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Soccer Pages 14-16

Amir officially launches Arabian Gulf Cup 'Khaleeji Zain 26'

— Details Page 16 —



Inset: His Highness the Amir delivers a speech to officially open the Arabian Gulf Cup 'Khaleeji Zain 26'. Main photo: Part of the opening ceremony of the Gulf Cup.



Tributes pour in as Amir marks 1st year in power

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a congratulatory message from His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah on the first anniversary of the Amir's assumption of power. In his heartfelt message, the Crown Prince wished for His Highness to be blessed by Almighty God, remaining a "leader and father of our dear homeland and the faithful people of Kuwait."

homeland and pride of its generous people." In response, His Highness the Amir expressed deep appreciation for the kind sentiments from the Crown Prince, invoking Almighty God to protect the homeland and grant it enduring security and prosperity. On Friday, His Highness Sheikh Meshal also received congratulations from His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who commended the progress made under the Amir's wise leadership. Sheikh Nasser acknowledged the Amir's sincere efforts to serve the Kuwaiti people and address their interests, which have led to fulfilling their aspirations for further prosperity. The Amir reciprocated by expressing gratitude for Sheikh Nasser's thoughtful sentiments.

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Kuwait champions reforms in int'l trading frameworks

VIENNA, Dec 21, (KUNA): Kuwait affirmed on Saturday its commitment towards developing international trading laws and cooperation in legal and economic fields. This came in a statement to KUNA by head of the Kuwaiti delegation, First Deputy Munira Al-Obaidi from Legal Advice and Legislation Department, following her participation in the work of the sixty-fifth session of UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), which concluded its work Friday

at the UN headquarters in Vienna. Al-Obaidi explained the importance of this participation in strengthening the legal system of Kuwait and benefiting from the international expertise provided by UNCITRAL, noting that these meetings are a vital platform for exchanging ideas and experiences between member states, contributing to developing local laws to keep pace with global developments.

Continued on Page 7

Kuwait AI eyes flag 4,122 traffic offenders in 4 days

Mol calls for rule adherence

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21: The Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior announced the issuance of 4,122 traffic citations for violations such as not wearing seat belts and using mobile phones while driving, through the automated monitoring enhanced by artificial intelligence technologies.

The department clarified that these violations occurred between December 12 and December 15, a period of just 4 days.

The Ministry urged all road users to comply with traffic regulations, emphasizing the importance of continuous monitoring and awareness campaigns to ensure public safety.

Continued on Page 7



First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior receives Prime Minister of the Republic of India and his accompanying delegation.

PM Diwan photo

Modi spotlights India-Kuwait timeless bond

Indian PM makes history with Kuwait visit

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21, (KUNA): Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his accompanying delegation arrived in Kuwait on Saturday on an official visit.

They were received at Kuwait International Airport by First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Chief Abdulaziz Al-Dakheel, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Advisor at His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan and Chief of the Accompanying Mission of Honor Sheikh Dr. Basel Humoud Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Hayat and Kuwaiti Ambassador in India Meshal

Al-Shemali.

Earlier, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed on Saturday India-Kuwait relationship, saying New Delhi deeply values the historical connection with the State of Kuwait.

"We deeply value the historical connection with Kuwait that has been nurtured over generations. We are not just strong trade and energy partners, but also have shared interest in peace, security, stability and prosperity in the West Asia region," Modi said in his departure message ahead of his visit to Kuwait.

Continued on Page 7

Kuwait welcomes UNGA resolution

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry on Saturday welcomed the UN General Assembly resolution requesting a legal opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) about the unprovoked ban on the activities of UN refugee agency, UNRWA.

In a press release, the ministry underlined that this resolution is a significant step that reflects international solidarity with the Palestinian people, and categorical opposition to Israeli measures undermining the UNRWA's role and distorting its humanitarian message.

It reiterated Kuwait's unwavering support for the UNRWA as a core pillar for helping Palestinian refugees, while restating its steadfast and principled stance on the Palestinian cause as well as support for the Palestinian people to end the occupation and establish an independent state on the June 4, 1967 border, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Continued on Page 7

Kuwait issues strong condemnation of German Christmas market attack

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry on Saturday strongly denounced the car ramming incident at a market in the German central city of Magdeburg, which claimed multiple casualties.

In a press release, the ministry said that Kuwait reaffirms its rejection of all forms of violence, and calls on the international community to stand united against violence and terrorism and to

bring culprits to accountability and wipe out its sources.

It added that the State of Kuwait backs the German government and offers condolence to the government and people of Germany and the victims' families, while wishing a swift recovery for the injured.

Saudi Arabia on Saturday condemned the ramming attack in the German city of Magdeburg on Friday, which left several people killed or injured.

In a press release, the Saudi Foreign Ministry restated the kingdom's denunciation of violence, while voicing sympathy with and sincere condolence to the families of the victims and wishing a quick recovery for those injured in the incident.

A car rammed into a crowd at a Christmas market in the German central city of Magdeburg on Friday evening, killing at least five people, including a small child, and wounding at least 200 others.

— See Also Page 8

NewsWatch

WASHINGTON: U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) said its forces conducted a precision airstrike targeting ISIS leader Abu Yusuf aka Mahmud in the Dayr az Zawr Province, Syria, resulting in two ISIS operatives killed, including Abu Yusuf.

"This airstrike is part of CENTCOM's ongoing commitment, along with partners in the region, to disrupt and degrade efforts by terrorists to plan, organize, and conduct attacks against civilians and military personnel from the U.S., our allies, and our partners throughout the region and beyond," it said in a press release on X. (KUNA)

RIYADH: Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi on Saturday affirmed the GCC states' support for efforts to maintain the unity, sovereignty and security of Syria.

The GCC Secretariat General said Al-Budaiwi was speaking in a phone contract with the UN envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen.

The two sides explored regional and international efforts for preserving Syria's unity, sovereignty and security. (KUNA)

TEHRAN: At least 10 people were killed and 17 others injured on Saturday as a bus plunged into a ravine in the western Iranian province of Lorestan, the semi-official Fars news agency reported.

Just after noon, the provincial emergency medical services (EMS) received the report of the incident, which occurred on an intercity road in Poldokhtar County, Fars said, citing Ali Mohammadi, public relations director of the EMS organization. (Xinhua)



2 Trade, commerce important pillars of bonds with Kuwait: Indian PM



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10 Gulf Bank launches Kuwait's fastest and most comprehensive rewards program with an enhanced customer experience

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

When nepotism eats away at nation's body!

"I ONCE believed that a culture of rejecting nepotism could start within families, spreading to schools, and eventually to workplaces, gradually expanding through society. However, I was reminded of a prevailing cultural belief," columnist **Youssef Abdul Karim Al-Zankawi** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"If my eyes love you, time will not harm you." This mindset has led to the spread of social hypocrisy, which eventually manifested in administrative and professional hypocrisy, where people go to great lengths to please those in power, often at any cost.

"Over time, another proverb emerged: 'Whoever hunts it will ruin his children,' reinforcing the idea of 'mukhamat' -- a concept which, in simple terms, refers to looting or plundering.

"This principle, rooted in our behavior, suggests that what one acquires through mukhamat is essentially the property of someone else.

"As a result, nepotism, likened to this looting mentality, has taken hold of our administrative and economic systems.

"When certain laws include provisions allowing ministers to exempt cases from stipulated conditions, such clauses are often the starting point for the spread of nepotism in both the public and financial sectors.

"If you examine every corruption case that has made headlines, you'll discover that nepotism is often the root cause. It is evident that all our administrative, financial, and social issues -- along with our broader culture -- stem from this epidemic.

"Without nepotism, we wouldn't have seen parachute appointments, nor would we have witnessed the seizing of lands, barns, and chalets.

"We wouldn't have had violations regarding government housing, exceptional pensions, forgery, duplication, and other corrupt practices that have flourished in our society, all because of nepotism.

"Personally, I despise nepotism because it undermines the law and devalues the principles of justice and equality.

"Nepotism elevates the ego of those who seek it, making them feel superior to others and giving them a false sense of entitlement to take what doesn't belong to them. Ironically, those who seek nepotism are often the same individuals who demand strict enforcement of laws for others who break them.

"During my time working in banking and as a daily columnist, I met several high-ranking officials, including the late Lieutenant General Mutafad Abdul Hamid Haji Abdul Rahim, Lieutenant General Mustafa Al-Zaab, Lieutenant General Abdullah Muhanna, and Lieutenant General Thabet Muhanna.

"Despite this, I never asked any of them to assist me in securing special treatment or achieving personal gain. Instead, I would have asked them to expel me from their offices had I requested anything that went against the law.

"I also provided media-related services to the General Traffic Department, which was known to Lieutenant General Abdullah Muhanna, helping to revise and

shorten road sign messages in Arabic and English to better serve my country.

"It seems that the rejection of nepotism has been passed down to my children. One of them, a doctor, refuses to accept nepotism even when it comes to assisting his own father. More than nine years ago, 'I went to the nuclear medicine department at Mubarak Hospital to schedule a stress test as part of a heart examination.

"The receptionist told me the earliest appointment was in five months, to which I agreed. However, when she saw my name, she asked if I was related to Dr. so-and-so.

"Upon confirming that he was my son, she suggested that he should intervene to bring the appointment forward. I responded that he would never break the law to favor me over other patients. I asked her to schedule the appointment as initially offered.

"Suddenly, my son appeared behind me and politely told the receptionist, 'Please, do what my father says, even if it means waiting more than five months for the appointment.'

Also:

"The Arabic language is increasingly facing challenges in the field of scientific and academic research, particularly with the growing reliance on foreign journals and publishing in English at academic institutions in Kuwait, such as Kuwait University and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training," **Dalal Anwar Al-Sharhan** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"As researchers are increasingly encouraged to publish in prestigious foreign journals as a standard of academic excellence, publishing in Arabic and Arabic scientific journals is becoming marginalized. This raises critical questions about the status of the Arabic language in science and its role in enriching the academic community.

"While there is no doubt that English has become the global language of science and an effective tool for reaching a wider audience and promoting knowledge exchange, the overemphasis on publishing in English at the expense of Arabic risks marginalizing the cultural and scientific identity of Arab researchers.

"It also leads to a reduction in the scientific content available in Arabic. This brings forth an important question: Is abandoning publishing in Arabic the best solution to enhance research quality in the Arab world?

"The Arabic language is not just a tool for communication; it is a vessel for the cultural and civilizational identity of the Arab world.

"Taking pride in the Arabic language and enriching it with modern scientific terms and concepts strengthens its status and ensures its continued relevance in the face of scientific developments.

"Promoting scientific research in Arabic should, therefore, be seen as both a moral and cultural responsibility, not just an academic choice.

"Societies that neglect their mother tongue in scientific research risk losing a part of their identity, reducing science and knowledge to a domain reserved for a group of elites fluent in foreign languages.

"While some Arab scientific journals may have lower quality compared to global counterparts, abandoning them is not the solution."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Al-Zankawi



KUNA photo

Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Culture, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Chairman of the Organizing Committee of Arabian Gulf Cup (Khaleeji 26) Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi receives Iraqi Minister of Youth and Sports Ahmad Al-Mubarka.

Info Min receives Iraqi sports minister

Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Culture, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Chairman of the Organizing Committee of Arabian Gulf Cup (Khaleeji 26) Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi received Iraqi Minister of Youth and Sports Ahmad Al-Mubarka, who is in Kuwait to attend the opening ceremony due on Saturday evening under the patronage of His Highness the Amir.

Minister Al-Mutairi welcomed the visit of the Iraqi

minister which represents the brotherly bilateral ties, considering such sporting events mark an opportunity to meet and work together to enhance the youth and sports fields between countries of the region.

He welcomed the Iraqi team to Kuwait, who will be participating in Khaleeji 26, considering the championship a brotherly gathering that brings people together from the eight participating countries. (KUNA)

Follow safety guidelines during Cup matches: KFF

Free entry for Mol staff, kids in 2 parks

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) has called on the public to adhere to safety guidelines while attending the 26th Gulf Cup matches, which are set to begin today, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The KFF emphasized the importance of following these instructions to ensure the safety and well-being of all attendees.

Key safety measures include familiarizing yourself with the main emergency exits near your seating area upon entering the stadium.

In case of an emergency, attendees are advised not to use the elevators, but instead follow the signs leading to the nearest emergency exit.

The KFF also urged cooperation with organizers and volunteers inside the stadium to ensure a smooth and safe journey to the assembly areas.

Additionally, the public was reminded to remain calm and avoid pushing or becoming nervous while exiting the stadium, as this could compromise safety for everyone.

□ □ □

KFF tackles three fires: This morning, Hawalli and Salmiya Central Firefighting Teams successfully contained a fire in an apartment building in the Hawalli area, ensuring no significant injuries occurred.

Firefighting teams also managed a factory fire in the Shuaiba area earlier today, again confirming no major injuries, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

On Friday evening, the General Fire Force announced that teams from Jahra, Jahra Crafts, Mishref, Sulaibikhat, and Istiqal centers had brought a warehouse fire under control.

The blaze, which broke out in a building materials warehouse containing paints, wood and a blacksmith workshop, was extinguished without any significant injuries reported.

□ □ □

Free entry for Mol staff: In celebration of Arab Police Day, the General Department of Security Relations and Media has announced that all members of the Ministry of Interior, including military, civilian and professional personnel, retirees, and their families, are invited to enjoy free entry to Winter Wonderland and South Al-Sabahiya parks on Thursday, Dec 19 and Friday, Dec 20, reports Al-Anba daily.





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KUNA photo
First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah receives the Italian Minister of Defense Guido Cossseto and his delegation on his visit to Kuwait.

Kuwait, Italy keen on upgrading relations

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21, (KUNA): The First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah on Friday held talks with the visiting Italian Minister of Defense Guido Cossseto on the evolving cooperation between the two

countries.

The Ministry of Defense said in a statement that the discussions were held when Minister Sheikh Fahad received the Italian minister and his accompanying delegation, currently paying an official visit to Kuwait.

The two sides exchanged views on current developments on the regional and international arenas, examined the developing mutual cooperation and the aspiration to elevate it to higher levels.

Senior officials from the ministry attended the session.

News in Brief



Clothes distribution

ployees as well as Director of the Cleanliness Department at Farwaniya Municipality Muhammad Al-Jabaa.

Director of Public Relations and Citizen Services in Farwaniya Governorate Hamed Al-Dabi highlighted Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser's interest in supporting charity and community initiatives reflects his commitment to reviving the spirit of social solidarity among the members of society.

He highlighted the governor's efforts to support initiatives that assist labor groups and further the humanitarian work for which the people of Kuwait are renowned.



Two die in accidents: Two people lost their lives in separate run-over accidents - one on the Coastal Road in Ahmadi and the other on the Sixth Ring Road opposite Farwaniya, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to security sources, when a run-over accident on the Coastal Road opposite Ahmadi was reported, securitymen and paramedics rushed to the location and saw that the motorist - a Kuwaiti citizen - was detained, and the victim - an expatriate - had succumbed to serious injuries. His corpse was transferred to the Forensic Medicine Department.

Also, another run-over accident occurred on the Sixth Ring Road, which resulted in the death of the victim, also an expatriate.

Workers get winter attire

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah distributed winter clothing to a number of Municipal workers in Farwaniya Governorate, in collaboration with Kuwait Finance House (KFH).

According to a press release, this initiative is part of ongoing humanitarian efforts to support field workers in Kuwait.

Executive Director of Media and Government Relations at KFH Muhammad Al-Fares was present during the event, along with several KFH em-

Kuwaiti honored for role in cementing US-Mideast ties

Proud to have Fawaz on our team: NUSACC

WASHINGTON, Dec 21, (KUNA): The National US-Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) named on Friday its Associate Director Fawaz Al-Mudhaf, a Kuwaiti, one of the Middle East Policy Council's (MEPC) "40 Under 40" leaders for his role in cementing US-Mideast relations.

"Fawaz is making extraordinary contributions to our Chamber, and he is very worthy of this recognition," NUSACC's President and CEO David Hamod said in a press release.

"Our Chamber is deeply committed to capacity-building for young Arab leaders - in the USA and across the Arab world - and we are

very proud to have Fawaz on the team. Well done, Fawaz!"

According to the NUSACC, this distinction recognizes emerging leaders who have made significant impacts in strengthening US-Middle East relations.

For his part, Al-Mudhaf expressed pride in this honoring and vowed to continue work to bolster Arab-US commercial relations.

"I am humbled to be part of the Middle East Policy Council '40 Under 40'," he said.

"This accolade underscores the profound significance of strengthening US-Arab relations, a cause I am privileged to champion through my work at the National US-Arab Chamber of Commerce. I remain dedicated to leveraging this momentum to cultivate deeper partnerships and to drive enduring prosperity."

Al-Mudhaf, based in New York City and Kuwait, serves as a key liaison for NUSACC between the United States and the 22 nations of the Arab world. He provides strategic advice to public and private sector leaders, fostering initiatives designed to stimulate trade and investment.

In his capacity as Associate Director at the National US-Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC), Al-Mudhaf facilitates engagement with stakeholders across the United States and the MENA region.

As NUSACC's lead researcher, Al-Mudhaf delivers tailored research for US and Arab governments and companies, including small and medium-sized enterprises and new-to-market exporters and importers.

His contributions have been instrumental in fortifying commercial ties between the US and the Arab world, helping NUSACC earn the 2024 E Star Award - conferred by the President of the United States - the highest honor that a US entity may receive for supporting America's exports.

The NUSACC is the only Chamber of its kind to receive this award since it was created six decades ago.

Al-Mudhaf earned his undergraduate degree from The Elliott School of International Affairs at The George Washington University, specializing in Conflict Resolution with a minor in International Business.



Fawaz Al-Mudhaf

Kuwait, Thai views identical, ties extend 61 yrs

BANGKOK, Dec 21, (KUNA): Kuwait and Thailand held on Friday the first round of political talks on the level of the two sides' foreign ministries, and agreed on fostering a comprehensive strategic partnership in all domains.

Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Hayat chaired Kuwait's delegation in the talks, while Deputy Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Thailand Paisan Rupanichkij headed his country's group.

In a telephone call with KUNA, Hayat said the meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere that showed outstanding historic relations between the two sides extended over 61 years, noting views discussed with the Thai side were identical.

Both sides discussed, during the meeting, growing and distinguished strategic relations, and means of enhancing and developing them in all domains, in addition to sharing opinions on some international and regional issues of common concern.

In addition, they dealt with bilateral issues and means of strengthening technical, trade, investment and economic bonds, along pushing bilateral coordination and

collaboration for wider horizons in all fields, it stated.

They shared views on the developments in the Middle East region and northeast Asia, mainly coordination and collaboration in international arenas.

The Kuwaiti and Thai sides affirmed keenness on holding periodical coordination and consultation between the two ministries, and agreed on discussing details of establishing an inclusive strategic partnership in trade, investment, health, culture, science, renewable energy, oil, petrochemicals, economy and others, it noted.

They expressed hope for keeping expanding outstanding economic partnership between the two countries, in light of interest in enhancing cooperation in all fields.

Furthermore they agreed on the importance of health sector and main cooperative domains in the two countries that could be expanded as they are essential for development, sharing views, and enhancing growth, sustainability and global competitiveness.

The meeting featured a number of senior officials from both sides, including Kuwait's Minister Plenipotentiary Saleh Al-Sarawi and diplomatic attaché Bader Al-Jassem.

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Your visit strengthens our shared legacy of friendship and mutual respect.

HEARTY WELCOME TO KUWAIT



SHRI. NARENDRA MODI Honourable Prime Minister of India

We wholeheartedly welcome Honourable Prime Minister **Shri. Narendra Modi**, who is leading India towards greater prosperity and a \$5 Trillion economy with his dynamic vision. May this visit further strengthen the historic relationship between India & Kuwait.

Long live Indo-Kuwait friendship



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LOCAL

Al-Huwaila praises HH Amir's support

Empowering Kuwaiti women

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21: The Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila stated that the first anniversary of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad's assumption of power is a momentous national occasion, inspiring the nation with his noble directives aimed at achieving sustainable development and advancing Kuwait.



Dr. Al-Huwaila

In a press statement, the minister explained that His Highness's wise vision has set Kuwait on a steady course toward the future, focusing on strengthening national values and supporting sustainable development while advancing Kuwaiti society in all sectors.

The moment she took the oath before His Highness the Amir marked the beginning of a new era, where she assumed a great respon-

sibility to serve both the nation and its citizens. The ministry draws inspiration from His Highness's esteemed directives, and is dedicated to translating them into practical steps that will serve Kuwaiti society and elevate the quality of services provided.

Dr. Al-Huwaila expressed her pride in His Highness the Amir's emphasis on the importance of the upcoming stage, stressing that setting priorities, unifying efforts, and harnessing energies to achieve Kuwait's development vision form the core of the ministry's work. She affirmed that the ministry remains committed to working as one cohesive team to fulfill the aspirations of the wise leadership.

Dr. Al-Huwaila asked God for His Highness's continued protection and for the security, stability, and prosperity of Kuwait.

Regarding empowerment of women, she said His Highness the Amir has consistently emphasized the vital role of women in the development and progress of society, adding that he places great importance on enhancing the status of Kuwaiti women and empowering them in various fields, including occupying senior positions.

Dr. Al-Huwaila highlighted that His Highness's wise directives support the achievement of equal opportunities and social justice for empowering women to hold prominent roles in the country, adding that this approach reflects the leadership's deep belief in the vital role women play as major partners in the nation's development and in achieving its national goals.



IOM Kuwait and the Embassy of the Philippines unite for a social painting event on International Migrants Day.

IOM Kuwait and Embassy of the Philippines celebrate International Migrants Day with social painting event

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21: In celebration of International Migrants Day, IOM Kuwait, in partnership with the Embassy of the Philippines, hosted a social painting event under this year's theme, "Every Step." The event brought together individuals from various sectors and walks of life, highlighting the diverse and inclusive spirit of the migrant community in Kuwait.

The theme "Every Step" emphasizes that every step in the migration process is crucial and deserves attention. Participants in the event included community members from the medical, construction, retail, domestic, and other sectors, all contributing to a collective artwork that symbolizes unity and shared progress.

The Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait, H.E. Mr. Jose A. Cabrera III said, "The Embassy great-

ly appreciates this opportunity to work in partnership with IOM Kuwait to raise awareness of the role and contribution of migrants in the development and prosperity of receiving states."

"The Embassy also greatly appreciates measures implemented by the Kuwaiti Government that benefit expatriates and workers in Kuwait and therefore seeks to continue dialogue and cooperation, especially for programs and activities that strengthen harmonious and mutually beneficial relations between migrant workers and employers", he added.

Mazen AboulHosn, IOM Chief of Mission in Kuwait said "Today, we celebrate the invaluable contributions of migrants to our societies. This event is a testament to the power of art in bringing people together and fostering understanding. Every step taken by a migrant is a step towards a brighter future for

all. It is our pleasure to partner with the Embassy of the Philippines to mark this important day."

The social painting event not only celebrated the artistic talents of the migrant community but also served as a platform to raise awareness about the benefits of regular migration pathways. By supporting initiatives like this, IOM Kuwait and its partners aim to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for migrants, ensuring their rights are protected and their contributions recognized.

Migration is a natural and integral part of the human story, contributing to cultural exchange, economic growth, and innovation. Well-managed migration benefits both migrants and the communities they move to, transforming lives and fostering development.

Yemeni Presidential Council lauds Kuwait's generous support

ADEN, Dec 21, (KUNA): Member of the Yemeni Presidential Leadership Council Aidarous Al-Zubaidi lauded Kuwait's supportive stances and humanitarian and developmental aid for Yemeni people.

The Yemeni state news agency (Saba) reported that this came during Al-Zubaidi's meeting with the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Yemen Falah Al-Hajraf to discuss bilateral relations

between the two countries and developments in the Yemen and the region.

Al-Zubaidi expressed gratitude to Kuwait for its generous aid and continuous support to Yemen to restore stability and achieve sustainable development.

He also appreciated Kuwait's its unlimited backing for Yemeni government's efforts to revamp the infrastructures which were destroyed

by the war.

The meeting reviewed ways to increase Kuwaiti support for the Yemeni people in the areas of development and infrastructure overhauling.

For his part, Ambassador Al-Hajraf affirmed the State of Kuwait's continued support for Yemen at this critical stage and enhancing cooperation with the government in various sectors.



Group photo of ambassadors and guests.

KUNA photo

Peru embassy in Kuwait hosts exhibition on Great Inca Road

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21, (KUNA): Peru Embassy in Kuwait, in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), along with Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center, organized on Thursday an exhibition on the Qhapaq Nan, Great Inca Road (Royal road) of the pre-Columbian South America era.

The exhibition of Qhapaq Nan Inca Road, included 35 historic photographs about the road, which is considered one of the most important human achievements in the 16th century.

NCCAL Secretary-General Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar, said in a press statement on the sidelines of the fair opening at Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center that this exhibition sheds light on one of the greatest trade routes in the world, which extends over a distance of about 40,000 kilometers.

Al-Jassar added that the road, which dates back more than three thousand years, has been included on the UNESCO

World Heritage List as one of the international landmarks that require protection and preservation.

He stressed the importance of such exhibitions in enhancing cultural and heritage awareness, pointing out the State of Kuwait's interest in registering its heritage sites on the World Heritage List.

He added, "We are in the process of studying how to register Kuwaiti sites in the World Heritage". He underlined that "visiting such exhibitions is an important opportunity to gain knowledge and experience."

Al-Jassar invited the Kuwaiti public and residents to visit the exhibition that tells the story of the "Great Inca Road" and provides a rich experience that highlights the ancient cultural and historical heritage.

Considered one of the most impressive engineering works in history, it stretches into six modern-day countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador, as well as Peru.

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LOCAL

'Al-khaleej diwan' workshops kick off

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21, (KUNA): The four-day "Al-khaleej diwan" workshops kicked started on Friday -- an activity coinciding with the Gulf Cup tournament.

The activity is co-organized by the Public Authority for Youth and the non-profit "Harvard diwan" institution.

The authority acting director general, Abdullah Al-Adwani, said in a statement on behalf of the Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, affirmed that the gathering "focuses on culture, arts, tasks by the youth who constitute a soft power." Up to 120 lecturers from Gulf States will address the event, he said.

Meanwhile, Saad Al-Tami, the executive manager of the "diwan" said the activity brings together the GCC citizens under the umbrella of dialogue and cooperation thus depict-

ing the Gulf unity patriotism."

The "Harvard diwan" groups experts, academics, decision makers and students from various Arab countries to discuss vital issues in the political and cultural realms, Tami said.

Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) is participating in "Al-khaleej diwan" that opened on Friday under sponsorship of the Minister of Information, Minister of Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.

The event features various cultural, social and technological activities and workshops coinciding with Kuwait's hosting of the Gulf Cup tournament.

The "diwan," co-organized by the Public Authority for Youth and "Harvard diwan" is a platform that groups media figures and the intelligentsia from various Arab countries.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait AI

It called on drivers to take responsibility for adhering to traffic rules to create a safer road environment for everyone.

Meanwhile, with the recent rainfall, some areas witnessed a decrease in reckless driving, due to the new measures implemented by the Ministry of Interior. These measures include referring reckless drivers to Central Prison after filing cases for damaging state property and seizing their vehicles. The streets have been notably free of such incidents because of the increased security presence and stricter penalties for reckless driving violations.

Indian PM

He hoped that his meetings with Kuwait officials would be an opportunity to chalk out a roadmap for a futuristic partnership for the benefit of the people of India and Kuwait and the region at large.

Modi added his visit will help to strengthen and reinforce the special ties and bonds of friendship between the people of India and Kuwait.

Modi's visit assumes importance as it is coming after 43 years as the last Indian Prime Minister to visit Kuwait was Indira Gandhi in 1981.

India and Kuwait have strong trade, investment, energy and people-to-people relationship and the current visit is to cement the existing ones and explore new avenues of cooperation. Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya paid a visit to India on December 4 and held extensive talks with his Indian counterpart S. Jaishankar.

Kuwait welcomes

Similarly, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Jassem Al-Budaiwi applauded on Saturday a resolution by the United Nations General Assembly requesting a consultative opinion from the International Court of Justice regarding Israel's adherence to the UN activities toward the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

The GCC secretary general said in a press statement that the adoption of this resolution clearly mirrors international consensus on supporting the Palestinian people in the face of the challenges. It also backs the Palestinian people's legitimate rights to determine their destiny and establish an independent state, Al-Budaiwi stated.

He indicated at the final declaration of the 45th session of the GCC Supreme Council (the GCC Summit), held in December 2024, regarding the Palestinian cause as the nation's central question.

Al-Budaiwi noted the GCC sum-

mit's stance on ending the Israeli occupation, supporting sovereignty of the Palestinian people on all the occupied territories, urging states to pursue recognition of the State of Palestine, conducting a collective measure to attain a lasting peace that ensures the independent Palestinian state to the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, according to the Arab Peace Initiative and the international legitimacy resolutions.

Tributes pour

Additionally, His Highness Sheikh Meshal received congratulations from Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. The Prime Minister expressed his honor in addressing His Highness on behalf of himself and his fellow ministers, extending heartfelt congratulations on this milestone. He conveyed admiration for the Amir as Kuwait celebrates this important anniversary while welcoming a new year filled with promise. The Prime Minister highlighted His Highness's efforts in promoting comprehensive development and national renaissance, pledging to adhere to the Amir's guidance in fulfilling their national duties.

Moreover, on Friday, His Highness Sheikh Meshal received a congratulatory message from Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. In his message, Sheikh Mubarak praised Kuwait's development under the Amir's leadership and acknowledged his significant efforts to serve the nation. He expressed hopes for continued prosperity while wishing His Highness a long and healthy life. The Amir responded with gratitude for Sheikh Mubarak's kind sentiments.

His Highness Sheikh Meshal also received congratulations from Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah on this anniversary. In his message, Sheikh Mohammad commended Kuwait's development under His Highness's leadership and recognized his genuine efforts to serve the Kuwaiti people while wishing for continued progress. The Amir reciprocated by expressing appreciation for Sheikh Dr. Mohammad's thoughtful words.

Furthermore, His Highness Sheikh Meshal received congratulations from Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on this significant milestone. In his message, Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf reflected on how this occasion symbolizes an era of achievements made possible through His Highness's wise leadership. The Amir replied with gratitude for Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf's kind words.

First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah also extended congratulations to His Highness Sheikh Meshal on this anniver-

sary. In a statement from the Ministry of Defense, Sheikh Fahad expressed wishes for more prosperity and development for Kuwait under His Highness's leadership while hoping for a long and healthy life for the Amir. He reaffirmed his commitment to serving the country and ensuring its security.

Additionally, His Highness Sheikh Meshal received a congratulatory cable from Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tariq Al Said on Friday, celebrating his first year in power. Sultan Haitham expressed hopes for continued prosperity in Kuwait under His Highness's leadership while wishing him a long healthy life. In response, His Highness sent a cable back expressing gratitude for Sultan Haitham's kind sentiments.

His Highness also received a congratulatory cable from Omani Deputy Prime Minister Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said regarding this anniversary. He wished for ongoing prosperity under His Highness's wise leadership along with good health for him. The Amir reciprocated by expressing appreciation for Fahd bin Mahmoud's kind feelings while wishing him a long healthy life as well.

Kuwait champions

She said that the Fifth Working Group held extensive discussions on pivotal issues, including tracking and recovering assets in insolvency procedures and determining the law applicable to those procedures, with a focus on objectives and formulating appropriate legal definitions.

The team also discussed the law of the state of the insolvency court, including the exceptions contained therein, and the implications of its application, added Al-Obaidi, saying the meetings also touched on payment systems, clearing and settlement, and financial markets subject to regulatory regulation.

Discussions also included lock-in compensation under eligible financial contracts, whether inside or outside regulated systems, in addition to recognizing the effects of the law of the state of the insolvency court and other laws applied by foreign courts.

Al-Obaidi stressed that these issues, despite their complexity, are of great importance for enhancing the stability of the legal and economic systems at the local and international levels.

She pointed out that such discussions contribute to reaching international consensus on complex legal issues, which supports the stability of commercial markets and helps meet the challenges of economic globalization.

Al-Obaidi praised the role played by the Legal Advice and Legislation Department in modernizing national legislation, explaining that Kuwait always seeks to harmonize its laws with international best practices, especially in the areas of bankruptcy, insolvency and regulation of financial markets.



Minister Al-Mutairi receives Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al Thani, the head of the Qatari Olympic Committee at Kuwait International Airport.



Minister of Youth receives Deputy Chairman of the General Sports Authority in the Kingdom of Bahrain Sheikh Salman bin Mohammed Al Khalifa.



KUNA photos
Minister of State receives Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Minister of Sports and Youth in the State of Qatar.

Al-Mutairi highlights regional unity

Kuwait welcomes Qatari and Bahraini delegates for Khaleeji 26 inauguration

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21, (KUNA): Minister of Information and Culture, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Chairman of the Organizing Committee of Arabian Gulf Cup (Khaleeji 26) Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi received on Saturday at Kuwait International Airport the head of the Qatari Olympic Committee Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al-Thani on the occasion of his visit to attend the tournament inauguration due later today.

In a press statement, Minister Al-Mutairi said that Kuwait's hosting of this Gulf sports event would contribute to boosting joint youth and sports action between Kuwait and the other states of the region. He welcomed Sheikh Joaan's gracious visit that embodies the brotherly relations between the two states.

The reception at the airport was attended by the deputy chairperson of the tournament steering committee and Chairman of Kuwait Football Association Sheikh Ahmad

Al-Yusuf Al-Sabah, the Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Sports Bashar Abdullah, the Qatari Ambassador to Kuwait Ali Abdullah Al-Mahmoud and members of the steering committee.

In another reception on Saturday, Minister Al-Mutairi greeted Sheikh Salman bin Mohammad Al Khalifa, Deputy Chairman of Bahrain's General Sports Authority and head of the Bahraini delegation. Minister Al-Mutairi underscored the championship's role in fostering unity and enhancing joint efforts among Gulf states.

On Friday, the Minister also welcomed Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Qatar's Minister of Sport and Youth, who visited Kuwait to attend the Gulf Cup inauguration. He reiterated that these sports gatherings offer opportunities to build stronger ties and further shared youth and sports objectives across the region.



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The Honorable Prime Minister of India

Shri. Narendra Modi

on his visit to Kuwait



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SAUDI ARABIAN CHEVRON INC. (SAC) - KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY

Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the under-mentioned Public Tenders for procurement of materials.

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in any of the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from 22 DEC 2024 up to 9 JAN 2025 for a non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender. Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057. Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

The closing date for the following Tenders from S.NO. 1 to S.NO. 11 will be on TUESDAY, 21 JAN 2025 @ 09:00 AM. and for the tender S.NO. 12 will be on TUESDAY, 4 FEB 2025 @ 09:00 AM

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	FEES (K D)
1	027826-R1	S/F YOKOGAWA SCADA PLC	5
2	027846-R1	S/F ZEECO FLARE SYSTEM	35
3	028876	PRODUCTION MANIFOLD ASSEMBLY	25
4	028950	OIL IMMersed TRANSFORMER	15
5	028951	PROGRAMMABLE LOGIC CONTROLLER	25
6	029025	OIL ANALYZER	15
7	029026	CHEMICAL INJECTION PACKAGE	35
8	029027	RECIRCULATION VALVE, SCHROEDAHL OR EQUIVALENT	5
9	029275	MISC SPARE PARTS (WEATHERFORD - EPRODUCTION SOLUTIONS)	25
10	029556	PIPES HDPE AND ACCESSORIES	35
11	029866	S/F SULZER PUMP	5
12	BPT # 258/24-R1	BLANKET PURCHASE TENDER FOR M/S SULZER PUMPS LTD (3 YRS)	100

Notes: Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender document and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please fill request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGOC or SAC) to e-mail HBJH@chevron.com and CBMS@chevron.com at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

For additional information, you may contact: Telephone No.: 23983639 - Ext.: 2502 - 3477

Offering broader redemption choices for travel, shopping, cashback, and points transfer

Gulf Bank launches Kuwait's fastest and most comprehensive rewards program with an enhanced customer experience



Group photo of bank officials and employees with Visa representative.



Bader Al-Ali and Visa representative Ghadir Sarab during the signing of the Points Program cooperation agreement.



Najla Aleisa gives a presentation on the points program.



Bader Al-Ali and Najla Aleisa during the press conference.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21: Gulf Bank has officially launched its enhanced Gulf Points Program, setting a new benchmark for loyalty rewards in Kuwait. Renowned as Kuwait's fastest and most rewarding loyalty program, the enhanced Gulf Points now offers customers unparalleled benefits, including cashback, seamless airline and hotel bookings, and a cutting-edge digital shopping store - the first of its kind in the banking sector.

The announcement was made during a press conference attended by Mr. Bader Al-Ali, Acting General Manager of Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank, Mrs. Najla Aleisa, Chief Marketing Officer at Gulf Bank, and [Visa Representative's Name], [Title], from Visa.

Revamped Program Features

Mr. Bader Al-Ali shared his excitement about the program, stating: "The enhanced Gulf Points program is designed to transform everyday banking into extraordinary experiences. It reflects Gulf Bank's commitment to providing innovative solutions tailored to customer preferences."

Key Features:

- **Earn Points:** Customers earn points on every transaction made using Gulf Bank credit cards.
- **Instantly redeem for cashback:** Gulf Points can be redeemed for cash, transferred directly to the customer's credit card.
- **Share Rewards:** Gulf Points can be gifted to family and friends.



Explanation of the many options of the points program.

- **Travel Benefits:** Redeem points for flights, hotel stays, and car rentals globally.

■ **Online Store:** A pioneering online store, integrated into Gulf Bank's app, enables customers to shop directly using Gulf Points.

Mr. Al-Ali emphasized: "These features are designed to meet the evolving needs of our customers, reflecting Gulf Bank's dedication to delivering innovative services rooted in customer feedback."

Driving a Culture of Saving

Mrs. Najla Aleisa highlighted the program's broader impact: "The enhanced Gulf Points program encourages the use of credit cards over debit cards, empowering customers to accumulate Gulf Points on daily purchases while fostering a culture of saving and innovative financial behavior."

She further noted:

Credit card usage in Kuwait accounts for only 10% of total consumer spending, compared to 27% in Saudi Arabia and 87% in the UAE, signaling substantial room for growth.

Gulf Bank's leadership in digital innovation is underscored by its highest-rated banking app on Apple's App Store and Google Play. Gulf Bank's credit cards are among the most widely integrated with digital wallets, reinforcing its role as a market leader. Adding that Gulf Points exemplifies Gulf Bank's focus on innovation and delivering beyond expectations."

Boosting Economic Growth

The program's launch aligns with Kuwait's increasing credit card us-

age, which grew by 12.6% in 2024, reaching KD 3.4 billion in the first nine months alone. Growth sectors such as tourism and travel have been key contributors to this trend. Adding that The contest will encourage customers to explore the program's full potential and maximize their benefits.

Stay tuned for more details about this initiative aimed at boosting customer engagement and credit card adoption.

The enhanced Gulf Points program reaffirms Gulf Bank's position as a pioneer in delivering innovative banking experiences, catering to customer needs while supporting Kuwait's growing economy. Download the Gulf Bank app today to explore the enhanced Gulf Points Program.

Fed's preferred inflation gauge shows US price pressures eased last month

Report shows prices rose just 0.1% from Oct to Nov

WASHINGTON, Dec 21, (AP): An inflation gauge that is closely watched by the Federal Reserve barely rose last month in a sign that price pressures cooled after two months of sharp gains.

Friday's report from the Commerce Department showed that prices rose just 0.1% from October to November. Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, prices also ticked up just 0.1%, after two months of outside 0.3% gains.

The milder inflation figures arrive two days after Federal Reserve officials, led by Chair Jerome Powell, rocked financial markets by revealing that they now expect to cut their key interest rate just two times in 2025, down from four in their previous estimate. Stickier inflation, Powell said, "might be the single biggest factor" causing the central bank to reduce the number of rate cuts it envisions. Fewer Fed rate cuts would likely mean that mortgage rates and other consumer borrowing costs would remain elevated.

Friday's data did contain one sign of still-persistent inflation: Year-over-year inflation edged up to 2.4% in November from 2.3% in October and above the Fed's 2% inflation target. But year-over-year "core" prices, which exclude volatile food and energy costs, were unchanged at 2.8%. The Fed pays closer attention to the core figures, which are regarded as a better sign of where inflation is likely headed.

The modest monthly inflation figures in Friday's report point to one likely reason why the Fed was willing to cut its benchmark interest rate Wednesday: Its preferred inflation gauge, known as the personal consumption expenditures price index, is coming in lower - and closer to the Fed's target - than the higher-profile consumer price index. The core CPI, for example, was 3.3% in November.

Friday's report also showed that consumers increased their spending by a solid 0.4% from October to November, a sign that households continue to propel the economy. On Thursday, the government reported that the U.S. economy grew at a healthy 3.1% annual rate last quarter, largely thanks to consumer demand.

"We can break for the holidays with the com-

fort that the economy's growth engine is humming along." Oren Klachkin, an economist at Nationwide Financial, wrote in a client note. "The Fed would like to continue lowering interest rates, but it feels it can't do so amid what increasingly looks like an elevated inflation and resilient growth environment."

Incomes also rose 0.3% last month, faster than prices - a trend which, if it continues over time, should help Americans adjust to higher costs.

Powell had said Wednesday that even if Friday's inflation figures came in unusually low, it would have only a limited effect on the Fed's outlook.

"Our position shouldn't change based on two or three points of good or bad data," he said at a news conference. "We have a long string now of inflation coming down gradually over time. ... We still have some work to do."

Inflation, according to the measure released Friday - the personal consumption expenditures price index - has plummeted from a peak of 7.2% in June 2022 to 2.1% in September. The Fed's tool for fighting inflation is to steadily raise borrowing costs across the economy, which tends to cool spending and growth.

Lending to companies had tightened more than expected

Russia's cbank holds off on interest rate hike amid friction between inflation, war spending

MOSCOW, Dec 21, (AP): Russia's central bank has left its benchmark interest rate at a record 21%, holding off on further increases despite high consumer inflation fueled by the Kremlin's war against Ukraine.

The decision Friday comes amid criticism from influential business figures, including tycoons close to the Kremlin, that high rates are putting the brakes on business activity and the economy.

And it underlines the ongoing friction in the economy between military spending and stable prices for consumers.

Central Bank of Russia Gov. Elvira Nabiullina said that lending to companies had tightened more than expected due to the October rate hike that brought the benchmark to its current record level. The central bank held open the possibility of an increase at its next meeting and said inflation was expected to fall to an annual 4% next year from its current 9.5%.

Factories are running three shifts making every-

thing from vehicles to clothing for the military, while a labor shortage is driving up wages and fat enlistment bonuses are putting more rubles in people's bank accounts to spend. All that is driving up prices.

On top of that, the weakening Russian ruble raises the prices of imported goods like cars and consumer electronics from China, which has become Russia's biggest trade partner since Western sanctions disrupted economic relations with Europe and the U.S.

Russia's military spending is enabled by oil exports, which have shifted from Europe to new customers in India and China who aren't observing sanctions such as a \$60 per barrel price cap on Russian oil sales.

High interest rates can dampen inflation but also make it more expensive for businesses to get the credit they need to operate and invest.

Critics of the central bank rates and of Nabiullina have included Sergei Chemezov, the head of state-

controlled defense and technology conglomerate Rostec, and steel magnate Alexei Mordashov.

Russian President Vladimir Putin opened his annual news conference on Thursday by saying the economy is on track to grow by nearly 4% this year and that while inflation is "an alarming sign," wages have risen at the same rate and that "on the whole, this situation is stable and secure."

Putin acknowledged there had been criticism of the central bank, saying that "some experts believe that the Central Bank could have been more effective and could have started using certain instruments earlier." Asked what decision the Central Bank was going to make on the rate, Putin said that Nabiullina didn't tell him what the rate will be. "She may not know it herself yet as they discuss it during the board meeting and make the final decision during discussion," he said. "I hope that the decision will be well-balanced and conform to today's needs."

10 Kuwaitis graduate from Germany's RENAC

BERLIN, Dec 21, (KUNA): New 10 Kuwaiti trainees have graduated from Germany's renewable energy academy (RENAC), as part of its program of developing photoelectric cell systems.

The Berlin-based academy held a graduation ceremony, which featured Kuwait's Ambassador to Germany Reem Al-Khaled and head of the academy Berthold Bredt.

Speaking to KUNA in a statement on Saturday, Al-Khaled said she is proud of Kuwaiti trainees who took part in this session, which came as part of collaboration between the RENAC and Kuwait's Ministry of Electricity & Water & Renewable Energy.

She congratulated Kuwaitis on this progress, and stressed the initiative constituted a key step toward achieving Kuwait's ambitious vision regarding enhancing innovation and sustainability in energy.

The program metalizes His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's vision, and it is based on the pillars of Kuwait Vision 2033 which eyes a paradigm shift in diversify-

ing national economy, she said.

It also shows the deep-rooted outstanding partnership between Kuwait and Germany through sharing expertise and building national capabilities in vital sectors in a manner that boosts sustainable development, Al-Khaled elaborated.

She further commended the outstanding efforts made by the academy, in collaboration with the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science.

Meanwhile, Bredt stressed the importance of boosting cooperation with Kuwait extended over 16 years.

The training session aimed to create appropriate conditions for trainees to be able to develop photoelectric cells in the future, Bredt told KUNA in a statement.

Representing the Kuwaiti delegation, Hajar Al-Hamlan told KUNA in a similar statement that participation was part of Kuwait's plan aiming to achieve His Highness the Amir's vision by securing 15 percent of the state's needs of renewable energy.

GCCSC projects 3.7% GDP growth by 2024

MUSCAT, Dec 21, (KUNA): The GCC Statistical Center (GCCSC) expected on Saturday a 3.7 percent GDP growth, with constant prices, in member states by 2024.

In its report, the GCCSC revealed a higher pace of continued growth in 2025 reaching 4.5 percent and 3.5 percent in 2026.

This forecast growth in 2024, 2025 and 2026 would happen due to a rise in GCC member states' oil production, the report stated.

The accelerated pace of economic recovery in the sectors related to tourism, transportation and infrastructure projects was one of

the reasons behind growth in GCC states, it noted.

GCC states' non-oil sector is expected to grow by 4.5 percent by 2024, and 7.8 and 8.6 percent in 2025 and 2026 respectively, it added.

GCC states' GDP (with constant prices) reached about USD 1.7 trillion in 2023, a five-percent growth compared with 2022, it said.

Inflation rates in GCC states are projected to reach 2.4, 2.6 and 2.1 percent from 2024 to 2026.

GCC states' consumer price index (inflation) hit 2.2 percent in 2023, a drop of .09 percent compared with 2022, it pointed out.



Yusuff Ali MA – Chairman of Lulu Group International

'A historic day in Indo-Kuwait ties'

"This is indeed a very historic day in the Indo-Kuwait bilateral relationship which spans decades.

For years now, Kuwait has been home to millions of Indians (today more than 1 million Indians reside in Kuwait) who have lived very peacefully and earn their livelihood with utmost respect and dignity in a very culturally & economically advanced country.

Kuwait under the wise and visionary leadership of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad

Al-Jaber Al Sabah is today one of the most prosperous and wealthiest economies in the world with a very high standard of living for its residents.

As the Honorable Indian Prime Minister makes his first ever official visit to Kuwait, I am very positive that it will further boost the long-standing socio-economic and trade ties between both the countries and bring in a new era of peace and prosperity."

Yusuff Ali MA

Chairman of Lulu Group International



Photos from the event.

Season to play, game, and save big at LuLu Hypermarket

A world of wonder and joy awaits kids and adults alike at Lulu Hypermarket's Toy Fest 2024, the ultimate holiday treat. From 18 December to 4 January, children and families are invited to explore a magical wonderland filled with toys, games, and exciting surprises that will light up every little one's holiday season.

The Toy Fest kicked off at LuLu Hypermarket Egaila outlet on 19th

December with an exciting inauguration by renowned gamer Ahmadal-rakla, in the presence of top management of LuLu Kuwait. The event drew enthusiastic crowds as families flocked to witness the beginning of this kid-friendly festival.

Toy Fest 2024 features jaw-dropping deals, including discounts of up to 60% on top-branded toys, and attractive offers on gaming accessories

making it the perfect opportunity to stock up on gifts and games for the little ones.

Shoppers can also explore the Toy Expo, a showcase of the latest and most popular toys, along with live spot games, where children can participate, win freebies, and enjoy a lineup of fun-filled end-of-year surprises that will make their holiday season ever more magical.

World Kindness Day celebrated with charitable art exhibition

Four Seasons Hotel teams up with KACCH & BACCH for Heartful II

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21: In celebration of World Kindness Day, Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya proudly partnered with the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital and Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (KACCH & BACCH) for their annual charitable art exhibition Heartful. This heartwarming event featured artwork from 32 talented artists and The Art Bazaar with creations of 13 additional talented contributors.

Building on the strong partnership established last year through various impactful initiatives, the Four Seasons For Good team actively supported the occasion. The Hotel's Restaurants & Beverages team contributed by preparing an array of drinks and canapés for attendees, enhancing the vibrant atmosphere of the exhibition. This collaboration highlights Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait's ongoing commitment to fostering community well-being and supporting cultural initiatives.

"Our collaboration with KACCH & BACCH for Heartful II reflects our ethos of responsible hospitality



A group photo from the event.

and giving back to the community," said Kapriel Kalendarian, Director of PR and Communications of

Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait. "We are honored to support this remarkable cause and contribute to its suc-

cess." This initiative complements the Hotel's larger commitment to sustainabil-

ity and community engagement. Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait has received recognition as a leader in responsible

hospitality, being the first and only hotel in the country to achieve LEED Platinum certification, along with Responsible Hospitality VERIFIED™ sustainability status by Forbes Travel Guide.

From on-site water bottling to AI-driven waste management, the elimination of single-use plastics, and community events like Heartful II, the Hotel continues to set a benchmark for luxury hospitality that harmonizes with social and environmental responsibility.

About Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya

Since opening its doors in 2017, Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya has redefined luxury in Kuwait with its sleek, avant-garde design and thoughtful sustainability practices.

As part of the world's leading operator of luxury hotels, Four Seasons is dedicated to creating a positive impact through innovative sustainability initiatives and meaningful community partnerships.

For more information, please visit www.press.fourseasons.com/kuwait.



Photos from the event.

'Lamy's Poem' screened at CAP

Director Kronmer hosted by Miseenscene Club

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21: As part of the activities of the "Miseenscene" Cinema Club on the Contemporary Art Platform "CAP" in Kuwait, a special discussion was held for the film Lamy's Poem on the evening of Saturday, December 14th. Director Alexander Kronmer participated in the discussion via Zoom from Washington. The event was moderated by film critic Hala Samy, who provided insightful analysis of the film's artistic aspects. She facilitated the conversation smoothly, ensuring a clear exchange between the director and the audience. Hala also guided the dialogue with thoughtful questions that helped clarify the film's themes, creating an engaging and informative atmosphere for all participants.

Plot summary:
In Lamy's Poem, Kronmer weaves a poignant narrative through three interconnected paths. The first follows 12-year-old Syrian refugee Lamy, whose story reflects the struggles of many displaced children affected by war. The second path links Lamy's journey to that of the 13th-century poet and philosopher Jalal ad-Din Rumi, who also suffered from displacement and the ravages of war. The third path merges these two timelines through Rumi's poetry book, which serves as a "magical gateway" that connects Lamy to Rumi's spiritual

world. His profound wisdom inspires and empowers Lamy to overcome her own challenges, blending past and present to deliver a powerful message of resilience and hope.

The director also spoke about the symbolic depth in the film, noting that it reflects the intersection of different cultural and historical experiences, making it a universal story of overcoming adversity.

Audience Reaction:

The audience was deeply engaged with the film, appreciating the director's unique approach and the emotional depth of the story. Many attendees, including a group of curious children, expressed interest in learning more about the human stories behind the film, particularly regarding refugees and the powerful role of dreams in connecting different eras. Attendees praised the film's narrative strength, the depth of its characters, and the beauty of its messages, noting how it resonated on both a personal and universal level. There was a strong desire for more such creative and thought-provoking films, underscoring the importance of such events in fostering a deeper appreciation of cinema.

The conversation also included insights from the director's wife, Lubna Ismail, who shared behind-the-scenes details of the film's production,

particularly the challenges of creating the film during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lubna, an Egyptian-American, added a touch of warmth and humor to the session, giving the audience a glimpse into the personal and professional dynamics that shaped the making of the film. She spoke about the creativity and resilience required to bring the film to life during such challenging times, and her lively presence made the discussion even more engaging.

At the end of the event, the attendees extended their heartfelt thanks to the Contemporary Art Platform "CAP" and the organizers of the Miseenscene Film Club for providing such a valuable opportunity. Special appreciation was directed towards writers and critics Ibrahim Farghaly, Walid Al-Zuhairy, and Hala Samy, whose roles were pivotal in organizing and facilitating the session.

This event highlights the Miseenscene Film Club's ongoing efforts to provide a rich cinematic experience to the Kuwaiti community, promoting dialogue between creators and the audience, and contributing to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the art of cinema.

The club's activities are held every Saturday at 7 PM, and the invitation is open to the public. You can follow their social media accounts for updates and more information.



Dancers perform during the Khaleeji Zain 26 opening ceremony.

Sports

HH Amir inaugurates Khaleeji Zain 26

Dazzling artistic show reflecting Gulf past, future; Amir receives FIFA president

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21, (KUNA): The Arabian Gulf Football Cup, "Khaleeji Zain 26," officially kicked off on Saturday evening with a grand opening ceremony at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium.

The ceremony featured mesmerizing artistic performances that celebrated Gulf heritage while highlighting a shared vision for the future.

The event began with an inspiring speech by the tournament's sponsor, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, followed by Kuwait's national anthem.

A vivid depiction of Gulf life unfolded during the ceremony, spotlighting Kuwait's and neighboring countries' historical ties to the sea, a vital source of livelihood for past generations. Additionally, the desert lifestyle, symbolized by the camel, was beautifully portrayed, aligning with the tournament's slogan: "The Future is Gulf."

Stunning artistic displays showcased the rich cultural heritage of the Arabian Gulf, seamlessly blending traditional elements with modern artistic interpretations. Gulf boats, representing both the region's history and its aspirations for the future, were prominently featured.

The ceremony masterfully combined traditional Gulf folk arts with advanced technology to present a compelling narrative of a unified Gulf identity.

Renowned Kuwaiti artist Bashar Al-Shatti and Saudi artist Ayed performed an emotive operetta set against vibrant visuals, including symbols like the championship cup, coffee pot, and incense burner. These displays reinforced themes of unity and the shared destiny connecting Gulf nations under one banner.

The event culminated in a breathtaking fireworks display, leaving the audience captivated and setting an electrifying tone for the tournament ahead.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah



Fireworks erupt during the opening ceremony of the Khaleeji Zain 26 in Kuwait.

welcomed FIFA President Gianni Infantino on Saturday at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium.

The meeting was attended by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, along with GCC ministers of sports and youth, and the heads of sports federations participating in the Arabian Gulf Cup (Khaleeji Zain 26).

The Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior is demonstrating tireless commitment and unwavering determination to en-

sure the success of the Arabian Gulf Cup, "Khaleeji Zain 26," which officially kicks off today, Saturday.

For weeks, ministry personnel have worked diligently to prepare and provide logistical support across all sectors involved in this significant event, running until January 3.

The First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, and Minister of Defense, Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah, alongside the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Sabah, and other security leaders, are closely overseeing the implementation of a comprehensive secu-

urity plan aimed at the smooth execution of the tournament.

In collaboration with the Kuwait National Guard and the Kuwait Fire Force, the Ministry's plan defines and distributes duties, missions, and responsibilities to ensure the safety and security of all attendees and guests. These coordinated efforts encompass various security, traffic, and logistical operations to guarantee a seamless event.

Speaking exclusively to KUNA, the Ministry of Interior emphasized that their approach draws from previous experiences in organizing major

championships. This includes raising awareness among security personnel and equipping them with specialized training to manage large-scale events effectively.

The traffic management plan includes facilitating audience entry to stadiums, streamlining gate access, and ensuring smooth organizational flow. Efforts also involve providing adequate parking and transportation services, with personnel stationed at all event venues to ensure efficient operations.

The Ministry stressed the importance of audience cooperation with

security instructions to enhance safety and ensure an enjoyable experience for all attendees.

Sheikh Fahad has issued clear directives to finalize all technical, traffic, and security preparations in line with the leadership's vision of showcasing the Gulf's strong unity through the success of this prestigious event.

The Ministry reiterated its commitment to implementing every aspect of the plan to deliver a secure and exceptional championship, urging attendees to adhere to guidelines and work collaboratively with security teams.

Hussein expresses readiness for Khaleeji Zain 26

Iraq begins title defense against Yemen

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 21: The second group of the "Khaleeji Zain 26," hosted by Kuwait until January 3, kicked off today. The defending champion, Iraq, will face Yemen at 5:25 pm at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium, while Saudi Arabia takes on Bahrain at 8:30 pm at Jaber International Stadium.

Iraq's head coach, Spaniard Jesús Casas, expressed confidence in his team's readiness despite challenges, including injuries. Speaking at a press conference on Saturday, Casas emphasized the importance of the Gulf Championship while also prioritizing the 2026 World Cup qualifiers.

Casas highlighted the team's collective goal of bringing joy to Iraqi fans by striving for another Gulf title. Reflecting on the team's journey, he noted the difficulty of predicting a winner due to the competitiveness of the tournament.

Addressing player selection, Casas stressed the significance of the ongoing Iraq League in preparing for future competitions. He praised the federation's strategy of involving players from various clubs, which he believes will help discover emerging talents.

On today's match against Yemen, Casas commended the opponent's quality, noting their skilled players and potential to contend for the title.

Iraqi striker Ayman Hussein expressed the team's readiness for the tournament, emphasizing their group-oriented approach rather than reliance on individual

stars. He assured fans of his commitment to giving his best performance to help secure victories for Iraq.

Algerian coach Nouredine Ould Ali, leading the Yemeni national team, shared insights into his team's preparations. Over the past three months, the team engaged in multiple training phases and friendly matches with Gulf teams to build cohesion among its predominantly local players.

Ould Ali described facing Iraq as a significant motivator, emphasizing that his team aims to deliver strong performances within its available resources. He acknowledged the supportive roles of the Iraqi and Bahraini federations in enabling Yemeni players' participation, which helped elevate the team's level.

While dismissing title aspirations for now, Ould Ali stated his primary goal is to showcase a commendable performance against Iraq and build confidence for the future.

Abdul-Wasie Al-Matari, the captain of the Yemeni national team, acknowledged the strength of Iraq's squad, singling out striker Ayman Hussein as a key player. He expressed confidence in his team's preparation and revealed that insights from Yemeni players in the Iraq league would aid their game plan.

The stage is set for an exciting second-group kickoff, with both teams eager to make a strong impression in the Khaleeji Zain 26.



Manchester City's Bernardo Silva, left, duels for the ball with Aston Villa's Morgan Rogers during the English Premier League soccer match between Aston Villa and Manchester City, at Villa Park in Birmingham, England. (AP)

Cityzens lose to Aston Villa

City stunning slump continues

LONDON, Dec 21, (AP): Manchester City's stunning slump continued Saturday with a 2-1 loss to Aston Villa in the Premier League.

Goals from Jhon Duran and Morgan Rogers at Villa Park consigned the four-time defending champion to a ninth defeat in 12 games. Pep Guardiola's team has won just once during that run.

Phil Foden pulled a goal back for City in stoppage time, but it wasn't enough to spark a late comeback.

City dropped to sixth in the standings - nine points below leader Liverpool, having played two games more.

Villa climbed to fifth.

City's remarkable fall shows little sign of stopping, with Guardiola admitting last week that he had not been good enough to turn his team's form around.

Defeat meant his once dominant team is without a win in any of its last eight away games in all competitions. While its title defense is unravelling, a place in the top four and Champions League qualification could also be in jeopardy.

A sixth league defeat is City's worst record since the 2020-21 season.

Villa dominated the game with Duran scoring his sixth goal in as many starts in the 16th minute from Rogers' assist.

Villa had a goal disallowed for offside in the second half and Rogers hit the post before doubling the home side's lead in the 65th.

Foden gave City a slim hope of salvaging something with his goal in the third minute of added time.

Manchester City's troubled season was dealt another blow with confirmation that defender Ruben Dias will be out for up to four weeks because of a muscle injury.

Manager Pep Guardiola has cited injuries to key players such as Rodri as a factor in his team's troubles and the loss of Dias compounds his problems.

Guardiola said Dias' injury occurred during Sunday's 2-1 loss to Manchester United.

"After 75 minutes against United he felt something. He's strong and wanted to stay on the pitch, but now he's injured," Guardiola told a news conference.

Mason Mount faces "several weeks" out of action because of a latest injury, Manchester United head coach Ruben Amorim said.

The midfielder was substituted after 14 minutes of the 2-1 win over Manchester City on Sunday due to a muscle problem and was consoled by teammates as he left the field.



Casas and Ayman Hussein address the press.



Yemeni coach Nouredine Ould Ali.

Allen claims victory at Riyadh Season Snooker Championship

RIYADH, Dec 21, (Xinhua): The 2024 Riyadh Season Snooker Championship concluded on Friday at the Boulevard City, Riyadh. Northern Ireland's Mark Allen secured the title with a commanding 5-1 victory over Belgium's Luca Brecel in the final, earning winnings of 250,000 pounds.

This year's championship brought together the world's top 10 snooker players, including current world No. 1 Judd Trump, seven-time world champion Ronnie O'Sullivan, China's top player Ding Junhui and rising star Zhang Anda.

Over three days of intense competition, Allen demonstrated remarkable form and consistency, advancing through each stage and ultimately claiming the prestigious trophy.

The tournament, which commenced on December 18, adopted a best-of-seven format for earlier rounds and a best-of-nine format for the final. Several high-stakes matches captured attention.

In the semifinals, Brecel defeated Mark Williams 4-2, while Allen eliminated defending champion O'Sullivan by the same scoreline. In the final, Allen main-

tained his dominance, dropping only one frame against Brecel to clinch the victory, marking another significant milestone in his career.

Chinese players also delivered commendable performances. Ding Junhui triumphed 4-0 over local player Abdulraouf Saigh in the first round but was defeated 4-0 by O'Sullivan in the quarterfinals. Meanwhile, Zhang Anda overcame Ahmed Aseeri 4-0 in the opening round but fell to Brecel in the second round.

In an exclusive interview with Xinhua, Ding expressed optimism about the future of young Chinese snooker players, emphasizing their dedication to rigorous training and their growing presence on the international stage.

He also praised Saudi Arabia for its efforts in introducing diverse sports and creating an excellent platform for high-level competitions, which he said will significantly benefit the development of snooker in the region.

"I'm also deeply grateful for the support of Chinese fans here in Saudi Arabia," Ding added. "Their encouragement gives me great motivation, whether in victory or challenging moments, and it means a lot to me during the competition."