khan.

Mavs & Thunder advance to NBA Cup quarterfinals



Denver Nuggets guard Russell Westbrook, front left, drives past Golden State Warriors guard Brandin Podziemski, back left, and forward Trayce Jackson-Davis to pass the ball in the first half of an Emirates NBA Cup basketball game in Denver. (AP)

Nuggets mount late comeback to beat Warriors

DALLAS, Dec 4, (AP): Luka Doncic had 37 points and 12 rebounds, Spencer Dinwiddie and P.J. Washington Jr. hit clutch 3-pointers in the final two minutes, and the Dallas Mavericks overcame a 15-point deficit to beat the Memphis Grizzlies 121-116 on Tuesday night and advance to the NBA Cup quarterfinals.

The Mavericks needed a win and help on the final night of group play to earn the West wild-card spot. They will face the top-seeded Oklahoma City Thunder.

Dallas trailed 111-103 with 3:34 to play and went on a 16-3 run capped by two 3-pointers from Dinwiddie and one from Washington.

Thunder 133, Jazz 106
In Oklahoma City, Jalen Williams scored 28 points, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 26 points, seven assists and six rebounds, and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Utah Jazz en route to the NBA Cup quarterfinals.

Isaiah Joe had 19 points and fellow reserve Aaron Wiggins finished with 16 as the Thunder closed out West Group B play at 3-1. They won the group when Phoenix beat San Antonio 104-93 later Tuesday.

Alexander, selected as Western Conference player of the month earlier Tuesday, scored 15 points after half-time. Oklahoma City twice led by as many as 30 points in the second half.

Nuggets 119, Warriors 115

In Denver, Nikola Jokic had 38 points, 10 rebounds and five steals to rally the Denver Nuggets to victory over the Golden State Warriors.

Jokic fell four assists shy of his

NBA-leading ninth triple-double of the season. The reigning league MVP remained tied with Magic Johnson for the third-most triple-doubles in NBA history with 138.

Michael Porter Jr. added 22 points and Aaron Gordon had 15 points and nine rebounds for Denver.

The loss was the fifth in a row for Golden State following a 12-3 start and means the Warriors will travel to Houston next week for the NBA Cup quarterfinals.

Suns 104, Spurs 93

Phoenix, Devin Booker scored 29 points and the Phoenix Suns weathered the loss of Kevin Durant to an ankle injury to beat the San Antonio Spurs 104-93 on Tuesday night.

Durant left the game with 3:51 to play in the second quarter and did not return. He headed to the locker room under his own power, and the Suns later said he hurt an ankle without providing any specifics. He finished with



Dallas Mavericks guard Quentin Grimes (5) goes up for a basket against Memphis Grizzlies center Jay Huff (30) and forward Santi Aldama (7) during the second half of an Emirates NBA Cup basketball game in Dallas. (AP)

13 points.

Knicks 121, Magic 106
In New York, Karl-Anthony Towns had 23 points and 15 rebounds, Jalen Brunson scored 21 points and the New York Knicks beat the Orlando Magic to reach the quarterfinals of the NBA Cup.

New York went 4-0 in East Group A and will host Atlanta on Dec. 11. Orlando (3-1) advanced as the East wild card and will travel to Milwaukee.

Bucks 128, Pistons 107

In Detroit, Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 28 points and Damian Lillard had 27, lifting the surging Milwaukee Bucks to a win over the Detroit Pistons and into the NBA Cup quarterfinals.

The Bucks, who won East Group B with a 4-0 record, have won seven straight and nine of 10.

Detroit was eliminated from the NBA Cup, dropping to 3-1 in the tournament. Cade Cunningham scored 23 points. Tobias Harris had 16, Tim Hardaway scored 15 and Jalen Duren

added 11 for the Pistons.

Cavaliers 118, Wizards 87

In Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell scored 19 points and Evan Mobley had 19 points and 10 rebounds as the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Wizards, extending Washington's losing streak to 15.

Sam Merrill and Georges Niang each scored 14 points off the bench for Cleveland, which has the best record in the NBA at 19-3 and is 12-1 at home. The 31-point win was the Cavaliers' largest of the season.

76ers 110, Hornets 104

In Charlotte, Paul George scored 29 points, Tyrese Maxey had eight of his 21 points in the final 30 seconds and the Philadelphia 76ers won back-to-back games for the first time this season with a victory over the Charlotte Hornets.

Jared McCain added 17 points off the bench and Kelly Oubre scored 14 for Philadelphia (5-14), which finished 2-2 in Group A NBA Cup play. Charlotte was 0-4. Neither team advanced out of pool play.

Kings 120, Rockets 111

In Sacramento, Domantas Sabonis scored 27 points and Sacramento made 15 straight shots from the field to beat Houston and deny the Rockets the top seed in the NBA Cup quarterfinals.

The shooting spree by the Kings turned an eight-point deficit late in the second quarter into a 12-point lead midway through the third to give the Kings their only win in four NBA Cup games.

Raptors 122, Pacers 111

In Toronto, Scottie Barnes scored a career-high 35 points, RJ Barrett added 29 and the Toronto Raptors never trailed in a win over the Pacers that extended Indiana's road losing streak to seven.

Jakob Poeltl had 17 points and 10 rebounds, and Ochai Agbaji scored 13 points for the Raptors, who led by 24 points in the third quarter.

Maryland improves to 9-0 with a balanced effort

COLLEGE PARK, Md., Dec 4, (AP): Christina Dalce scored 13 points, and No. 7 Maryland remained unbeaten with an 87-52 victory over Mount St. Mary's.

The Terrapins (9-0) are off to their best start since 2018-19, when they won their first 12 games. Maryland held the Mountaineers (0-6) to 19 points in the first half and pulled out to a big lead in the second quarter.

Shyanne Sellers and Allie Kubek scored 12 points apiece for the Terps, and Saylor Poffenbarger and Kaylene Smikle added 10 each.

Jo Raflfo led Mount St. Mary's with 10.

Maryland shot 52% from the field while holding the Mountaineers to 34%.

Mount St. Mary's: The Mountaineers were coming off a 36-point loss to George Mason - a team Maryland beat last weekend - so it was unrealistic to expect anything but a rout here. Mount St. Mary's had 15 turnovers in the first half but only four in the second.

Josh Dix swished a game-winning 3-pointer just before the buzzer to give Iowa an 80-79 victory over Northwestern in a Big Ten Conference opener for both teams.

After Ty Berry went 1 of 2 at the free-throw line

with 5.8 remaining to give Northwestern a 79-77 lead, Iowa got it past midcourt before calling a timeout with 0.8 seconds left. Brock Harding struggled to find an open teammate from the sideline before Dix came out well past the 3-point arc to swish a fade-away 3-pointer.

Dix's teammates raced to surround him at the other end in front of the Northwestern bench, with fans coming onto the court in celebration.

Dix finished with 22 points and Payton Sandfort had 20 points, seven rebounds and four assists for Iowa (7-1). Owen Freeman added 16 points.



Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton of Britain in action during the Qatar Formula One Grand Prix at the Lusail International Circuit in Lusail, Qatar. (AP)

Al-Hilal moves into first place

Shanghai on course for Asian Champions League Elite knockout stage

SHANGHAI, China, Dec 4, (AP): Brazilian midfielder Oscar kept Shanghai Port on course for the Asian Champions League Elite knockout stage by scoring a second-half penalty in a 1-1 draw with South Korea's Gwangju FC. In the western zone, Uzbekistan giant Pakhtakor drew 1-1 with defending champion Al-Ain of the United Arab Emirates.

Al-Hilal of Saudi Arabia, already certain of a place in the next round, moved into first place with a 3-0 win at

home to Al-Gharafa of Qatar.

The 33-year-old Oscar, the last of the big stars who signed for Chinese Super League clubs in the previous decade still playing in the country, wouldn't confirm reports that he's leaving the team.

"I will make my final decision with my family in the coming days and weeks," Oscar said after the game.

In September, the former Chelsea star told Brazilian media that he would be moving on when his contract

expires at the end of December. Oscar joined Shanghai in middle of Chelsea's 2016-17 season for a transfer fee reported to be \$73 million.

Shanghai is seventh in the group, with eight points. The 24 teams are evenly split with the top eight from each progressing to the Round of 16.

Central Coast Mariners are virtually out of contention after a 4-0 home loss to Japan's Yokohama F. Marinos left Australia's sole representative with just one point

from six games.

"To defend against a top team like Yokohama, you all have to be willing to work, stick to the game plan, stay connected and in the first half we had players who didn't want to do that," Central Coast coach Mark Jackson said.

Yokohama leads the group, level on 13 points with Gwangju and Vissel Kobe, the Japanese team that lost 3-1 to Pohang Steelers of South Korea.

Leverkusen eliminates Bayern

Bielefeld continues impressive run in German Cup

BERLIN, Dec 4, (Xinhua): Nathan Tella's single goal was enough to give Bayer Leverkusen a 1-0 victory over a 10-man Bayern Munich in the German Cup round of 16.

Bayer Leverkusen, the double domestic champion, started confidently away from home, with the first notable opportunity coming in the 11th minute when Florian Wirtz unleashed a dangerous shot from a central position. Elsewhere, third-division Arminia Bielefeld continued its impressive run, defeating higher-tier opponent Freiburg 3-1. Stuttgart booked its place in the quarterfinals by knocking out second-division Jahn Regensburg, while Werder Bremen beat Darmstadt 1-0.

Although Bayern initially controlled possession, the match took a drastic turn in the 17th minute. Goal-

keeper Manuel Neuer received a straight red card for a foul on Jeremie Frimpong, leading to substitute goalkeeper Daniel Peretz replacing Leroy Sane.

The Werksell began to dominate but failed to extend its lead as Frimpong could not beat Peretz following a precise through ball from Wirtz in the 30th minute.

Bayern continued to press forward, with Kingsley Coman missing an opportunity as he headed wide from close range four minutes later.

As the match progressed, Bayern began to regain control and created several chances. Leon Goretzka tested goalkeeper Matej Kovar, while Konrad Laimer saw his shot blocked by Granit Xhaka just before the halftime whistle.

In the second half, Wirtz nearly added another for Leverkusen with a low shot that went just wide of the left post in the 51st minute.

Despite being reduced to ten men, Bayern continued to dominate possession, although it lacked

the creativity needed to breach Leverkusen's well-organized defense.

Leverkusen finally made its numerical advantage count in the 69th minute, when Tella headed home Alejandro Grimaldo's pinpoint cross at the far post. This came just eight minutes after Tella had entered the game as a substitute.

Bayern struggled to make a significant impact on Kovar's goal. Dayot Upamecano headed over from a corner, while both Mathys Tel and Michael Olise fired shots from a distance in the closing stages.

Despite late pressure from Vincent Kompany's side, it was unable to prevent its elimination from the competition.

"It is bitter. The red card has a natural effect on the game. The boys played well anyway. Leverkusen played a good cross into the box and had the first real chance to score. But unfortunately, there's nothing to talk about. We lost and are out of the competition," said Bayern coach Kompany.

Kuwait's squash team heads to Hong Kong for World Championship



The Kuwaiti delegation poses for a group photo before departure.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The Kuwaiti men's squash team delegation has departed for Hong Kong to compete in the World Championship, which will run from next Sunday through December 15. The delegation is led by board member Ahmed Al-Adwani and includes coach Majed Khan alongside four players: Mohammed Al-Masoud, Adhbi Al-Jumaan, Jassim Al-Gharib, and Abdulrahman Al-Maghribi.

Delegation head Al-Adwani emphasized that the national teams committee opted to integrate young talent into this championship, with players Al-Gharib and Al-Maghribi, both 19 years old, participating to help build a promising squad capable of achieving positive results in future international tournaments.

Milan and Bologna reach Italian Cup quarterfinals

MILAN, Dec 4, (AP): AC Milan and Bologna advanced to the Italian Cup quarterfinals with convincing victories.

Milan thrashed Serie B leader Sassuolo 6-1, while Bologna routed Serie A struggler Monza 4-0.

The Rossoneri will face either Roma or Sampdoria in the last eight. Bologna will play the winners of Atalanta's match against Cesena.

Both those round of 16 matches take place next week.

Tuesday's match at San Siro was all but over after less than 23 minutes as Sassuolo was swept away by a double from Samuel Chukwueze and other goals by Tijjani Reijnders and Rafael Leao.

It had been a much-changed start-

ing lineup for Milan ahead of a tough Serie A trip to Atalanta on Friday and the Rossoneri made four further changes at halftime.

Milan nevertheless extended its advantage through Davide Calabria and Tammy Abraham, either side of a consolation goal for Sassuolo from Samuele Mulattieri.

Bologna scored two goals in each half, with Tommaso Pobega and Riccardo Orsolini netting in the first period and Benjamin Dominguez and Santiago Castro in the second.

However, Orsolini limped off shortly after scoring and Bologna now faces an anxious wait to discover the extent of his injury. The Italy forward is Bologna's top goalscorer this season, with six goals.



AC Milan's Rafael Leao, right, and Sassuolo's Cristian Volpato vie for the ball during an Italian Cup eighth final soccer match between AC Milan and Sassuolo at the San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy. (AP)



Bayern's Joshua Kimmich, left, fights for the ball with Leverkusen's Edmond Tapsoba during a German Cup Round of 16 soccer match between Bayern Munich and Bayer Leverkusen at the Allianz Arena in Munich, Germany. (AP)

Guehi defies the FA

Van Nistelrooy off to a winning start at Leicester

LONDON, Dec 4, (AP): It was a fine first win for Ruud van Nistelrooy, and perhaps one final defeat for Julien Lopetegui.

Leicester marked Van Nistelrooy's first match in charge of the team by surging to a 3-1 win over Lopetegui's West Ham in the Premier League.

Van Nistelrooy, the former Manchester United striker, is back in English soccer this time as a manager, with Leicester taking something of a gamble on the Dutchman after his brief and impressive spell as interim coach at United this season following Erik ten Hag's departure.

He faces the tough task of keeping Leicester, one of the top candidates for relegation, in the top division. For that to happen, he's likely to need goals from Jamie Vardy - and the 37-year-old former England international delivered immediately.

Nine years after breaking Van Nistelrooy's record for scoring in consecutive games, Vardy scored the first goal of the Dutchman's tenure at

Leicester by beating the offside trap and slotting home a finish with less than two minutes gone.

Morocco midfielder Bilal El Khannouss supplied the pass for Vardy's goal and scored himself with a low shot in the 61st minute to make it 2-0. Patson Daka added a third for Leicester in the 90th minute, before a stoppage-time consolation by West Ham substitute Niclas Fullkrug.

Van Nistelrooy praised the "spirit and energy" in his team.

This dismal result for West Ham came three days after its 5-2 thrashing at home by Arsenal, which piled more pressure on Lopetegui early in the former Spain and Real Madrid coach's first season with the London club.

West Ham's disgruntled traveling fans chanted "You're getting sacked in the morning" toward Lopetegui during the second half - even if his team dominated large parts of the game but only had one goal to show from 31 shots on goal.

West Ham has lost seven of its 14

games so far and is in 14th place in the 20-team league, one spot above Leicester.

Crystal Palace won for just the second time in the league this season, beating relegation rival Ipswich 1-0 to pull clear of the bottom three.

Jean-Philippe Mateta scored the goal in the 59th minute. Palace's only other league victory was against Tottenham in October.

While Ipswich stayed in next-to-last place, Palace moved three points above the relegation zone.

Much of the focus ahead of the game was on the teams' captains, Sam Morsy of Ipswich and Marc Guehi of Palace.

For the second straight game, Morsy chose against wearing a rainbow armband issued to the captain of each of the 20 teams in the league. He has made the decision "due to his religious beliefs," Ipswich says.

Guehi did wear the rainbow armband but defied Football Association rules by writing a religious message on the item.



Crystal Palace's Jean-Philippe Mateta, right, challenges with Ipswich Town's Jacob Greaves to score the opening goal during the Premier League soccer match between Ipswich Town and Crystal Palace at Portman Road, Ipswich, England. (AP)



Brentford's Ethan Pinnock, left and Leicester City's Jamie Vardy vie for the ball, during the English Premier League soccer match between Brentford and Leicester City at the Gtech Community Stadium, in Brentford, England. (AP)

Best of the Rest

Kuwait partakes in games: The Kuwaiti team is partaking in the Asia Pacific Deaf Games, hosted by Malaysia on December 1-8.

Khalaf Hamed Al-Shemmari, the head of the expedition and the treasurer of the Kuwait Sport Club for the Deaf, said in remarks to KUNA on Wednesday that the Kuwaiti teams play in field and track, bowling and tennis table competitions.

Meanwhile, the State of Kuwait Ambassador to Malaysia Rashed Al-Saleh lauded while hosting the Kuwaiti team at the embassy headquarters the athletes and their managers.

The Kuwaiti field and track team comprises ten players, in addition to five blowing players with three tennis men table players and three women in the same category. (KUNA)

Corinthians extend streak: Dutch striker Memphis Depay scored twice as Corinthians extended its Brazilian Serie A winning sequence to eight games with a 3-0 home victory over Bahia.

Depay opened the scoring in the 12th minute at Corinthians Arena after combining with strike partner Yuri Alberto.

The latter doubled the hosts' lead on the stroke of halftime with a cool finish on the counterattack.

Depay completed the rout just after the hour by curling a stunning freekick into the top-right corner. (Xinhua) (Xinhua)

Mascherano excited by challenge: Former Barcelona and Liverpool enforcer Javier Mascherano has played down his lack of coaching experience as he prepares to take charge of MLS club Inter Miami.

Mascherano faced the media for the first time on Tuesday since his appointment as Inter Miami manager late last month, replacing compatriot Gerardo Martino.

"I'm convinced that I'm capable of coaching the team," the 40-year-old former Argentina captain told a news conference at Chase Stadium in Fort Lauderdale.

"I'm very excited to take on this role. Sometimes experience in football doesn't make much sense. I mean, for me, beyond the fact that I have been coaching for three years, I am also supported by my 20-year career and everything I have gone through." (Xinhua)



Wales' Hannah Cain, left, celebrates after scoring the opening goal from a penalty during the Women's EURO 2025 Qualifiers second leg of play-off round two soccer match between Republic of Ireland and Wales at the Aviva Stadium, Dublin, Ireland. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait Club and Qadsia players reunite with national team for 'Khaleeji Zain 26' preparations



The Kuwaiti players intensify training in Doha.

DOHA, Dec 4: Players from Qadsia and Kuwait Club have joined the national football team delegation in Doha for their training camp ahead of "Khaleeji Zain 26", which Kuwait will host from December 21 to January 3.

The players had been absent following their participation with their respective clubs – the Qadsia in the Gulf Champions League and Kuwait Club in the AFC Champions League 2. The players joining the camp include Khaled Al-Rashidi, Khaled Ibrahim, Mubarak Al-Fanani, Saud Al-Hoshan, Eid Al-Rashidi, Fahad Al-Hajri, Sami Al-Sanea, Moaz Al-Dhafiri, Rashid Al-Dosari, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, Faisal Zayed, Khaled Al-Kharqawi, and Mohammed Daham. They missed the Blues' training sessions, which began last Thursday in Doha.

The national team is maintaining a rigorous training schedule, with two daily sessions: a morning gym workout at the team's residence and an evening practice at Qatar University's fields. Argentine coach Juan Pizzi and assistant coach Ahmed Abdul Karim are overseeing the preparations.

The Blues are set to play their first friendly match of the camp against Yemen next Monday. They will follow this with a match against Lebanon on December 12 and conclude their friendly fixtures against Syria on December 15.

The national team delegation will return to Kuwait on December 16 before continuing internal training in preparation for the "Khaleeji Zain 26". The team is placed in Group A alongside Qatar, the UAE, and Oman, while Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Yemen make up Group B.

Raphinha stars as Barcelona ends league slump with rout of Mallorca

Barbastro ousts Espanyol in Copa

MADRID, Dec 4, (AP): Barcelona got back to winning in the Spanish league in style, routing Mallorca 5-1 on with a pair of goals by Raphinha. In the second round of the Copa del Rey, fourth-division club Barbastro ousted top-flight club Espanyol 2-0, while Celta Vigo trounced Salamanca 7-0, Las Palmas defeated Europa 2-1 and Valladolid beat Avila 4-2.

Ferran Torres, Frenkie de Jong and Pau Víctor also scored for Barcelona, which hadn't won in three consecutive league games to allow Real Madrid to inch closer at the top of the standings.

Torres, who got to start in place of league-leading scorer Robert Lewandowski, opened the scoring in the 12th minute after Mallorca defenders failed to clear an easy ball from inside the area. One defender tried to kick it away but it ended ricocheting off a teammate to give Ferran an easy shot on goal.

The hosts equalized just before halftime in what was Mallorca's only shot on target, but Raphinha put Barcelona back in front by converting a 56th-minute penalty kick. He added to the lead in the 74th after a nice assist by Lamine Yamal.

Raphinha now has 11 goals in 16 league games this season.

"This is probably my best moment, but I want to do more," Raphinha said. "We knew it was



Barcelona's Raphinha, left, challenges for the ball with Mallorca's Valery Fernandez during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Mallorca and Barcelona at the Son Moix stadium in Palma de Mallorca, Spain. (AP)

important to win again after three matches in which something was lacking. It wasn't our best match, but it was important to win."

Yamal also helped set up De Jong's goal five minutes later, not long after the midfielder had come off the bench. It was De Jong who then assisted Víctor's goal in the 84th.

Barcelona has scored five or more goals in a match for the sixth time this season across all

competitions. It has outscored opponents 48-17 in the league alone.

Barcelona had lost twice in its last three league matches - 2-1 to Las Palmas at home on Saturday and 1-0 at Real Sociedad three rounds ago. Its other setback was a 2-2 draw at Celta Vigo when it was winning 2-0 until late in the match.

The game against Mallorca was moved forward in the sched-

ule because both clubs will be playing in the Spanish Super Cup in January.

Barcelona, which beat Brest in the Champions League last week, will visit Real Betis in its next league match on Saturday. Mallorca, sitting in sixth place in the Spanish league, faces Celta on Friday. Mallorca was coming off two straight league victories - against Valencia and at Las Palmas.

Burgan leads after hard-fought win

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Burgan continued its impressive run in the Handball League with a hard-fought 32-31 victory over Kazma in the tenth round of the preliminary stage. The match highlighted Burgan's resilience. Meanwhile, Kuwait Club secured a dominant 39-25 win against Sulaiyikhat, and Al-Nasr comfortably defeated Al-Sahel 37-25 in the third match of the round.

With this victory, Burgan climbed to the top of the standings with 15 points, while Kazma remained in fifth place with 10 points.

Kuwait improved to 12 points, moving to fourth place, while Sulaiyikhat stayed in seventh with 10 points. Al-Nasr increased its tally to 8 points, placing it tenth, and Al-Sahel remained at the bottom of the table without points.

The round concludes today with two games at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Halls Complex. Al-Qadsia faces Al-Tadamon at 5:00 pm, followed



Kuwait Club makes a goal attempt against Al-Sulaiyikhat.

by Al-Qurain taking on Al-Yarmouk at 6:30 pm.

The tournament follows a single-round league system, with the top six teams advancing to the Premier League. The Premier League will feature a three-division format, where qualified teams will carry forward points from the preliminary stage. Teams ranked seventh to fourteenth will compete in a two-division league to determine their final standings.

Kuwait Club and Qadsia battle for Volleyball Champ'ship supremacy

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: The Union Hall at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Halls Complex will host today's high-light matches of the seventh round of the Union Volleyball Championship. The showdown features Qadsia and Kuwait Club at 7:00 pm, preceded by Al-Shabab taking on Al-Nasr at 5:00 pm.

Both Qadsia and Kuwait Club enter the match tied at the top of the standings with 15 points each, with Kuwait Club holding the lead due to a superior set difference.

Both teams have already secured spots in the second round, where the top four teams from the preliminary round advance to the semi-finals.

The first-place team will face the fourth, and the second will meet the third, with the winners progressing to the final. Meanwhile, Burqan and Kazma appear to be the frontrunners for

the two remaining semi-final spots.

Kuwait Club is coached by Turkish tactician Taner Atik, who relies on a strong mix of local players and international stars, including Cuban Fernando Hernandez and Brazilian Rafael Vieira. Qadsia, under the guidance of Bahraini coach Reda Ali, counts on players such as Nasser Abdul Samad, Rashid Anbar, and Nasser Dashti, along with Iranian professional Mohammad Reza Beyk and Dutch star Thijs Ter Horst.

In the earlier match, fifth-placed Al-Shabab, with 7 points, looks to secure a win against bottom-ranked Al-Nasr, who has yet to score any points in the tournament.

In other results, Al-Arabi defeated Al-Sulaiyikhat 3-1 at the end of the sixth round, climbing to sixth place with 6 points, while Al-Sulaiyikhat remains in eighth with no points. Al-Yarmouk notched its first victory of the tournament with a 3-0 win over Al-Nasr.



Al-Arabi and Al-Sulaiyikhat players in action.

IOC official open to back-to-back World Cup in Saudi Arabia & Salt Lake Olympics in early 2034

GENEVA, Dec 4, (AP): Scheduling the 2034 World Cup in Saudi Arabia back-to-back with the 2034 Salt Lake City Winter Games would pose "no risk" to the Olympics, a senior IOC official said.

"We don't see at this stage a major issue. On the contrary, it is a lot of sport in the time frame," Christophe Dubi, the International Olympic Committee executive director for the games, said at an online briefing after a board meeting, suggesting two major sports events close together would be "a real feast" for fans.

Dubi's comments suggested January 2034 is surprisingly open for FIFA and Saudi Arabia to stage soccer's marquee event despite a near-clash with the Salt Lake City Olympics that aims to have an opening ceremony on Feb. 10 that year.

Playing a World Cup in January 2022

was not option when FIFA and future tournament host Qatar - in the planning stages a decade ago - needed to find cooler months to avoid the searing Middle East heat in June and July.

Before deciding in 2015 to play in Qatar in November-December 2022, FIFA understood from Olympic officials it would be unacceptable to move too close to the 2022 Winter Games.

Those Olympics eventually were hosted in Beijing, opening on Feb. 4.

Saudi Arabia will be confirmed next week by FIFA as host of a 2034 World Cup that cannot realistically be played in summer months when temperature routinely exceeds 40 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

The new 48-team, 104-game World Cup format takes 38 days to play.

Asked if the IOC wants January and early

February to be off limits for FIFA in 2034 to protect Salt Lake City, Dubi said: "I think that the risk of having those two in parallel is immensely limited."

"From all standpoints, including a commercial one, we have actually virtually no risk," he said. "This is going to be for sports fans a real feast during a period of whatever it is, three, four months, where you are going to have these two events."

Saudi Arabia currently has excellent relations - politically and financially - with FIFA and IOC to resolve the scheduling issue.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino has built a close working relationship over several years with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and the IOC this year sealed a 12-year deal for the kingdom to host the new Esports Olympics.