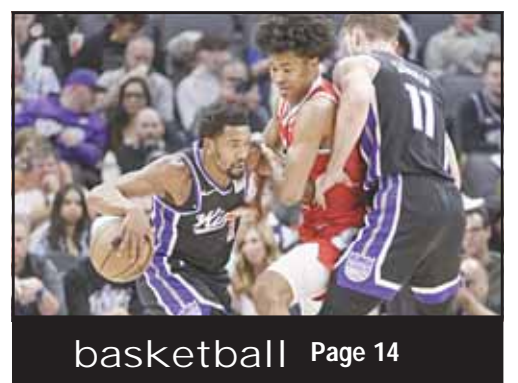




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Amir, Crown Prince commend efforts behind Gulf Cup success

— Details Page 16 —



Photos show the spectacular closing ceremony of the Arabian Gulf Cup – Khaleeji Zain 26 at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium on Saturday, Jan 4.

KUWAIT ENFORCES HEFTY FINES FOR BIRTH REPORTING, VISA VIOLATIONS New expat residency law takes effect

Mol urges compliance to avoid penalties, ensure legal residency status

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: The Ministry of Interior has announced that the new residency law will be enforced starting Sunday, following the launch of the 'Be Aware' campaign on Saturday to educate expatriates about the new law and the penalties associated with violations, in multiple languages.

The ministry highlighted the important provisions of the new law as follows:

Article Six:

Failure to notify the authorities about a newborn within four months of birth will result in a fine of KD2 for each day of delay during the first month, increasing to KD4 per day starting from the second month or a maximum fine of KD2,000.

Article Nine: Foreign nationals entering the country under various residency entry visas (government work, private sector work, commercial or industrial work, medical treatment, family reunification, education or temporary government contracts) must obtain a residence permit. Those who fail to do so will incur a fine of KD2 for each day of delay during the first month, rising to KD4 per day thereafter, with a maximum fine of KD1,200. For foreign domestic workers or similar visa holders, the fine is KD2 per day, up to a maximum of

KD600.

Article 11: Foreign nationals entering the country on a visit visa who overstay their permitted period (whether for governmental, commercial, family, private, transit, multiple-entry, tourist, emergency or specific work purposes) will be fined KD10 per day, up to a maximum of KD2,000.

Article 12: If a foreign national exceeds his temporary residence period or fails to notify authorities of his departure on time, he will be fined KD2 per day during the first month, with the penalty increasing to KD4 per day thereafter, up to a maximum of KD1,200. For domestic workers and similar visa holders, the fine is KD2 per day, up to a maximum of KD600.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait weather turns frosty as cold nights and rain loom

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department of Kuwait announced Saturday, that the country is experiencing the impact of a high-pressure system accompanied by a cold air mass coming from Eastern Europe.

This weather condition is causing cool daytime temperatures and very cold nights with a possibility of frost formation in agricultural and desert areas.

The Acting Director of the Meteorological Department, Dhirar Al-Ali, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that northwesterly to variable light-to-moderate winds, occasionally becoming gusty, are contributing to an enhanced sense

of chill, particularly during nighttime.

Al-Ali indicated that Saturday's daytime weather will be cool, with northwesterly to variable winds ranging between 8 and 32 kilometers per hour, and partly cloudy skies. He added that the expected high temperatures range between 16 and 18 degrees Celsius, while sea conditions will be light to moderate, with waves reaching heights of 1 to 3 feet.

He noted that Saturday nights weather will be very cold, with frost likely to form in agricultural and desert areas.

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A memorial sits outside a restaurant along Bourbon Street in the French Quarter, Thursday, Jan. 2, 2025 in New Orleans. (AP)

Kuwait slams 'terror' in New Orleans that killed 14 people

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Thursday emphatically condemned and denounced the tragic vehicle ramming incident in New Orleans in the U.S. State of Louisiana, which claimed 14 people.

In a press release, the ministry said the State of Kuwait stands side by side with the U.S. against such criminal acts, and rejects once more all forms of violence and terrorism.

The ministry extended sincere condolences and sympathy to the U.S. and the families of the victims, while wishing a swift recovery for those injured in the incident.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas said the United States won't allow an "atmosphere of fear" to prevail after a deadly "terror" attack in New Orleans on Wednesday killed 14 people and injured dozens more.

The attack suspect, Shamsud-Din Jabbar, was an Army veteran and U.S. citizen from Texas who was killed by police in the early morning hours of the new year after driving a truck into a crowd of holiday revelers.

See Also Page 6



KFH honors winners of Innovation Challenge



BMW M Drive event thrills car enthusiasts at Kuwait Motor Town with launch of new BMW M5

News watch

KUWAIT CITY: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the random gunfire shooting in Montenegro's city of Cetinje leaving a number of people dead or wounded.

The Ministry, in a statement, re-affirmed the State of Kuwait's rejection of all forms of violence, expressed heartfelt condolences to families of the victims, Montenegro's Government and wished the injured quick recovery. (KUNA)

— See Also Page 6

Bayan roadworks kick off under Hawally's infrastructure revamp

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: The Ministry of Public Works has announced the commencement of major road maintenance works in Bayan as part of a larger road maintenance contract for Hawally Governorate, affirming that its teams inspected the area before starting the work.

Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan revealed that the maintenance works will begin in the most affected areas and then extend to the less damaged ones. She said the ministry's teams will oversee and monitor the progress of the work. She added the quick commencement of these road repair works was in response to the recommendations of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, reflecting the government's commitment to improve the

country's infrastructure.

She called for coordinated efforts to resolve any issues related to the road maintenance projects. She urged also the implementing companies to ensure that the entire work is completed efficiently, to the highest standards and within the agreed timeline; while adhering to the approved technical specifications.

She stressed that the road maintenance and repair projects are a priority for the country's political leadership and praised the continued support of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah. "These efforts are in line with the goals of the 'New Kuwait 2035' strategy, which focuses on building a modern and advanced infrastructure," she confirmed.

Continued on Page 5

Two suffer from asphyxiation

3 dead in Kabd camp suffocation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: In a heart-breaking incident that highlights the risks associated with winter camping, three Asian female workers suffocated to death Friday in a stable in the Kabd area, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The initial report shows the women died of asphyxiation. Nonetheless, the remains have been referred to Forensics to ascertain that the women died of suffocation.

The Kuwait Fire Force has reiterated its urgent safety appeals, especially for seasonal campers and those using stables. The KFF emphasized the dangers

of bringing a coal heater (dowah) into tents or rooms unless the coal has cooled to an 'ember' state, as burning coal can release toxic fumes.

The KFF also stressed the importance of ensuring proper ventilation in such spaces to allow fresh air to circulate. Additionally, the public was warned not to place a 'dowah' inside the tent while sleeping and advised to keep children away from it and urged people to immediately contact emergency services when necessary.

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Experts support positive step

Tax reform sparks Kuwait economic shift

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: Kuwaiti economic experts have lauded the government's decision to impose a tax on multinational companies, calling it a pivotal move for diversifying the country's income sources.

With the private sector having operated without taxes for decades, experts argue that this law will help spread the financial burden more equitably, ensuring the private sector contributes to the nation's economic development.

Economic expert Sultan Al-Jazzaf sees the tax as a positive step, noting that it has been carefully drafted to avoid excessive tax rates while targeting multinational companies earning significant revenues -- estimated at 750 million euros or more annually.

Al-Jazzaf emphasized that this move aligns with Kuwait's long-term economic vision, ensuring the country does not remain overly reliant on a single source of income, such as oil.

He added that this tax policy will also prevent Kuwaiti multinational companies from shifting profits to other countries with lower taxes, benefiting Kuwait from taxes that would otherwise go uncollected.

Al-Jazzaf believes that it is high time for the private sector

to contribute more actively to the national economy, as the government has long been supportive of its growth without imposing taxes. Al-Jazzaf further highlighted that the imposition of taxes will help alleviate Kuwait's growing budget deficit, which is expected to persist for the next four years.

By diversifying the state's revenue streams, the tax will provide additional support to the national budget, aligning with the country's efforts to ensure sustainable economic growth and financial stability.

Private companies, especially those profiting substantially from international markets, should be required to contribute fairly to the state's financial health, according to Al-Jazzaf.

Administrative expert Khaled Mohammed also praised the tax decision, describing it as a pioneering step. The law, which imposes a 15 percent tax on multinational companies operating in Kuwait, includes a range of provisions aimed at ensuring fairness and transparency.

Article 4 of the law outlines exemptions for several entities, including government bodies and non-profit organizations, while Article 27 provides mechanisms for companies to challenge the tax if they believe they have been wrongfully assessed.

Continued on Page 5

Day by Day

AS we step into the New Year, we are greeted by a leader of decisive action, offering hope for change.

We are assured that the outdated and obstructive laws that have hindered progress will either be amended or abolished.

These laws have stalled the nation's development, prolonged bureaucratic processes, left the country in a state of confusion and stagnation and effectively closed Kuwait under weak and unfounded pretexts.

They have not only impeded progress but also pushed us into a state of regression and despair.

Gratitude is owed to those who illuminate the path forward, showing us light after enduring prolonged darkness. Tomorrow holds the promise of a brighter day.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Wanted fugitive killed in gunfight with police

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: The Ministry of Interior announced that after extensive efforts and precise surveillance, the General Department of Criminal Investigations pinpointed the fugitive Talal Al-Shammari and had no option but to neutralize him, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During the arrest operation, Al-Shammari, classified as armed and dangerous, opened fire on security personnel, necessitating a response in line with established legal procedures.

Al-Shammari was injured in the ensuing exchange of fire and was transported to the hospital for treatment.

Continued on Page 5

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	05:19	Asr	14:44
Sunrise	06:43	Maghrib	17:03
Zohr	11:53	Isha	18:25

Local

Expected Weather for Net 24 hours

By Day: Rather cold and clouds will increase gradually with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speed of 08-30 km/h.

By Night: Cold to very cold and partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind to

Weather

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec			
Kuwait City	20	09	Bubyan	21	05
Kuwait Airport	20	03	Jahra	21	06
Abdaly	20	03	Falaka Island	21	08
			Salmiya	19	12
			Ahmadi	20	05
			Jal Aliyah	19	04
			Nuwaisibq	21	05

'Khaleeji Zain 26' big tourism boon

100 pc occupancy in hotels; 79,000 Gulf citizens entered Kuwait in 4 days

By Inaas Awadh and Mohammad Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: In a new achievement added to its sporting and historical record, Kuwait successfully hosted the Arabian Gulf Cup "Khaleeji Zain 26", an event that brought immense pride and honor to the country for its ability to organize such a major Gulf sporting competition. The event transcended a mere sporting contest and evolved into an integrated experience that demonstrated Kuwait's capability to reassert its position in the Gulf and Arab arenas in the most beautiful way. The tournament had a profound impact on the social, economic, and tourism levels.

This success was not a coincidence but the result of joint cooperation between various governmental entities. The Ministry of Interior ensured the provision of security, and efficiently managed fan entry, as well as the electronic processing of visas. The Ministry of Information provided excellent media coverage. The Public Authority for Sports, Ministry of Public Works, Kuwait Municipality, Ministry of Health, and others offered vital logistical and support services with all efficiency.

The collaboration extended beyond organizational aspects, as it also played a key role in boosting tourism. Thousands of fans from all Gulf countries flocked to Kuwait, which contributed to a noticeable economic recovery.

In an unprecedented tourist atmosphere, hotels were packed with guests, restaurants were bustling with patrons, and markets were alive. This created a scene that evoked memories of Kuwait's prosperous days as a sought-after tourist destination. Visitors expressed their admiration, and affirmed that Kuwait had become the center of attention in the Gulf during the championship days.

Boost

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Kuwait Union of Restaurants, Cafes, and Food Supplies Fahad Al-Arbash highlighted that Kuwait's hosting of the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup had provided a major boost to the local economy due to the influx of tourists and sports visitors.

He explained that the restaurant and cafe sector had seen an increase in activity, but it had not achieved a transformative leap in profits, particularly in establishments located outside the areas of festive events and large crowds. This surge in business coincided with the Kuwait Hotel Association's announcement of a 100 percent occupancy rate in all hotels, particularly those of higher classification.

In a press statement, Al-Arbash explained that sales had increased by 30 percent to 40 percent at popular restaurants and cafes in Mubarakiya and heritage sites, as well as in establishments in the Avenues, Marina, Gate, and 360 malls. However, restaurants and cafes in different areas of Kuwait saw a more modest increase of 10 to 15 percent in sales.

Al-Arbash revealed that his family's gold shops in Mubarakiya experienced a

10 to 15 percent increase in sales during the Khaleeji Zain 26 period.

A number of visitors confirmed that Kuwait, despite the challenges, has all the potential to restore its former glory and shine, and position itself as a new Gulf hub that showcases its rich cultural and civilizational identity.

Restaurants and cafes experienced large crowds, and shopping centers and popular markets flourished due to the influx of visitors, which significantly boosted economic activity and reaffirmed Kuwait's status as a vibrant tourist destination.

Media coverage

The Ministry of Information demonstrated exceptional readiness by providing comprehensive media coverage that matched the significance of the event.

According to sources, the Ministry of Information formed specialized teams comprising correspondents and editors to ensure accurate and high-quality coverage of all tournament events. It also equipped its studios with the latest technical equipment to broadcast continuous analytical and news programs for highlighting the matches and the overall atmosphere of the tournament.

They said field teams were deployed to broadcast live events from the stadiums and popular gathering areas with the aim of providing a comprehensive image for viewers both in Kuwait and abroad.

The sources revealed that the Ministry of Information facilitated all the necessary logistical services for the participating Gulf satellite channels, including supporting live broadcast operations and offering technical assistance to ensure that the tournament was televised in a manner befitting its significance.

Kuwait's ports, including Kuwait International Airport, saw a significant increase in public attendance during the tournament, as the number of arrivals between January 1 and January 4 reached approximately 79,000.

Furthermore, sources from the travel and tourism sector said the majority of arrivals were due to the Gulf Cup Championship, which encouraged many visitors to come to the country and enjoy the festive atmosphere.

In addition, the supervisor of decorations and flag raising at Kuwait Municipality Ghosoun Al-Jassem said a specialized team from the municipality's decorations department was formed prior to the launch of the Khaleeji Zain Cup events.

In a press statement, she explained that the municipality decorated important tournament locations, especially Jaber Stadium, with approximately 128 flags representing the eight participating countries - Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Yemen, and Iraq.

Also, 68 flags were placed in Souk Mubarakiya, 16 flags at the Kuwait Football Association building, 12 flags at Sulaibikhat Club, and 32 flags at the entrances of Jaber Stadium.

In addition, the acting head of the Maintenance Department in the Construction Department of the municipality's projects sector Khaled Al-Kandari confirmed that the municipality successfully provided technical services to Souk Mubarakiya in record time during the Khaleeji Zain Championship.

He highlighted the cooperation with the Kuwait Oil Company in implementing and overseeing the decorative lighting in Mubarakiya.

prioritize the safety of students during the trips.

Meanwhile, the Information Technology Systems Department at the Ministry of Education has announced a project to replace existing computers and printers, as well as provide new devices for recently appointed employees.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the letter sent to educational districts, in which acting Director of the department Mona Salem explained that this step follows a thorough assessment of the needs in various departments. The department has requested full cooperation with the information systems engineer tasked to oversee the project, she disclosed.

Salem enumerated the procedures for implementing the device replacement project like verifying the status of employees; determining whether an employee is still active in their office role, retired or in another category and compiling a list of new employees.

She issued a directive that all current devices be cataloged, and that the information technology systems engineer be supported in visiting departments to inventory existing devices and assess each department's needs.

She called for the appointment of a liaison officer in each department to facilitate communication with the Information Technology Systems Department to ensure a smooth process for providing and replacing computers and printers.



Photo by Mohammad Morsi

People from different Gulf nationalities have entered Kuwait on visit visas to see the football championship to support their respective teams.

Gulf journalists all praise for local government

'Kuwait did wonderful job to host Khaleeji Zain 26 Cup'

By Saud Al-Duwaila

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4, (KUNA): Arabian Gulf media professionals and journalists praised Kuwait's organization of the Arabian Gulf Cup (Khaleeji Zain 26) and its media coverage.

Journalists confirmed that Kuwait outdid itself in organizing the tournament and was an example to be followed by other countries seeking to organize sports tournaments.

They also praised the efforts of the Kuwaiti local authorities and their cooperation in making the tournament a success.

Emirati journalist Dr. Adnan Hamad in a statement to KUNA said that Khaleeji Zain 26 tournament was an "exceptional event," and he did not expect this precise organization of the tournament.

Hamad mentioned that he had witnessed the Gulf Cup tournaments since 1982 and

witnessed the countries' organization of the tournament, as he considered (Khaleeji Zain 26) one of the best editions in terms of organization, media coverage and other services.

On his part, Qatari journalist Khaled Jassem said in a similar statement that Kuwait was creative in organizing the (Khaleeji Zain 26) tournament and made it an event engraved in the minds of the people in the Gulf.

He congratulated the Kuwaiti political leadership and the people on this success, saying that Kuwait deserves this success as a result of the great efforts made by those in charge of the tournament.

Jassem added that the organizing committee harnessed all its capabilities to serve the participating teams, the media, and the fans.

He also praised the classy treatment by the officials, the ease of completing the procedures, and the generosity of the people and

their reception and hospitality.

Moreover, Omani Journalist Saleh Al-Barhi affirmed in a statement that Kuwait has proven its ability to organize major sports tournaments in the future after the "wonderful" organization of the (Khaleeji Zain 26) tournament.

Al-Barhi said that this tournament was a confirmation of Kuwait's success in organizing the Gulf Cup tournaments after the four previous editions that it hosted, pointing out to the "constant creativity" in hosting the tournament.

He added that the speed of task completion that the organizing committee had contributed to the success of the tournament.

He expressed his hope that Kuwait would continue to work on what was built in this tournament in terms of organization, infrastructure, and attention to stadiums.

Other Voices

Don Quixote and Iranian mind

By Ahmad alsarraf

Iran is perhaps the only country in the world, other than America, that has almost 'everything' that any government needs: economic power, a unique geographical location, diverse weather, enormous natural resources, multiple industries, an active people, a long history, a vast land, huge tourism potential, a world-class cuisine and wonderful arts.

However, its people live under harsh conditions and it is classified among the backward countries.

Half of the countries in the world are hostile to it, or at least do not feel comfortable dealing with Tehran. It is the lowest in rank when it comes to tourism, compared to Turkey, Dubai, Morocco and Egypt, despite all its potential (other than religious tourism) and despite its great tourism capabilities.

The reason is that most of its resources and money are directed to overcoming the economic sanctions imposed on it and its adventures, inside and outside its borders and the fear of the possibility of a coup against its regime.

This prompts it to spend lavishly on its military and intelligence agencies and on its regional expansions, under political and sectarian pretexts and a desire to gain allies, which it succeeded in doing for a while, but they were allies who were not distinguished by anything, except that they are 'bankrupt', financially and intellectually, so it only took Israel a few days to eliminate more than half of them in the region!

Iran has the fourth largest proven oil reserves in the world, the second largest gas reserves in the world after Russia, an area of 1,650,000 km² (Kuwait is less than 18,000 km²) and a population of 90 million. It outperforms Russia in the field of short-range missile manufacturing and drone technology, but it suffers from inflation, unemployment, government corruption and a huge number of

problems.

In an article published a few days ago in the newspaper, colleague Khalil Ali Haidar asked:

'Does the Islamic Republic now realize the depth and significance of the grave events that the region has gone through, which caused it to lose face?'

What happened was not something it can ignore and return to before the fall of Bashar? His collapse, Turkey's support for the new regime and the hesitation of its allies to stand with it, require a realistic understanding by its leadership and to carry out a series of transformations and abandon the policies it has adopted since 1979.

The events in Syria have proven that suppressing political freedoms does not provide security and guarantees for any regime. How can it justify spending tens of billions of dollars on parties hated by its people and failed, or justify the complete and shameful loss of everything that was spent for yesterday's allies, or what caused Iran's impoverishment over half a century?

Why do all the Gulf states and many oil countries live in luxury and enjoy strong economies, strong currencies, generous monthly salaries and retirement benefits, while the employee and worker in Iran suffer from a series of pressures, clear limited income and a decline in the standard of living and his country is the richest, so where did the country's huge wealth go?

And why should the Iranian people alone suffer, militarize, build nuclear weapons, buy fighter jets, missiles and tanks and adopt exaggerated positions on the Palestinian issue, which even exceed the positions of many Palestinians?

All of Iran's enemies wish it to continue with the same behavior, only its friends, despite their scarcity, ask it to do otherwise and ask: isn't it time for Iran to review its policies and turn to serving its people and enhancing their well-being, instead of the Don Quixote stances and the claim that it is the spearhead of the Islamic world and I don't remember who tasked it with doing that?

□ □ □
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MoE announces entry fees for students to museums, centres

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: The Ministry of Education (MoE) has announced the entry fees for museums and entertainment centers for students at various educational levels; including kindergarten, primary, intermediate and secondary schools.

The ministry confirmed that the entry fees will range from KD1 to KD 6, depending on the type of activity and the chosen destination.

The newspaper obtained a copy of this decision, approved by Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development Maryam Al-Enezi in order to provide educational and recreational activities for students at affordable prices, without placing a financial burden on parents. The trips will include visits to museums and scientific and cultural centers, designed to enhance students' skills and raise their cultural and scientific awareness.

Al-Enezi emphasized that no additional fees should be imposed on parents for school trips and that schools must comply with this directive. She clarified that any violation of this decision could result in accountability for the school administration.

Furthermore, Al-Enezi stressed that school administrations are required to submit clear and detailed plans for school trips prior to implementation; while ensuring adherence to the specified budget and

About 3,000 Kuwaitis to get jobs in public sector

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: Approximately 3,000 citizens had registered for employment in the 89th cycle between December 6 and December 20. Among them are holders of bachelor's degrees, secondary school diplomas, specialized diplomas, and other qualifications in line with central employment conditions, reports Al-Anba daily quoting informed sources.

They explained that the decision regarding their nominations will be made promptly, rather than waiting until the new employment needs are approved in April. This is based on the Civil Service Council's resolution No. 13/2024, issued on November 7, which prioritizes the nomination of those who are qualified for the first time and have not been nominated previously. In line with this, the registered individuals are awaiting invitations to uphold their appointment justifications automatically through Civil Service Commission (CSC)'s website, similar to their peers.

CSC has successfully nominated all individuals registered in the central employment system who were qualified for nomination for the first time. Also, all individuals who were rejected by the nominated agencies and had not previously declined any job opportunity were also nominated. This includes holders of doctoral, master's, bachelor's degrees, diplomas, post-intermediate training courses, vocational qualification diplomas, and those with parallel education.

CSC also nominated citizens who had been rejected by the nominated agencies one or more times. These nominations covered various educational levels and scientific specializations, in line with the needs of government agencies as part of the implementation of the comprehensive employment plan.

CSC also pledged on December 12 to nominate the remaining 570 citizens who had not been selected due to a lack of job openings, as soon as new positions became available in other government agencies beyond those they had initially been nominated for.

While CSC fulfilled its pledge to nominate those who completed the qualifying course for hotel support services allocated to the Ministry of Health, specifically for holders of intermediate and secondary qualifications, on November 28, it also stipulated that those currently registered must enroll in the training courses. A total of 1,851 citizens are expected to join these courses.

The sources said, "There are 1,085 registered citizens with primary school education, and a special announcement will be published for them in accordance with the needs of government agencies."

diwaniya

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Wishing for peace in a world of never-ending wars, misery

“GLORY to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!” – Luke 2:14

December 25 marks the celebration of Jesus Christ's birth (Peace Be Upon Him), in Western Christian tradition. However, this Christmas, like the last, arrives against the grim backdrop of the ongoing war on Gaza, a conflict that has persisted since October 7, 2023. The irony of celebrating a season of peace while destruction unfolds could not be more stark,” columnist **Sultan Ibrahim Al-Qallaf** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

“In Washington, the White House halls glimmered with Christmas trees adorned with sparkling lights, embodying this year's theme: ‘A Season of Peace and Light.’ The theme ostensibly pays homage to the angels' message of peace and goodwill during Christ's birth.



Sultan Al-Qallaf

“Yet, this message seems incongruous with the actions of senior Western leaders, led by the United States, who continue to provide Israel's government under Benjamin Netanyahu with military aid, prolonging the suffering in Gaza.

“The United States, often perceived as a moral compass for the global community, unflinchingly arms the Netanyahu government with bombs, weapons and ammunition. This support has fueled the destruction of Gaza's infrastructure and the relentless targeting of its people.

“Similarly, Germany, a nation governed by a coalition including the Christian Democratic Party, follows the US in providing military aid to Israel. By doing so, critics argue, Germany disregards the peaceful teachings of Christ, (PBUH), thus compromising its Christian identity.

“France, Britain and most other European Union nations are no different in their unwavering support for Israel's military actions. However, Ireland has stood out as a voice of dissent, calling for severe sanctions against Israel to pressure an end to the aggression. This rare position highlights a stark division within the European community.

“Amid this geopolitical turmoil, the meaning of Christmas in the West has been reduced to a commercial spectacle. Glittering markets showcase countless holiday goods and gifts, attracting crowds in pursuit of material satisfaction. The season's original essence -- peace, goodwill and reflection -- has been overshadowed by consumerism, devoid of deeper humanitarian significance.

“Humanity has rarely known peace since the Christian West assumed global leadership. The early 20th century bore witness to two catastrophic world wars, both originating in Christian Europe, leading to the loss of tens of millions of lives.

“Today, tensions in Ukraine -- another arena involving Christian-majority nations -- continue to undermine peace. Orthodox Russia faces off against American and European allies, despite shared religious roots and annual celebrations of Christ's birth.

“This grim pattern of conflict and hypocrisy raises a crucial question: How can nations claiming to follow Christ's teachings of peace and love justify their actions?”

“Innocent of these contradictions, Christ, (PBUH), stands far removed from the actions of Western leaders who proclaim adherence to his teachings.

“Their policies, from Gaza to Ukraine, reflect not peace but a propensity for shedding human blood. Gaza's devastation bears witness to this stark reality, offering a somber reflection on how far global leadership has strayed from the principles they claim to uphold.

“As we mark another Christmas amid war and strife, the world is called to introspection. Beyond the glittering lights and festive cheer, the message of peace and goodwill toward all must resonate more profoundly, inspiring actions that align with its true essence. Only then can humanity begin to bridge the chasm between faith and practice, between the ideals of Christ-mas and the realities of our world.”

Also:

“The national identity has undoubtedly faced corruption, tampering, infiltration, impersonation and pretense, necessitating a comprehensive and strategic effort to purify and restore it. The cornerstone of this effort lies in the political leadership's directives, which serve as a framework for addressing the challenges tarnishing the national identity and ensuring its preservation,” columnist, Constitutional Expert **Dr Mohammad Al-Moquei** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

“In his speech on May 10, 2024, His Highness the Amir articulated a clear and direct stance on this issue, stating:

“Security is a matter of utmost importance and we will devote most of our attention to achieving this goal. Therefore, we will review the social security laws first. Whoever entered

the country surreptitiously and falsely claimed Kuwaiti nationality, assumed a lineage other than their own, holds dual nationality, or forged documents to gain citizenship and benefited unjustly from the country's wealth while depriving rightful citizens -- these matters will be addressed.”

“Similarly, in a prior speech on April 1, 2024, His Highness emphasized the severity of the issue, declaring:

“The damage to the national identity caused by tampering with Kuwaiti citizenship has become evident to all. Since national identity is fundamental to the survival, governance and destiny of a country, attacking it constitutes an assault on the state's very foundation and cannot be tolerated. We commend and support all measures aimed at safeguarding the national identity.”

“In line with this vision, steps have been taken to scrutinize citizenship files and address the irregularities through decisions to revoke, withdraw, or deny Kuwaiti citizenship in cases of forgery, dual nationality, or fraudulent claims.

“This approach, aimed at correcting past chaos, is both necessary and commendable. It includes verifying the integrity of citizenship acquisition procedures, particularly ensuring that decrees accompany all cases of naturalization, including citizenship granted under Article 8 of the law (e.g., for Kuwaiti spouses).

“Regarding Kuwaiti wives who acquired citizenship through marriage, a nuanced approach is essential, as their cases vary significantly in terms of factual and legal circumstances.

“For instance, if citizenship withdrawal results from the absence of a formal decree, establishing a grievance mechanism would provide justice to deserving individuals. This aligns with the aim of preserving national identity while avoiding undue harm.

“The First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior outlined a practical solution: the formation of a special committee to review grievances. Such a committee could evaluate cases based on criteria like the continuity and seriousness of the marriage, the presence of children, stable residency in Kuwait, renunciation of other nationalities and compliance with legal requirements.

“This process ensures fairness while addressing legitimate grievances, allowing for the restoration of Kuwaiti citizenship through decree or alternative solutions that uphold justice.

“By adopting this balanced approach, Kuwait can safeguard its national identity without undermining the stability of families or the integrity of its citizenship laws.”

“Every year during the New Year's holiday, the Kuwait International Airport is typically filled with travelers, especially when the holiday lasts five days,” columnist, former MP and General Manager of Scope Satellite TV,” **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“However, this year, there has been a noticeable decline in the number of ‘migratory birds’, according to statistics.

“The attractive weather in Kuwait, along with the on-going Gulf Cup tournament and the country's new-found openness, has encouraged people to stay rather than travel. Moreover, Kuwait has become a favored tourist destination.

“While we may not know the exact number of hotels or serviced apartments in Kuwait, we do hear that there are many across different areas.

“However, one notable exception is the city of Jahra, which has only one hotel and lacks furnished apartments, hotel apartments, or even one-star hotels.

“That being said, thanks to the Gulf Cup and the country's openness, every hotel in Kuwait is fully booked, with no empty rooms available.

“The restaurants, particularly those in Mubarakiya, are also operating at full capacity, and shopping areas are bustling with activity. Car rental offices are fully booked, making it nearly impossible to find an available car.

“All markets and malls across Kuwait are teeming with visitors and shoppers, both young and old. Most consumer goods are selling out quickly. One owner of a women's abaya shop shared that he has sold all of next year's stock of abayas.

“This vibrant atmosphere is a direct result of the Gulf Cup tournament and the recent openness of the country.

“The transformation in Kuwait is clear -- once isolated and strict in granting visit visas, the country has now become a sought-after tourist destination for people across the Gulf.

“The visitors are leaving safely, and there is no room for violations. The question remains: will this positive momentum continue with future tourist seasons? We certainly hope so.”

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah arrives at the stadium.

KUNA photo

Mol wins accolades for stupendous security efforts

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: By all accounts, the success achieved by the Ministry of Interior and the concerned authorities in securing the stadiums during the events of the Khaleeji Zain Cup 26 was remarkable. This success was evident in the smooth entry of fans into both Jaber Al-Ahmad Stadium and Jaber Al-Hamad Stadium, despite the large crowds, with over 60,000 spectators arriving from GCC countries for the matches.

The security operations for the games were overseen by the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh

Fahad Al-Yousef, along with senior security leaders who were present on the ground for providing clear guidance and instructions to the Ministry of Interior personnel. Their efforts were crucial in maintaining security not only at the stadiums but also in Souk Mubarakiya, which witnessed large celebrations organized by fans to celebrate their teams' victories. A robust security presence from various sectors ensured the safety and orderliness of the celebrations, as well as the smooth coordination of fans in the market.

The security organization was well received by the crowds, as security personnel carried out their duties with professionalism, and greeted guests at the border crossings with smiles and chants of

“Welcome.”

Many visitors and attendees praised the Ministry of Interior for its continuous and distinguished presence, and commended its efforts in maintaining security throughout the event. They also acknowledged the role of the National Guard in ensuring the smooth transportation of crowds to Jaber International Stadium.

The active participation of female police officers was particularly notable during the tournament. They played a major role in organizing the celebrations and facilitating traffic flow. They made regular appearances in the public security, traffic, rescue, and investigation sectors on all roads and streets.

Basra Governor clarifies role in handing over suspect to Kuwait

Al-Khalidi, wanted in multiple cases held thru Interpol

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: Basra Governor Asaad Al-Eidani has clarified that the role of the Basra governorate in the transfer of the accused Salman Al-Khalidi to Kuwait was solely to protect the transfer process, without involving itself in the procedural details, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He explained that his presence during the deportation was a protocol requirement, as the Kuwaiti Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, was present, while the Iraqi Minister of Interior, Abdul Amir Al-Shammari, could not attend.

Al-Eidani stated that Al-Khalidi was arrested

at Baghdad International Airport at 8:00 am and after being detained for 11 hours, his plane arrived at Basra Airport.

From there, he was transferred to Safwan port. The accused was handed over by the Iraqi Interpol to the Kuwaiti Interpol, with the procedures carried out in Interpol Police vehicles, without the governorate's involvement in the transfer details.

Earlier Iraq had announced the arrest of fugitive Salman Al-Khalidi, who was wanted by the Kuwait authorities.

The arrest followed international efforts coordinated through Interpol. Al-Khalidi, who

was wanted by law in connection with 11 arrest notices since December 2023, was located in Iraq.

A specialized security team worked closely with the Iraqi authorities and the Kuwaiti embassy, leading to his arrest before he could escape.

Kuwait expressed its gratitude to the Iraqi Minister of Interior, Abdul Amir Al-Shammari, Basra Governor Al-Eidani and the Iraqi security forces for their swift and effective cooperation. This success highlights the strong bilateral ties and commitment to justice between Kuwait and Iraq.

The Ministry reaffirmed its commitment to pursuing individuals who threaten the country's security, both domestically and internationally and emphasized the strict application of the law.



Al-Eidani

Mol Central Market, Al Zahra to open 24/7 for employees

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: The Board of Directors of the Central Market for Ministry of Interior employees has announced that its main branch in the Al Zahra area will now operate 24 hours a day, starting today, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

This move is part of the Ministry's ongoing efforts to enhance the services offered to its em-

ployees, ensuring that their various needs are met at any time of the day.

The Board emphasized that this decision is in line with the Ministry's commitment to providing a well-rounded and convenient work environment. By extending market hours, the Ministry aims to support its workforce effectively,

ensuring that employees can access necessary services with ease, no matter the time.

This initiative is part of a broader strategy to improve services, reflecting the Ministry's vision of empowering its human resources -- who are regarded as the fundamental pillar of success across all sectors.



The victorious team.

KFF photo

KFF beats Guards, takes first spot in squash final

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) team triumphed in the Ministries and Government Institutions League for the 2024/2025 season in squash.

According to a press release issued by KFF, the team secured first place in the singles category by defeating the National Guard team in the final match.

In the teams category, the KFF team also emerged victorious, defeating the National Guard team once again to claim first place. This success earned them both the gold medal and the league cup in the singles championship, as well as the gold medal and first place cup in the teams league.

The members of the KFF team were Colonel Hussein Muhammad Redha, Lieutenant Colonel Hussein Ahmed Hassan, Lieutenant Colonel Sayed Hamza Walid Majed, and Major Ahmed Msaed Ibrahim.



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Kabd road overhaul approved

63 roundabouts, new bridges planned

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: After the Municipal Council approved the advisory agreement for the study, design, supervision of implementation, and maintenance of the road network in Kabd, the project is now set to move forward.

Kuwait Municipality is coordinating with the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) to approve the plans for the road network development project, which extends from the Sixth Ring Road in the north to the extension of the Seventh Ring Road in the south and east, and Salmi Road in the west. The agreement includes the construction of several internal and main roads, the extension of the Fifth Ring Road and Sixth Ring Road with all associated services, the building of four overpasses for cars, and the creation of 63 roundabouts, with radii ranging from 25 to 50 meters.

Kuwait Municipality has stipulated that PART must adhere to the requirements of the relevant service ministries and coordinate with them before beginning implementation, which is scheduled for the first months of 2025.

It also authorized the concerned departments to adjust the dimensions and lengths of the networks, but only by a margin not exceeding the prescribed limits, if they conflict with existing infrastructure services or regulatory requirements during installation.

The agreement signed between PART and the local consulting office covers the study, design, supervision of implementation, and maintenance of the road network in Kabd.

The primary objectives of the project include:

1. Developing the industrial craftsmen area in the former Al-Sulaibiya farms, now known as Kabd, and linking it to surrounding main roads, which are the Sixth Ring Road and Seventh Ring Road and Al-Salmi Road) to ease traffic flow to and from the area.

2. Completing the path of the Fifth Ring Road and Sixth Ring Road from Kabd Al-Sulaibiya Road to Al-Salmi Road, with a focus on the area's development, particularly as new residential areas with high population density, such as South Saad Al-Abdullah Residential City and West Abdullah Al-Mubarak City, are being established.

3. Developing existing and proposed roads to connect industrial areas and cities, such as Shadadiya Industrial City.

4. Upgrading roads and services to support farms, sewage stations, oil well areas, water wells, and industrial zones.

5. Designing safer alternative roads to replace existing unsuitable ones that pose significant risks to their users.

Ministry of Information issues obituary over actor Abdulaziz Al-Haddad's death

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Ministry of Information issued an obituary over the death of renowned Kuwaiti actor and director Abdulaziz Al-Haddad, who passed away earlier on Thursday.

In a press statement, the ministry conveyed the deepest condolences of the Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi to Al-Haddad's family.

Actor Al-Haddad had prominent work in the media field in Kuwait and the Arab World, both on television and radio.



KUNA photo
Abdulaziz Al-Haddad – Kuwaiti actor and director

Plans to mark 250 yrs of historic ties unveiled

PM Modi's visit marked a significant milestone in bilateral ties: Dr Swaika

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: "The recent visit of the Indian Prime Minister to Kuwait marked a significant milestone in the bilateral relationship between the two nations," said the Indian Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, HE Dr Adarsh Swaika.

He made this remark during a press briefing to the local journalists on Jan 2, 2025 at the Indian Embassy premises.

He termed the visit 'exceptional' in both symbolism and substance and underscored the deep-rooted ties and mutual respect shared by India and Kuwait.

The visit witnessed several remarkable gestures from Kuwait's leadership, reflecting the high regard for the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Notably, the prestigious Order of Mubarak Al-Kabir, Kuwait's highest national award, was conferred upon him. This recognition highlighted the significance of India's relationship with Kuwait.

In another exceptional gesture, the Prime Minister of Kuwait personally received the Indian leader at the airport and later met him for discussions. Modi was also invited as a special guest to the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup, further emphasizing the warmth between the two nations.

The Crown Prince of Kuwait hosted a banquet in the Indian Prime Minister's honor, featuring Bollywood music, a cultural touch that resonated deeply with the Indian delegation, he said.

Such gestures were profoundly appreciated and acknowledged by the Indian leader, who extended invitations to Kuwait's top leadership to visit India and further the bilateral relationship.

Beyond the symbolism, the Indian envoy said, the visit resulted in significant agreements and initiatives. The following are the key highlights:

-- Defense Cooperation: A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed, establishing an institutional framework for defense collaboration. This paves the way for joint exercises, enhanced training and potential partnerships in the defense industry.

Cultural and Sports Exchange -- Agreements were reached to strengthen cultural ties and sports cooperation, fostering people-to-people connections.

International Solar Alliance -- Kuwait joined the International Solar Alliance as its 122nd signatory, signaling its commitment to sustainable energy and global climate action.

Health Collaboration -- Discussions focused on enhancing healthcare ties, including recognizing Indian pharmacopoeia, increasing the presence of Indian generic medicines in Kuwait and exploring the establishment of Indian pharmaceutical plants in the Gulf nation.

Food and Agriculture -- Both sides deliberated on food security, with Kuwait showing interest in participating in India's mega food parks and agricultural initiatives.

Education and Technology -- The potential for establishing Indian university campuses in Kuwait was explored, alongside initiatives in cybersecurity and artificial intelligence training.

The visit also set the stage for robust institutional collaboration. The establishment of a Joint Commission for Cooperation at the foreign ministers' level was announced. This body will oversee seven newly created joint working groups focused on -- trade and investment, food security and agriculture, energy cooperation, education and skill



H.E. Dr Adarsh Swaika – Indian Ambassador to the State of Kuwait

development, science and technology, culture and tourism.

Education has also been a key focus, with discussions on establishing Indian university campuses in Kuwait and accrediting Indian universities to enhance their recognition and accessibility. This accreditation process is ongoing. Additionally, there are plans to provide training for diplomats at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service, formerly known as the Indian Foreign Service.

These groups aim to address key areas of mutual interest and ensure structured dialogue between the two nations. Existing working groups on labor, health and oil will also contribute to this comprehensive framework.

Trade between India and Kuwait has grown significantly, with bilateral trade volumes rising from \$10 billion to \$17 billion over the past decade. Discussions during the visit emphasized enhancing business-to-business interactions and finalizing a new bilateral investment treaty to facilitate greater economic engagement.

The Kuwait Investment Authority and private business houses have already made substantial investments in sectors such as steel, hospitality and logistics in India.

Energy remains a cornerstone of the India-Kuwait relationship. Kuwait is India's sixth-largest supplier of crude oil and a significant source of LPG, he said.

The Indian envoy went on to say, the leaders discussed broadening energy cooperation beyond a buyer-seller dynamic, exploring upstream and downstream collaborations and Kuwait's participation in India's Strategic Petroleum Reserves Program.

Diplomats will also receive training at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service, previously known as the Indian Foreign Service Academy. On the international and multilateral front, both sides acknowledged their strong track record, particularly in the United Nations, where India has served as a co-facilitator for Security Council reforms.

India and GCC foreign ministers held their first strategic dialogue in September and further collaboration is expected under Kuwait's presidency of the GCC.

Kuwait's active roles in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Asia Cooperation Dialogue were also acknowledged and appreciated, demonstrating its commitment to fostering regional and international partnerships.

Overall, the visit underscored the shared vision of deepening bilateral ties and advancing mutual interests across various sectors.

India's growing ties with the GCC, including a strategic dialogue and negotiations for a free trade agreement, were highlighted as key areas for future cooperation, Dr Swaika added.

Yemeni Taiz governor inaugurates Kuwait residential village



Taiz Governor and his companions during the opening of the village.

ADEN, Jan 4, (KUNA): Governor of Yemeni Taiz, Nabeel Shamsan, opened on Wednesday Kuwait residential village, located in the governorate's southern rural area.

The village, financed by Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity Society as part of the 10-year long campaign, (Kuwait By Your Side), includes 40 residential units and service facilities.

During the inaugural ceremony, Shamsan commended the humanitarian and developmental role of Kuwait for its contributions for families in Yemen.

CEO of Estjaba foundation, the project developer, Mohammad Bahartha, he said that each housing unit is set with a solar system, a water network and furnished with the essentials.

The village also includes a school, a fully-equipped health clinic, a mosque, some shops and a playground, he noted.

KUNA photo



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French envoy reaffirms commitment to strengthening bilateral ties with Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: The French Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Olivier Becht, reiterated his country's commitment to continuing the enhancement of friendship and cooperation with Kuwait in all areas.

In a recorded message on the Embassy's official Instagram account to mark the arrival of the New Year, Becht said: "As we begin the year 2025, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations, on behalf of myself and the Embassy, to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah, as well as to the government and the people of Kuwait."

He added, "I wish Kuwait success and prosperity as it embarks on an important year, and allow me to express my best wishes to the country on hosting the Gulf Cup football final, taking on the presidency of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the designation of Kuwait City as the Arab Capital of Culture for 2025."

The Ambassador also addressed the French community in Kuwait, wishing them "a New Year full of happiness."



HE Olivier Becht – French Ambassador to Kuwait

He reaffirmed the Embassy's commitment, especially the Consulate's, to continue supporting and assisting them, while praising their contributions in highlighting French expertise and excellence in various fields of work in Kuwait.

Two heads of state impeached in under a month as political crisis paralyzes South Korean politics

S. Korea's CIO asks acting prez to order security service for Yoon's arrest

SEOUL, Jan 4, (Agencies): South Korea's anti-corruption investigative agency said on Saturday that it asked Acting President Choi Sang-mok to order the presidential security service for the execution of a warrant to arrest the impeached President Yoon Suk-yeol.

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials (CIO) said that it sent an official letter again to Choi, who is Minister of Economy and Finance and became an acting president after the impeachment of Yoon and the prime minister.

In the letter, the CIO asked Choi to order the security service to cooperate with the investigative agency for Yoon's arrest.

On Friday, the CIO investigators and police officers raided the presidential residence in central Seoul, but they failed to arrest Yoon after being blocked by the third and last cordon of some 200 security service agents built about 200 meters away from the residence.

It was unclear whether the acting president would cooperate as he refused to respond to the first CIO official letter that was delivered on Wednesday.

The CIO formed a joint investigation unit with the National Office of Investigation and the defense ministry's investigation headquarters to



Investigators from the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials arrive at the gate of the presidential residence as supporters of impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol stage a rally to oppose a court having issued a warrant to detain Yoon, in Seoul, South Korea, Friday, Jan. 3, 2025. (AP)

probe Yoon's martial law imposition.

The impeachment motion against Yoon was passed in the National Assembly on Dec. 14 last year and was delivered to the constitutional court to deliberate on it for up to 180 days, during which Yoon's presidential power is suspended.

Yoon, who was named by in-

vestigative agencies as a suspected ringleader on insurrection charge, declared a martial law on the night of Dec. 3, but it was revoked by the National Assembly hours later.

South Korean investigators left the official residence of impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol after a near-six-hour standoff on Friday during which

he defied their attempt to detain him. It's the latest confrontation in a political crisis that has paralyzed South Korean politics and seen two heads of state impeached in under a month.

The country's anti-corruption agency said it withdrew its investigators after the presidential security service blocked them from entering Yoon's residence for hours, due to concerns about their safety.

The agency said its outnumbered investigators had several scuffles with presidential security forces and expressed "serious regret about the attitude of the suspect, who did not comply with the legal process."

It said detaining Yoon would be "virtually impossible" as long as he is protected by the presidential security service. The agency plans to "strongly demand" that the country's acting leader, Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, instruct the service to comply with their execution of the detention warrant.

Outside the residence, a large group of pro-Yoon protesters braved freezing temperatures for hours, waving South Korean and American flags while chanting slogans vowing to protect him.

The National Police Agency said it planned to investigate the chief and deputy chiefs of the presidential security service on suspicion of ob-

structing official duty and summoned them for questioning on Saturday.

Yoon, a former prosecutor, has resisted investigators' attempts to question him for weeks. The last time he is known to have left the residence was on Dec. 12, when he went to the nearby presidential office to make a televised statement to the nation, making a defiant statement that he will fight efforts to oust him.

Investigators from the country's anti-corruption agency are weighing charges of rebellion after Yoon, apparently frustrated that his policies were blocked by an opposition-dominated parliament, declared martial law on Dec. 3 and dispatched troops to surround the National Assembly.

Parliament overturned the declaration within hours in an unanimous vote and impeached Yoon on Dec. 14, accusing him of rebellion, while South Korean anti-corruption authorities and public prosecutors opened separate investigations into the events.

A Seoul court issued a warrant to detain Yoon and a separate warrant to search his residence on Tuesday, but enforcing them is complicated as long as he remains in his official residence.

Yoon's lawyers, who filed a challenge to the warrant on Thursday, say it cannot be enforced at his residence

due to a law that protects locations potentially linked to military secrets from search without the consent of the person in charge.

The office said it will discuss further actions but did not immediately say whether it would make another attempt to detain Yoon. The warrant for his detention is valid for one week.

Yoon's lawyers have also argued that the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials, which is leading a joint investigation with police and military investigators, lacks the authority to investigate rebellion charges. They said that police officers don't have the legal authority to assist in detaining Yoon, and could face arrest by either the "presidential security service or any citizens." They didn't elaborate further on the claim.

If investigators manage to detain Yoon, they will likely ask a court for permission to make a formal arrest. Otherwise, he will be released after 48 hours.

During a background briefing to reporters, an official from the anti-corruption agency said its investigators were able to approach within 200 meters (yards) of Yoon's residence but were stopped by a barricade comprising around 10 vehicles and approximately 200 members of the presidential security forces and troops.



People in India shop for warm jackets amid dense fog in Jammu, India, Thursday, Jan. 2, 2025. (AP)

Zero visibility due to dense fog hits Delhi traffic

At least 19 flights were diverted and over 200 were either rerouted or delayed, and the service of 81 trains was affected amid zero visibility due to dense fog in and around Delhi on Saturday.

Vehicular traffic on roads too moved at a snail's pace due to zero visibility during the early hours of the day in the national capital.

According to sources at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, the flights' landing and departure was impacted between 00.15 a.m. and 1.30 a.m. due to reduced visibility to almost zero. While 19 flights were diverted, 51 flights were re-routed, and many others were delayed.

The Delhi airport issued a travel advisory to travelers warning them of potential flight delays, and advising them to remain in touch with their individual airlines for regular updates about landing and departure of their respective flights.

An official of the Indian Railways confirmed that the movement of a total of 81 trains to and from Delhi was also affected due to poor visibility caused by dense fog.

Office-goers and other commuters too faced dense fog in the early hours. As a result, vehicular traffic was very slow with the commuters putting on fog lights and blinkers.

Elsewhere, a thick blanket of fog accompanied by icy winds has left people in Bangladesh, where climate

is tropical with a mild winter from October to March, shivering.

The severe cold wave sweeping through the capital Dhaka and other parts of Bangladesh led normal life and businesses to suffer, particularly in the country's northern region facing the Himalayan mountains.

Md Bazlur Rashid, a meteorologist of the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), said that the country's lowest temperature on Thursday was recorded at 9.8 degrees Celsius in Chuadanga district, some 215 km west of Dhaka.

He said the BMD recorded Dhaka temperature at 14.2 degrees Celsius on Thursday morning.

Sky over Dhaka and most parts of the country remained cloudy for the last couple of days while cars and buses were running by switching on headlights in daytime on many Dhaka streets.

Sunlight was completely absent in Dhaka and the country's northern districts due to dense fog Thursday.

Chilling cold also slows the wheels of normal life in most parts of Bangladesh including the capital of Dhaka.

Amid the chilly weather, drifters in Dhaka have been facing hard time due to the cold spell. Poor people in Dhaka were seen taking warm by firing woods. Sickness was rampant among these poor people.

Temperatures will gradually warm back up slightly from next week, said the meteorologist. (Xinhua)



Japan's Empress Emerita Michiko, from left, Emperor Emeritus Akihito, Emperor Naruhito, Empress Masako, Princess Aiko, Crown Prince Akishino, Crown Princess Kiko and Princess Kako wave at well-wishers during a public appearance for New Year celebrations at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, Jan. 2, 2025. (AP)

Japan's Emperor Naruhito, family greet throngs of New Year well-wishers

TOKYO, Jan 4, (AP): Japan's Emperor Naruhito and his family greeted throngs of New Year's well-wishers from a balcony window at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on Thursday.

Some shouted "banzai" - "long live" - while others waved small paper Japanese flags.

"I feel for those who are still greatly suffering," Naruhito said, referring to the quake in western Japan that struck a year ago, as well as flooding and other natural disasters throughout the nation.

Last year, his appearance was canceled at the last minute because of a devastating quake in the Noto Peninsula that killed hundreds of people.

In the royal family's New Year video message for this year, released earlier in the week, Naruhito showed a beautifully crafted mask from the Noto area, which are worn by drummers who perform in a traditional style called gojinjo daiko.

The emperor's 2021 and 2022 greetings, which attract huge crowds to the palace's usually cloistered grounds, were canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Naruhito also offered prayers for people's happiness in an appearance that also included his wife Empress Masako and their daughter Princess Aiko.

Aiko, who turned 23 last month, is at the center of a national debate about the rules of male-only succession in the imperial family. Under current law, she will leave the family, once she marries outside the imperial family.

Also standing on the balcony was Emperor Emeritus Akihito, who abdicated in favor of his son in 2019, and his wife Empress Emerita Michiko, as well as Naruhito's younger brother and his family.

Satoshi Nishoji, who came from Osaka in western Japan and stood in line for five hours to join the crowd, said "I was so happy to see them all because I haven't made it the last five years."

Africa

French troops to withdraw: French armed forces will withdraw from Cote d'Ivoire "as early as January 2025," Ivorian President

Alassane Ouattara announced in his New Year's message on Tuesday, stressing that the withdrawal will be "concerted and organized."

"We have decided on a concerted and organized withdrawal of French forces from Cote d'Ivoire," said Ouattara, revealing that the 43rd Abidjan Marine

Infantry Battalion (BIMA), stationed in Port-Bouet, a suburb of Abidjan, the economic capital of Cote d'Ivoire, would be "handed back to the armed forces of Cote d'Ivoire in January 2025." (Xinhua)

Recurring quakes concern Ethiopians: Recurring earthquakes around the eastern part of Ethiopia have sparked concern among the public as experts and authorities called for calm and vigilance.

Latest data from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) showed that at least ten earthquakes have occurred in central Ethiopia over the past two days, with the majority impacting areas around Awash Fentale and Metehara towns. (Xinhua)

Fire engulfs market in Accra: A fire broke out in the early hours of Thursday at a big market located in the central business district of Accra, Ghana's capital.

The fire, which erupted overnight, left widespread destruction, with traders scrambling to salvage their goods as the flames rapidly spread.

Eyewitnesses told local media that the fire broke out suddenly, with voices of people who first saw it screaming to draw attention to the inferno that ravaged numerous shops within the market. (Xinhua)



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro waits to receive attendees at the start of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) Summit in Caracas, Venezuela, Dec. 14, 2024. (AP)

Caracas offers \$100K reward for opp'n whereabouts of presidential candidate

CARACAS, Jan 4, (AP): Venezuela's government has announced a \$100,000 reward for information on the whereabouts of Edmundo González, the opposition candidate who claims to have defeated President Nicolás Maduro in last year's election. The announcement came eight days before Venezuela's next presidential term is set to begin.

"A \$100,000 reward is offered to anyone who provides information about his location," the press office of the country's Scientific, Criminal and Forensic Investigations Agency said in the caption of an Instagram post showing a wanted-like bulletin with González's photo and instructions to turn him in to authorities.

Hours after the government's announcement, González's campaign said the former ambassador would kick off an international tour with a visit to Argentina, where he would meet with President Javier

Milei on Saturday.

González left Venezuela in September for exile in Spain after a judge issued a warrant for his arrest as part of an investigation linked to the July 28 presidential election, which the country's National Electoral Council, stacked with ruling-party loyalists, said was won by Maduro.

However, unlike previous presidential elections, electoral authorities did not provide detailed vote counts. Yet, the opposition collected tally sheets from 80% of the nation's electronic voting machines, posted them online and said the voting records showed that the faction's candidate, González, had won the election with twice as many votes as Maduro.

Global condemnation over the lack of transparency prompted Maduro to ask Venezuela's high court, also stacked with ruling-party loyalists, to audit the results. The court subsequently reaffirmed his victory.

577 road accidents, 6 deaths: DOH

Holiday firecracker injuries in Philippines skyrocket to 771

MANILA, Jan 4, (Xinhua): The Philippines' Department of Health (DOH) on Saturday said three people were killed during the Christmas and New Year revelries, with the total number of firecracker-related injuries climbing to 771.

The DOH said that the number of injuries recorded from Dec. 22, 2024, to Jan. 4, 2025, reached 771, 27.6 percent higher than that in the same period of the previous year.

Most of the victims were teens and minors, according to the DOH data. Of the 771 injured people, 453 were 19 years old and below.

Meanwhile, The Philippines' De-

partment of Health (DOH) said on Thursday it has logged 577 road accidents nationwide during the holiday season, with at least six deaths.

The agency said the road accidents tallied from Dec. 22, 2024, to Jan. 2, 2025, were 33.5 percent higher than that in the same period of the previous year.

The DOH said the cases involved drivers who did not use safety gear such as seatbelts and drivers under the influence of alcohol.

The agency said more than 400 crashes involved motorcycles. Four of the six deaths were from motorcycle accidents.



Fireworks explode to celebrate the New Year over Quezon City Memorial Circle in Quezon City, the Philippines, on Jan. 1, 2025. (Xinhua)

For AI-driven service and customer experience enhancements

KFH honors winners of Innovation Challenge

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 4: Recognizing the valuable contributions and diverse experiences of its employees, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) honored the winners of its annual Group-level Innovation Challenge. This competition aims to create innovative services and solutions, leading to the development of systems and better customer experience.

The honor ceremony was held in the presence of Acting Group CEO of KFH, Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood; Senior Deputy Group CEO-Finance, Shadi Zahran; Deputy Group CEO-Transformation, Technology and Operations, Haytham Abdulaziz Alterkait; and KFH Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Zeyad Abdullah AlOmar, along with other KFH leaders.

The first three place winners were awarded a total prize of \$45,000 after a great competition. Each project underwent a meticulous evaluation by a specialized committee, ensuring adherence to the highest standards. Key criteria included alignment with this year's AI theme, adherence to KFH's general policy, successful implementation, and the presence of clear steps and specific implementation stages. Criteria also consider dimensions such as competition, profitability, quality, and adherence to local and global professional and regulatory standards.

A specialized committee within Executive Management evaluated nominated ideas in the final stages of the selection process and chose the winning entries. These efforts empower KFH Group to adopt a flexible business model, actively driving the consistent flow of innovative ideas across the organization. This model adapts to the unique characteristics of each market the Group operates in, considering customer segments, guidelines, and relevant criteria.

In his speech during the ceremony, Acting Group CEO



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



Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood



One of the winners of the innovation competition.

of KFH, Abdulwahab Iesa Al Rushood, emphasized the importance of motivating distinguished staff to develop innovative ideas that contribute to business growth and enhance the

customer experience. He pointed out that KFH strives to maintain its leadership in the Islamic banking industry by raising the level of innovation, adopting artificial intelli-

gence, supporting the use of its solutions, and encouraging the adoption of this new level to benefit both KFH and its customers.

Al Rushood noted that the

competition stringently scrutinized ideas, assessing them against rigorous criteria and evaluating their intended use. All aspects of each idea underwent thorough discussion. Fol-

AI Rushood:

- Embracing outstanding ideas to sustain KFH's leadership position

Alterkait:

- We are proud of the unique technological solutions developed by KFH employees

lowing the selection process, three winning ideas were chosen and will soon be implemented to achieve their planned objectives.

Deputy Group CEO Transformation, Technology and Operations, Haytham Abdulaziz Alterkait

Deputy Group CEO Transformation, Technology and Operations, Haytham Abdulaziz Alterkait expressed his pride in KFH employees who consistently submit outstanding ideas and advanced solutions in each edition of the Innovation Challenge. These submissions have a significant positive impact on KFH systems, improve overall performance, streamline procedures, and enhance the customer experience.

He highlighted that choosing Artificial Intelligence as this year's theme reflects the rapid global advancements in AI. The reliance on AI has become paramount in numerous systems, serving to facilitate and expedite business processes while concurrently delivering optimal solutions. This accelerates human progress with a focus on accuracy and quality.

Alterkait said that creativity and innovation play a pivotal role in continuously enhancing the customer experience. He highlighted KFH's dedication to empowering employees with the necessary technological resources to bring their innovative ideas to life, thereby achieving KFH's goals and enhancing service excellence.

CGCC signs AED 158.88 million tender for Dalma Island project

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: The Combined Group Contracting Company (CGCC) has announced the signing of a significant tender contract worth 13.26 million dinars (approximately 158.88 million UAE dirhams) for the development of the industrial zone on the Dalma Island, part of Project (C052), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The company made the announcement through its UAE-based subsidiary, revealing that the project will involve upgrading the island's infra-

structure over the course of 578 days.

This contract comes at a time when the company is facing a slight decline in its profits. For the third quarter of 2024, CGCC reported a 13 percent year-on-year decrease in profits, with earnings reaching 1.45 million dinars, down from 1.66 million dinars in the same period of the previous year.

Despite this, the company continues to secure large-scale projects, underscoring its commitment to expanding its operations in the region.

Türkiye could facilitate Syria's economic revival, say experts

ANKARA, Jan. 4, (Xinhua): As attention shifts to Syria's future following the collapse of the Bashar al-Assad's government, regional player and neighbour Türkiye could assist the war-torn nation in its economic recovery in the long term with its geographic proximity, industrial strength, and historical trade ties with Syria, experts have said.

With decades of war and political turmoil leaving Syria's economy in ruins, rebuilding the nation presents an enormous challenge.

Türkiye has voiced its commitment to Syria's post-conflict reconstruction, with Turkish officials signaling their willingness to provide logistical support, technical expertise, and investment in key sectors such as construction, agriculture, and energy.

According to analysts, the revival of connections between Syria and Türkiye, which shares a 900-km borderline, could act as a catalyst to Syria's economic growth.

Türkiye's transportation networks, including railways and highways that connect to Syrian borders, would facilitate the flow of goods, services, and people, said Oytun Orhan, a senior researcher at Ankara's Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies.

"Reopening trade routes and border crossings that remain closed because of the civil war could significantly boost regional trade," Orhan told Xinhua.

Trained workforces also play a pivotal role in Syria's reconstruction, to which Türkiye could have a major contribution by training and equipping Syrians with the skills needed to rebuild their country, the analyst noted.

"Joint initiatives between Türkiye and international organizations could further enhance education and vocational training programs for Syrians," the analyst added.

In addition, energy is another sector where Türkiye could provide vital assistance, experts said, noting that Turkish companies' expertise in renewable energy and infrastructure development could power Syria's recovery.

In December last year, Türkiye's Energy and Natural Resources Minister Alparslan Bayraktar expressed his nation's intention to assist Syria in boosting oil and natural gas production.

"Collaborative projects aimed at restoring Syria's power grid, developing clean energy sources, and boosting gas and oil production could be set up," said Selim Esen, a specialist on energy issues based in Ankara.

He, however, noted that U.S. and European Union-imposed sanctions continue to be a significant obstacle to reconstruction projects.

Investments will also be urgently needed to rebuild roads, develop air passenger and cargo services at Aleppo and Damascus airports, and renew Syria's ports at Latakia and Tartus on the Mediterranean Sea.

Türkiye has already sent specialists and engineers to Syria to prepare Damascus airport for international flights and restore railway lines for passenger and freight transport.

"To restore Syria's economic infrastructure and trade lines is one of our priorities so that the country can stand on its feet again," a Turkish official told Xinhua.

This source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that Türkiye's business community is monitoring developments in Syria and is ready to contribute to the Syrian economic recovery.

Nevertheless, while saying the end of the conflict would provide opportunities for Türkiye, the source sounded a note of caution. "We have to see that the new government has everything under control."

GDP in Arab region at 2.5% in '24, to reach 3.9 pct in 2025: report

Conflict- and war-torn countries continue to face severe contraction

BEIRUT, Jan 4, (Xinhua): Economic growth in the Arab region is expected to reach 2.5 percent in 2024, according to a report released recently by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

The report noted that growth is expected to accelerate in 2025, reaching 3.9 percent.

Dubbed Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Arab Region, the report noted that the growth in the Gulf Cooperation

Council countries is expected to reach 4.3 percent in 2025.

Increased demand for phosphate and gas will drive growth in middle-income Arab countries, where it is expected to reach 2.8 percent in 2024 and 3.6 percent in 2025, it said, adding that the repercussions of the war on Gaza and Lebanon will affect neighboring Egypt and Jordan.

Meanwhile, Arab conflict- and war-torn countries continue to face severe contraction. In 2024, the economy of Palestine contracted

by at least 13.3 percent, and the economy of Sudan by at least 12.6 percent. Lebanon's GDP also contracted by at least 1.9 percent, said the report.

The report highlighted concerns regarding the region's rising unemployment rate, projected to reach 11.5 percent in 2024.

"The region is in dire need of comprehensive development plans based on innovation and regional and international partnerships to face challenges efficiently," said Ahmed Moumni, the survey's lead author.

Biden officially blocks proposed acquisition of US Steel

Nippon Steel to sue U.S. gov't over decision to block acquisition: media

TOKYO, Jan. 4, (Agencies): Japan's Nippon Steel Corp. is set to file a lawsuit to United States President Joe Biden's decision to block its takeover of U.S. Steel Corp., local media reported Saturday.

Nippon Steel and U.S. Steel are expected to claim in court that Biden did not present sufficient evidence to prove the proposed acquisition poses a threat to U.S. national security, and that his decision violates due process under the U.S. Constitution and the law governing the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, Kyodo News reported, citing sources close to the matter.

Biden said Friday that he has decided to block the 14.1 billion U.S. dollars sale of U.S. Steel to the Japanese steel giant, citing risks to national security, while urging the two steelmakers to "fully and permanently" abandon their plan.

In a joint statement on Friday, the two firms said the U.S. authorities' review of the international buyout project was "manipulated to advance President Biden's political agenda" and that they will "take all

appropriate action to protect our legal rights."

Meanwhile, Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Yoji Muto said, "It is incomprehensible and regrettable that this kind of decision has been made on the grounds of concerns over national security."

The Japanese government regarded Nippon Steel's plan to acquire U.S. Steel as a deal "that would benefit both countries" as Japanese investment in the U.S. has been on track to continue increasing, Muto said in a statement.

In late 2023, Nippon Steel announced plans to acquire U.S. Steel, which is headquartered in Pennsylvania, one of the key swing states in the 2024 presidential election. Before Biden withdrew from the race, both he and his then-opponent, Donald Trump, had expressed opposition to the acquisition.

Nippon Steel is the world's fourth-largest steelmaker by volume, while U.S. Steel ranks 24th, according to a 2023 tally by the World Steel Association.

U.S. President Joe Biden on Friday officially blocked Nippon

Steel's proposed acquisition of U.S. Steel on national security grounds.

"A strong domestically owned and operated steel industry represents an essential national security priority and is critical for resilient supply chains," Biden said in a statement released by the White House.

In an executive order signed on the same day, Biden cited the 1950 Defense Production Act, stating that he believes that Nippon Steel "might take action that threatens to impair the national security of the United States."

In late 2023, Nippon Steel announced plans to acquire U.S. Steel, which is headquartered in Pennsylvania, one of the key swing states in the 2024 presidential election. Before Biden withdrew from the race, both he and his then-opponent, Donald Trump, had expressed opposition to the acquisition.

Biden's economic team had previously said that the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) would conduct a review of the acquisition.

Recently, CFIUS expressed concerns, believing that the deal could lead to a decline in U.S. steel pro-

duction and pose a national security threat. However, due to a lack of consensus within the committee on whether to block the acquisition, it chose not to provide a formal recommendation on whether the deal should be allowed.

Nippon Steel said the concerns raised by CFIUS were "littered with factual inaccuracies and omissions, misleading and incomplete statements, conjecture and hypotheticals that have no basis in fact and are plainly illogical." It previously stated that it was prepared to take legal action if the acquisition is blocked.

U.S. Steel had also previously urged Biden to approve the deal. Following the CFIUS referring decision on pending transaction with Nippon Steel to the president, U.S. Steel said in a statement that this is a transaction that should be approved on its merits, and one that should be a model for "friendshoring" investment.

"It is the best way, by far, to ensure that U.S. Steel, including its employees, communities, and customers, will thrive well into the future," it said.

What's On

600 free trolleys giveaway

Lulu launches New Year Big Five Days promotion

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: Lulu Hypermarket was thrilled to begin 2025 with its highly awaited New Year Big Five Days promotion, running from 31st December 2024 to 4th January 2025. Shoppers across all Lulu outlets in Kuwait can celebrate this New Year with unmissable deals, exclusive promotions, and unforgettable experiences during this vibrant celebration.

A standout highlight of the campaign is the giveaway of 600 free trolleys over five days, adding an extra dose of cheer to the New Year festivities. Adding to the excitement, Lulu Hypermarket introduces a Mid-night Sale from 31st December to 3rd January, with jaw-dropping discounts available from 8:00 PM to 3:00 AM. This late-night shopping bonanza offers a unique opportunity to grab incredible bargains.

Shoppers can also enjoy up to 70% discounts on selected products throughout the day—perfect for stocking up on essentials and indulging in luxury purchases. Families

can delight in the “Just Ride” Toy Discounts, offering special deals for children of all ages, while food lovers can indulge in tempting promotions on Lulu’s signature hot food items through Lulu Kitchen Specials. Tech enthusiasts are not left out, with the Special Tech Deals featuring unbeatable prices on mobiles, TVs, laptops, and gadgets.

To keep the festive spirit alive, Lulu introduces the “Spin & Win” activity, where shoppers can win surprise gifts from 31st December to 3rd January. Other incredible offers include the Fashion Half Pay Back promotion and an Extra Digital Clearance Sale, ensuring every shopper finds extraordinary value.

Lulu Hypermarket remains committed to delivering unmatched variety, value, and quality for all customers. Celebrate this New Year by visiting nearest Lulu Hypermarket and make the most of these incredible offers during the Big Five Days campaign.



Lulu launches Big Five Days promotion for 2025.

Next Alfouz draw scheduled for 6 Jan, 2025

ABK unveils Anwar Al Nouri as Alfouz winner

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to announce Anwar A N Al Nouri as the winner of the Alfouz KD 100,000 quarterly draw on Monday, 30 December 2024. The draw took place in the presence of a Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative, ensuring transparency.

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

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



Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait's Alfouz winner

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

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account or increase their balance to participate in the upcoming draw, which is scheduled to take place on Monday, 6 January 2025.

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

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

Event honors late Dr. Manmohan Singh

KMWA hosts successful Kannadiga Get-Together

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: The Karnataka Muslim Welfare Association (KMWA) hosted a successful Kannadiga Get-Together, titled “Sarva Janangada Shantiya Thota” (The Garden of Peace for All People), in celebration of Karnataka Rajyotsava 2024, on Thursday, 26th December 2024, at ICSK (Senior) in Salmiya. The event presided over by Jameel Ahmed, President of KMWA, aimed to foster peace and unity among diverse communities. The program began at 7:45 PM and was attended by a distinguished group of guests and community members.

The convenor, Br. Ameeruddin Amir, welcomed the esteemed guests and presented a video showcasing KMWA’s mission and activities. The guests were then invited to the stage, where several prominent figures from the community shared their thoughts. The guests of honor, recognized for their contributions to society, delivered brief yet inspiring speeches, each lasting two minutes:

- Dr. Diwakar Chaluvaiah, Ex-President of IDF
- Dr. Surendra Naik, President of GSB Sabha Kuwait
- Mr. Ramesh Kediyoor, Founder President and Convenor of Mogaveera Association Kuwait & Ex-President of Tulu Koota Kuwait
- Mr. Sandeep Chhaba, Ex-Vice President, Kuwait Kannada Koota
- Mr. Rajesh Kunder, of Billava Sangha Kuwait
- Mr. Yusuf Rasheed, President of Kkma – Karnataka Branch
- Mr. Jagadeesha Shanbough, GS, Tulu Koota Kuwait

B.S. Sharafuddin delivered the keynote speech on the theme “Sarva Janangada Shantiya Thota” (The Garden of Peace for All People), emphasizing the significance of peaceful coexistence and religious harmony for the development of individuals and society. His presentation also highlighted the various dialects of Kannada spoken across different regions of Karnataka. After concluding his talk, he conveyed a heartfelt condolence message for the late Dr. Manmohan Singh, the beloved former Prime Minister of India, acknowledging his tremendous contributions.

The evening’s program also featured a fun and interactive Kahoot quiz, led by Br. Fahimuddin Sharief, with five thought-provoking questions that energized the attendees and sparked lively discussions.

Br. Atheeq Bayezed delivered the Vote of Thanks, expressing gratitude to all attendees, guests of honor, the speaker, and KMWA office bearers (Br. Imam Baksh, Br. Ameeruddin Amir, Br. Irshad Kudroli, Br. Tanveer, Br. Fahim Sharief, Br. Jafar Sadiq, Br. Hameedullah, Br. Shakeel Ahmed, Br. Syed Akhil, Br. Shami, and Br. Mushtaq Ahmed) for their support and participation in making the event



Photos during the event.

memorable.

The evening commenced with a recitation of the Holy Qur’an by Br. Irshad Kudroli, concluded with a de-

lightful dinner, where attendees enjoyed a meal and engaged in networking, further strengthening the bonds of friendship among the community members.

Participants left the event with a renewed sense of unity and a deeper appreciation for peace and harmony among all people.

Students benefit from free check-ups

IDAK conducts successful ‘Dental Awareness Camp’

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: Indian Dentists Alliance in Kuwait (IDAK) successfully conducted a Dental Awareness Camp on 14th December 2024 at Al Madrasatul Islamiya School (AMI), Kuwait, offering free dental check-ups and oral health education to students of the institution.

The event witnessed quite an enthusiastic participation, with around 200 students aged between 5 and 15 years, benefitting from dental examinations. The camp aimed to promote oral hygiene practices among children and identify any early signs of dental issues.

IDAK’s Community Welfare

Committee alongwith a team of dedicated volunteers conducting the camp, included Dr. Neelima Kakirala, Dr. Aastha Mehta, Dr. Ranjitha R S, Dr. Jane John Thomas, Dr. Shashikala Savla, Dr. Medhini Menon, Dr. Shiraz Usman and Dr. Gireesh Krishnan.

Drs. Jane and Ranjitha engaged the children through interactive learning activities, and in turn imparted important dental knowledge.

The initiative was highly appreciated by the parents and school authorities alike, for raising awareness about the importance of oral health.



Indian Dentists Alliance promotes oral health among children.

New office bearers elected unopposed for TEF 2025

Tamilnadu Engineers Forum starts 2025 with new leadership

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: Tamilnadu Engineers Forum (TEF), Kuwait is a distinguished nonprofit engineering association which is certified to ISO 9001:2015 Standards. Founded by alumni engineers from Tamilnadu, India, TEF boasts a membership of approximately 550 engineers residing in Kuwait and is officially registered with the Indian Embassy in Kuwait.

Aligned with its core objectives of professional development and community building, TEF organizes a series of Technical seminars & conference (TICE) to enhance the technical knowledge and skills of its members. This commitment to excellence has established TEF as a leading professional organization within the Kuwaiti engineering landscape.

TEF provides an exceptional platform for companies to connect with a highly qualified audience through Technological Innovations Conference & Exposition (TICE) organized every year. Furthermore, TEF fosters a strong sense of community by organizing enriching family events such as Kodai Vizha, cultural programs, family picnic, sports days, and walkathons exclusively for its members.

In 2025, the new organizing committee of the Tamilnadu Engineers Forum (TEF) has taken charge under the leadership of Mr. Raja (President) and Mr. Balasubramanian (General Secretary) during the valedictory function of TEF 2024, held at the American International School (AIS) Auditorium on December 20, 2024. The office bearers for TEF 2025 were elected unopposed, following a well-coordinated election process managed by election officers Mr. Ramaraj and Mr. Bala Elamaran. The election officers were facilitated by Mr. Raja and Mr. Balasubramanian for ensuring a seamless and smooth election process.



TEF swears in new leadership for 2025.

The new committee comprises Mr. Raja as President, Mr. Balasubramanian as General Secretary, Mr. Arun Golden as Treasurer, Mr. Subramanian as Vice President, Mr. Periyasamy as Joint Secretary, Mr. Kapil Duraisamy as Joint Secretary (IT), and Mr. Justin Anto Prasanna as Joint Treasurer, forming the Executive Committee. Additionally, the team includes the following esteemed members: Mr. Gem Prasanna, Mr. Anantharaj R, Mr. Kalai Arasan, Mr. Maniyarasu, Mr. Murali Krishnan, Mr. Middleton, Mr. Karthik Ramadoss, Mr. Parthiban, Mr. Sathishkumar, Mr. Senthilkumar, Mr. Stanley Charles, Mr. Subbu, Mr. Ukkirapandian, Mr. Reckston, Mr. Raj narayanan Desigan, Mr. Asokan Mani, Mr. Suresh Anand, and Mr. Ananth Raj. President Mr. Raja introduced executive committee members and during his speech, he outlined the vision and mission of TEF, emphasizing the importance of upholding its legacy. He highlighted the team’s collective experience and commitment to leading this prestigious forum, drawing upon past achievements. Following this, Mr. Balasubramanian, General Secretary, introduced the other office bearers and presented a roadmap of exciting activities planned for 2025.

Key highlights of the upcoming year include the Inaugural and Technical Symposia, a Cultural Event, a Walkathon, the InnoEX interschool science competition, a Sports Day, and the flagship event: the Technological Innovations Conference & Exposition (TICE) 2025 and the 9th Engineering Excellence Awards (EEA), scheduled for 9th October 2025 at a prominent venue in Kuwait.

The new committee commenced its activities in January 2025 with a commitment to engaging members and their families through a diverse range of technical and cultural events. TEF eagerly anticipates continued support from all Indian Associations and other communities in Kuwait.

Hollywood's A-listers shine at Palm Springs Film Festival

Kidman gives tearful dedication to late mother

PALM SPRINGS, Calif., Jan 4, (AP): Nicole Kidman gave a long-awaited dedication to her late mother Friday night at the Palm Springs Film Festival.

"I feel my momma right now. This is for you, momma," Kidman said onstage in tears. The Australian actor and producer's mother died last year shortly after Kidman arrived at the Venice Film Festival to promote "Babygirl."

"I didn't get to do it at the Venice Film Festival," the actor said. "Thank you for giving me the chance to say this is for my mom. My whole career has been for my mom and dad."

Kidman's "Scarpetta" co-star and friend Jamie Lee Curtis presented her with the International Star Award during the 36th annual International Film Awards at the festival in Palm Springs, California.

The intimate gala kicked off Hollywood's whirlwind award season, honoring some of the film industry's most anticipated award contenders.

Kidman was among notable A-listers including Adrien Brody, Zoe Saldana, Isabella Rossellini and Angelina Jolie, who was presented with the Desert Palm Achievement Award-Actress by her godmother,

acclaimed actor Jacqueline Bisset.

Jolie, who portrays opera singer Maria Callas in the Netflix biopic "Maria," is nominated for a Golden Globe for Best Performance by a Female Actor in a Motion Picture.

"I'm all right today because when I walk off of this stage, I am more myself because of you, Zahara, and your brothers and sisters," the Academy Award-winning actor said to her daughter while reflecting on Callas' difficult life. Jolie's speech came days after finalizing a divorce settlement with Brad Pitt that reached over eight years.

Recipients

The night was full of onstage reflection as recipients and presenters gave long, heartfelt speeches at the non-televised event.

Colman Domingo, who was presented with the Spotlight Award by good friend Demi Moore, reflected on art's impact on him as a child and its power to transform lives. The speech was a nod to his recent film, "Sing Sing," which tells the story of incarcerated men who find purpose while acting in a theater

group.

"I found art when I really needed it to be a parachute to save my life," Domingo said. "Art saves lives. It saved mine. It will save yours."

While receiving the Chairman Award, Timothée Chalamet said he feels "clear-sighted" about his career and credits music icon Bob Dylan for indirectly providing him with the perspective he has to work as an actor out of love for the art form.

Chalamet stars as Dylan in "A Complete Unknown" and spent more than five years preparing for his transformation into the folk musician.

"A wise man once said, 'They can hurt your feelings if they boo you, they can also kill you with kindness.' I took my anxiety about tonight as a good sign that I'm actually focused on what really matters. The work and the opportunity to do the work again," Chalamet said.

Intermixed with the sentiment, stars also took the time to poke fun at themselves and their peers.

Jennifer Coolidge presented Ariana Grande with the Rising Star award, noting the "Wicked" actor and pop star was already a household name.



Nicole Kidman accepts the international star award for 'Babygirl' during the 36th annual Palm Springs International Film Festival Awards Gala on Friday, Jan. 3, in Palm Springs, Calif. (AP)

Film

Who's hosting and presenting at the Golden Globes 2025?

Davis and Danson honored at Golden Gala

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif., Jan 4, (AP): Viola Davis' journey to becoming one of Hollywood's most revered actors was driven by a straightforward mantra: Embrace every role, using each as a paycheck and a chance to explore new characters while honing her skills.

Davis delivered a moving, 16-minute speech while accepting the prestigious Cecil B. DeMille Award at the Golden Gala: An Evening of Excellence on Friday night. She reflected on how her turbulent upbringing fueled her passion for acting as an escape and how financial necessity often influenced her choice of roles.

"If I waited for a role that was written for me, well crafted, then I wouldn't be standing up here," said Davis, who along with Ted Danson, recipient of the Carol Burnett Award, were celebrated for their career achievements in film and television during a star-studded, black-tie gala dinner in Beverly Hills, California, just two nights before the 82nd annual Golden Globes on Sunday.

Some of the popular names in attendance included Carol Burnett, Jane Fonda, Anthony Anderson, Steve Guttenberg and singer-songwriter Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds. It's the first time the Globes hosted a separate event dedicated to both awards.

Davis said she couldn't afford to wait for the perfect role, especially as a "dark-skinned Black woman with a wide nose and big lips."

"So I took it for the money," said Davis, who won praise for a string of compelling characters in films such as "Fences," "The Woman King," "The Help" and "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" while captivating TV audiences through the legal thriller drama "How to Get Away with Murder."

Nobility

"I don't believe that poverty is really the answer to craft," she said. "I don't think there's any nobility in poverty."

Meryl Streep presented the award to Davis, who she called a pure artist who "delivers the truth every time." Both actors worked together in the 2008 film "Doubt," where Streep first became in awe of Davis, who she called her "favorite actor in the world."

The DeMille Award has been bestowed on Hollywood's greatest talents. Past recipients include Tom Hanks, Jeff Bridges, Oprah Winfrey, Morgan Freeman, Streep, Barbara Streisand and Sidney Poitier.

When Danson accepted his award, he congratulated Davis, calling her an "amazing actor."

"It's such a pleasure to be in the same room with you," said Danson, a three-time Globes winner, who has been a fixture on TV since he broke out as Boston bartender Sam Malone on NBC's comedy "Cheers." His other credits include "The Good Place," "Mr. Mayor," " Fargo," "CSI" and "CSI: Cyber,"

"Damages" and "Becker."

Danson currently stars in Netflix's "A Man on the Inside," which earned his first nomination since 2008 and 13th overall.

"Bia Iftikhar, who does his hair on set, said it best: 'Ted sets the tone,'" said his wife, actor Mary Steenburgen, who presented Danson with the Carol Burnett Award, which was inaugurated in 2019. Past recipients include Norman Lear, Ryan Murphy and Ellen DeGeneres. The first was Burnett herself.

Danson and Steenburgen appeared in a few projects together including "Pontiac Moon," "Gulliver's Travels" and "It Must Be Love."

"He's so loving and takes such joy in acting that all of us who are hard at work away from our families for long hours get to work on a set that is dictated by his kindness," Steenburgen said. "As his wife, watching the respect and love ... for Ted, it made me very proud."

Admiration

Danson traded "I love you" with Burnett, showing admiration for each other. He thanked a number of writers, producers and actors along with the "Cheers" co-creators Glen and Les Charles, who surprised him by showing up to the event.

"I feel so grateful," he said. "I'm truly the luckiest... on Earth."

Davis quipped, "Little Viola is squealing," referring to how her younger self would be overjoyed at the actor's journey from an impoverished childhood to Hollywood stardom.

"She's standing behind me and she's pulling on my dress," said Davis, who achieved EGOT status after winning a Grammy last year for best audio book, narration, and storytelling for the recording for her memoir "Finding Me."

"She's wearing the same red rubber boots that she wore rain or shine because they feel 'purty'" she continued. "What she's whispering is: 'I told you I was a magician.'"

The Golden Globes will return Sunday with major star appeal thanks to a slew of big name nominees, including Zendaya, Timothée Chalamet, Angelina Jolie, Daniel Craig, Denzel Washington, Ariana Grande and more.

Nominations for the 82nd awards ceremony were made last month. The show will be televised by CBS and streamed on Paramount+.

Here's the key things to know about the ceremony:

Comedian and actor Nikki Glaser was chosen to host next year's ceremony.

Glaser has made a name for herself as a riotously sharp wit, especially at roasts, including recently for Tom Brady, who she needed for his complex love life and his one-time advocacy of crypto. She earned an Emmy nomination for her latest special, "Someday You'll Die" for HBO, which dealt with everything from offering to pay for



Barry Adelman, (from left), Nikki Glaser, Helen Hoehne, Glenn Weiss, and Ricky Kirshner roll out the red carpet during the 82nd Golden Globes red carpet roll out on Thursday, Jan. 2, at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, California. (AP)

her friends' abortions to her darkest porn habits.

Glaser cited Tina Fey, Amy Poehler and Ricky Gervais as inspirations. She'll follow last year's host Jo Koy, who was slammed by critics for a fumbled opening monologue and a rushed pace throughout.

Jacques Audiard's audacious musical "Emilia Pérez," about a Mexican drug lord who undergoes gender affirming surgery, leads all nominees with 10.

That put it ahead of other contenders like the musical smash "Wicked," the papal thriller "Conclave" and the postwar epic "The Brutalist."

"The Apprentice," about Donald Trump as a young man, also landed nominations for its two central performances, by Sebastian Stan as Trump and Jeremy Strong as Roy Cohn.

"The Bear" leads all television nominees with five.

With his 11th nomination, Denzel Washington is the most-nominated Black performer at the Globes.

Steve Martin is nominated for the fourth straight year in the best television actor in a musical or comedy series category for "Only Murders in the Building." The nomination marks his ninth overall and could be his first-ever Globes win.

There are 26 first-time nominees including Grande, Dakota Fanning, Glaser, Seth Meyers, Zoe Saldana and Pamela Anderson - who surprisingly earned a nod for "The Last Showgirl."

The embattled Globes, which are no longer presented by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, are still in comeback mode after years of scandal and organizational upheaval.

Ceremony

A ton of starry people: Andrew Garfield, Anthony Mackie, Anthony Ramos, Anya Taylor-Joy, Ariana DeBose, Aubrey Plaza, Auli'i Cravalho, Awkwafina, Brandi Carlile, Catherine O'Hara, Colin Farrell, Colman Domingo, Demi Moore, Dwayne Johnson, Édgar Ramírez, Elton John, Gal Gadot, Glenn Close, Jeff Goldblum, Jennifer Coolidge, Kaley Cuoco, Kate Hudson, Kathy Bates, Ke Huy Quan, Kerry Washington, Margaret Qualley, Melissa McCarthy, Michael Keaton, Michelle Yeoh, Miles Teller, Mindy Kaling, Morris Chestnut, Nate Bargatze, Nicolas Cage, Rachel Brosnahan, Rob McElhenney, Salma Hayek Pinault, Sarah Paulson, Seth Rogen, Sharon Stone, Vin Diesel, Viola Davis and Zoë Kravitz.

The Globes are the first major

ceremony of the awards season. They're not exactly an Oscar bellwether, but they're known for a few things: being a boozy, sometimes irreverent party and a glamorous gathering of the biggest television and film stars.

A Globes win can help build momentum for a movie or actor's Oscar campaign. As the first televised awards show of the year, they get ahead of similar ceremonies like the Screen Actors Guild and Critics Choice Awards and are nearly two months before the Oscars, which this year will be held on March 2.

Stan, Kate Winslet and Selena Gomez are all double nominees.

Gomez is up for both best performance by a female actor in a supporting role for "Emilia Pérez" and best performance by a female actor in a television musical or comedy series for "Only Murders in the Building."

Winslet is nominated for both best performance by a female actor in a drama for "Lee" and best performance by a female actor in a limited anthology series for television for "The Regime."

Stan earned a nod for both best performance by a male actor in a drama for "The Apprentice" and best performance by a male actor in a musical or comedy for "A Different Man."

Variety

NEW YORK: Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, is starting the new year with her first Instagram account since 2020.

The Associated Press confirmed Wednesday that @meghan belongs to the Duchess of Sussex. Her first post is a black and white video of herself at the beach, wearing white and drawing 2025 in the sand on an overcast day. The account already has more than 200,000 followers.

Meghan and Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex, were married in 2018, and were initially part of @KensingtonRoyal, which also included Harry's brother, Prince William, and his wife, Kate, the Princess of Wales. But a year later, Meghan and Harry launched their own account, @SussexRoyal, a sign of their growing distance from the royal family.

@SussexRoyal was discontinued in 2020, around the time that Meghan and Harry announced they were stepping back from their official roles.

Meghan, who had a popular Instagram account when she was best known for her role in "Suits," had indicated she would return. In a 2022 interview with New York Magazine's The Cut, she confided: "Do you want to know a secret? I'm getting back ... on Instagram."

At other times, she sounded reluctant to return to Instagram, citing concerns about harassment. In 2023, Meghan and Harry urged social media platforms to strengthen content-moderation policies, saying that some apps could damage the mental health of young people. (AP)



Markle

LONDON: British rapper Stormzy was banned from driving for nine months on Thursday after admitting he drove his Rolls-Royce through London while using his phone.

The 31-year-old whose real name is Michael Ebenazer Owuo Jr. is known for bringing the grime genre of rap into the commercial mainstream. His debut "Gang Signs and Prayer" won album of the year at the Brit Awards in 2018, where he was named best male British solo artist - an honor he won again in 2020.

His record on the road, however, isn't good, a judge said at Wimbledon Magistrates' Court.

District judge Andrew Sweet said that Stormzy's actions were "dangerous and irresponsible."

Stormzy previously put "vulnerable road users at risk" when he drove a Lamborghini Urus with illegally tinted windows, prosecutor Alice Holloway said. The windows only allowed 4% light transmission - a tiny fraction of the 70% required for tinting. (AP)

LONDON: Police in London are searching for a burglar who broke into an occupied mansion and stole more than 10.5 million pounds (\$13.2 million) worth of jewelry, designer handbags and cash.

The owners of the estate, identified in British media as an Instagram influencer and her developer husband, were not home at the time on Dec. 7. But employees were there and a housekeeper had a near run-in with the armed intruder, according to surveillance footage.

"This is a brazen offense where the suspect has entered the property while armed with an unknown weapon," Det. Constable Paulo Roberts of the Metropolitan Police said on Monday, when the theft was announced.

Among the stolen items were a 10.73-carat diamond ring, diamond earrings and a clip studded with gold, diamonds and sapphires. The haul also included 150,000 pounds (\$189,000) worth of handbags. (AP)



Viola Davis arrives at Golden Gala: An Evening of Excellence on Friday, Jan. 3, at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP)

Eagles star brings Philly flavor to late-night TV

Jason Kelce tries hand as late night show host

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 4, (AP) — Jason Kelce chatted with the Linc — yes, the concrete and steel of the Philadelphia Eagles home stadium answered him with a pep talk — before the retired All-Pro lineman toured the city in his Eagles helmet car all while dressed in his Super Bowl parade Mummer's costume. He parked the souped-up golf cart and tossed the keys ZZ Top-style ahead of the first day of his new job.

He then dropped a profanity into the start of his monologue.

Roll out The Chug Machine, fly, fly, and save a seat for Sir Charles because the latest host crashing late-night television is a bit more raw than the traditional suit-and-tie joke tellers.

Jason Kelce threw a late night bash — and he brought his wife, his parents, a fan with a Phillie Phanatic tattoo inked on his navel, a Philly band and an uncensored (at least on stage) take on sports for the first of five episodes of "They Call It Late Night with Jason Kelce," on ESPN.

Here's Kelce!
"I used to love watching late night TV growing up," Kelce said.

Kelce quickly proved there's space for another JK in late night — Kelce disappeared into a portal where he walked out into Jimmy Kimmel's office to ask for hosting advice — and moderated a loose panel of sports topics with guests Charles Barkley, rapper and actor Lil Dicky, and NFL Network analyst Brian Baldinger.

And Kelce said he received real guidance from Kimmel on the art of hosting.

"He sat me down and really explained some things that he thought would accelerate this process for me," Kelce said.

Kelce bantered with the guests during commercial breaks and took questions from a few of about 300 fans in the audience. When a fan from New Jersey invited Kelce to his wedding, the retired star quipped, "I don't go into New Jersey."

Eagles fan and Penn State student Caleb Tinley learned only two days earlier he was randomly selected for a pair of free tickets and was first in line around noon to get a good seat for the taping. He's a fan of the "New Heights" podcast Kelce co-hosts with his brother, Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce, and figured the TV show was as close to that experience as he could get.

"Ever since he had that speech at the Super Parade, he became a Philly legend," Tinley said.



Former NFL player and ESPN analyst Jason Kelce introduces the final segment during the taping of "They Call It Late Night with Jason Kelce," Friday, Jan. 3, in Philadelphia. (AP)

The 37-year-old Kelce — who retired in March after a 13-year career spent entirely with Philadelphia — has watched his profile balloon in retirement. The Super Bowl winner already hosted the podcast but has become a prolific pitchman hawking everything from chicken wings to soup, to laundry detergent to cereal, to hoagies to his own beer company.

Kelce was already omnipresent on television and social media, so what was one more gig to add to his resume? So "Late Night" was born.

Kelce is in the first year of a multiyear agreement with ESPN and already appears on the network's "Monday Night Countdown" show. The retired center taking center stage on a late night staple such as a talk show — no Letterman, though he did wear his Cleveland Heights letterman's jacket — seemed a natural extension into his growing entertainment profile.

The show's title is a homage to "They Call it Pro Foot-

ball," which was NFL Films' first full-length film in 1967. NFL Films originated in Philadelphia and founders Ed and Steve Sabol are in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. It also featured the legendary voice of John Facenda, whose tone was imitated on the show by Kelce and his panel as they narrated modern NFL highlights.

"I knew I wanted NFL Films because I felt like we wanted to make a show that celebrated the NFL landscape," Kelce said. "Not just from current players and current games, but of past games and past players. Past announcers. NFL fans and the subculture of the NFL. We wanted to create a show that really embraced all of that."

The Philadelphia-based band Snacktime provided the music. Kylie Kelce, fresh off dethroning Joe Rogan as the No. 1 podcast on the Spotify charts, served as the foul-mouthed sidekick from her perch in "Kylie's Korner."

Kelce's expletives in the monologue were no momentary brain cramp as he transitioned from locker room talk to cable television. Kelce and Kylie peppered their conversations with profanity — this is late night, after all — and tried to make the relationship seem as real in the studio as it is at home where the couple raise three daughters with a fourth girl expected this year.

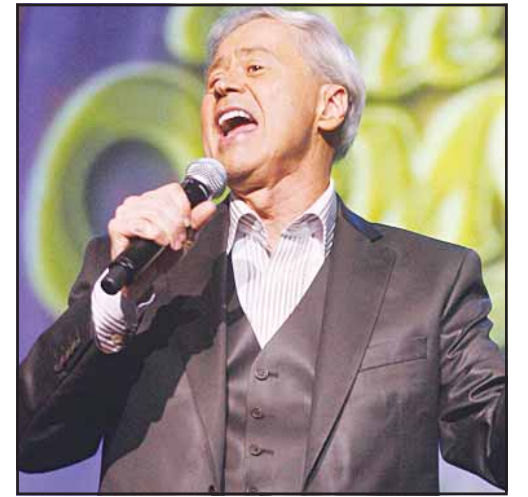
"We really wanted the language to be real and authentic to me," Kelce said after the show. "We overdid it a little bit today in kind of prep the audience on what to expect. I think the F-bombs was the one thing where I was told, we might want to be a little bit cautious there but, listen, we want to give you range to be who you are."

The debut one-hour "Late Night" episode was taped Friday in front of a live audience from Philly concert venue Union Transfer. The show aired at 1 a.m. EST on ESPN and will tape the next four Friday nights. The schedule coincides with the last week of the NFL's regular season and the playoffs.

Comedian Seth Herzog warmed up the crowd and joked the event had a no-phones policy so Kelce wouldn't smash them like he did in a viral moment at Penn State.

The Philly slant couldn't be missed — they filmed a bit where a female fan spewed bites of a hoagie into the mouth of, well, Jason Kelce from the future, and Barkley played to the crowd when he picked the Eagles to win the Super Bowl — but the real Kelce said he wanted a show that would appeal to fans nationwide.

Obituaries



Wayne Osmond performs during a taping of the Osmonds 50th anniversary show at the Orleans casino in Las Vegas on Tuesday, Aug. 14, 2007. (AP)

'Massive stroke'

The Osmonds' Wayne Osmond passes away

NEW YORK, Jan. 4, (AP) — Wayne Osmond, a singer, guitarist and founding member of the million-selling family act The Osmonds, who were known for such 1970s teen hits as "One Bad Apple," "Yo-Yo" and "Down By the Lazy River," has died. He was 73.

Sibling Merrill Osmond posted on his Facebook page that Wayne died this week at a Salt Lake City hospital after suffering a "massive stroke."

"I've never known a man that had more humility. A man with absolutely no guile," Merrill wrote. "An individual that was quick to forgive and had the ability to show unconditional love to everyone he ever met."

Wayne Osmond was the fourth oldest of nine children raised in a Mormon household in Ogden, Utah, and the second oldest among the musical performers. The siblings' career began in the 1950s when Wayne, Alan, Merrill and Jay sang as a barbershop quartet.

Their popularity grew in the 1960s after being supported by singer Andy Williams, and they peaked as a quintet in the early 1970s, with younger brother Donny Osmond the breakout star. "One Bad Apple" and other songs were often compared to the music of The Osmonds' contemporaries, the Jackson 5, and Donny was positioned as the white counterpart to the Jacksons' lead singer, Michael Jackson.

The Osmonds' popularity faded by the mid-1970s, although Donny and Marie Osmond both enjoyed successful careers as solo performers and as a brother-sister duo.

In the 1980s, Wayne Osmond regrouped with Alan, Merrill and Jay as a country act and had a handful of hits, including "I Think About Your Lovin'."

But in the mid-1990s he was diagnosed with a brain tumor and lost much of his hearing from the surgery and treatment. A stroke in 2012 left him unable to play guitar.

"I've had a wonderful life. And you know, being able to hear is not all that it's cracked up to be, it really isn't," he told the Deseret News in 2018. "My favorite thing now is to take care of my yard. I turn my hearing aids off, deaf as a doorknob, tune everything out, it's really joyful."



Rosita Missoni poses for photographers before the Missoni women's Spring/Summer 2018/19 fashion collection, presented in Milan, Italy, Sept. 23, 2017. (AP)

Knitwear pioneer

Italian fashion icon Rosita Missoni dies

ROME, Jan. 4, (AP) — Rosita Missoni, the matriarch of the iconic Italian fashion house that made colorful zigzag-patterned knitwear high fashion and helped launch Italian ready-to-wear, died Thursday, a company official said. She was 93.

Missoni SpA confirmed the death and planned a statement along with the family later, said Alberto Gualeni, an international spokesperson for the company in Milan.

Local officials offered condolences and recalled Missoni's ties to the small northern city of Gallarate where the Missoni brand was born in an artisan's shop in 1953.

Born Rosita Jelmini, Missoni grew up in a family that owned a textile factory that produced shawls. When she met and married Ottavio Missoni, they founded their eponymous fashion house in Gallarate that would turn into a fashion dynasty, with the couple's three children and their offspring involved in expanding the brand.

The Missonis got their first break in 1958, when the Rinascente department store commissioned 500 colorful vertically striped shirt dresses — the first to carry the Missoni label.

The Missoni first showed their collection in Milan in 1966 and the brand helped turn the city into a fashion mecca.

Their signature fashions, with the trademark graphic zigzags, long had a reputation for wearability and for surviving many seasons of changing trends. Family members were often the brand's best models, wearing Missoni graphic creations in everyday life.

The founders turned over the business to their children in 1997, though Rosita remained involved in the Missoni home collection.

In 2013, as the company celebrated its 60th anniversary, the family endured a double tragedy. The eldest Missoni son and the company's CEO, Vittorio Missoni, died when a plane carrying him and five others disappeared off Venezuela. It took six months to locate the plane wreckage in the seas off the South American country, during which time patriarch Ottavio Missoni died, aged 92.

Light Festival



Above & inset: Luminous installations from a Chinese company are displayed during a light festival in Jahra Governorate, Kuwait, Jan. 3, 2025. The festival will last till Feb. 28. (Xinhua)

Music

Trio's Grammy nomination highlights breakthrough

Khruangbin letting music speak for itself

NEW YORK, Jan. 4, (AP) — If you think your Spotify playlist is getting a little too long, consider the one shared by the members of Khruangbin. It's got 51 hours of songs.

"I'm trying to listen to as many different things as possible before they all start to sound kind of the same," says Mark Speer, the trio's guitarist and musical explorer, capturing interesting sounds from Thailand to the Middle East.

"We lose Mark sometimes for a small period of time because he's on an anthropological dig," says bassist Laura Lee. Drummer Donald "DJ" Johnson finishes her thought: "For the quintessential Chinese funk."

The mainly instrumental Khruangbin's sonic explorations have paid off of late, with a warmly received 2024 album, "A La Sala," that reached the top 40 of the Billboard 200 and a Grammy Award nomination for best new artist. Not that any of that is going to their heads.

"I think we're just going to keep leaning in what we do and keep trying to be more the silhouette version of ourselves as much as we can and let the music speak for itself, because that's who we are. We don't like the spotlight in that way," says Lee.

The Texas trio makes music that's hard to describe, a mix of soul, surf rock, psychedelic and funk that creates a melodic, Afro-pop-inspired, reverb-heavy sound with nods to other cultures. The band's name is appropriately travel-related — Khruangbin is the Thai word for airplane.

"Mark's storytelling feels like words, even though there are no words. And my storytelling feels like math even though there are no numbers necessarily. And D.J. is the translator between my language and Mark somehow," says Lee.

They are highly collaborative, working in the studio and performing live with Leon Bridges on two EPs, Paul McCartney, Vieux Farka Touré, Wu-Tang Clan, Childish Gambino, Toro Y Moi, Men I Trust and more.

For "A La Sala," Khruangbin focused on the trio, realizing that they didn't need anyone else in the studio.



Mark Speer, (left), and Laura Lee Ochoa, of Khruangbin perform on Saturday, Sept. 28, 2024, at The Eastern in Atlanta. (AP)

They say that was empowering.

"I think because we had just been through a process of collaborating quite a lot, it felt important for us to just huddle, just the three of us," says Lee. "When it's just the three of us, it's like a deep breath and a collective sigh."

Most of their music is instrumental, but vocals — either ghostly or a full-on lyric song — have been employed, like on "May Ninth" from the new album, with the lyrics "Memory burned and gone/A multicolored gray."

"The music comes first," says Johnson. "And when we finish putting everything together, if we feel that it needs one more thing, something missing, or we just want a vocal texture, then usually we go down the path of adding that."

The trio, especially early on, faced pressure from record executives who liked the instrumentals but wished there was a vocal on top.

"I think it's just human nature. I don't think it comes from like any sort of bad place," says Lee. "But people just want to sing on top of it. And people are used to hearing a vocal. They're like, 'This sounds so good. Let's add a vocal.'"

"A La Sala" is the trio's fourth studio album, with Pitchfork saying "each member of the trio has several opportunities to shine while making each track sound individual, and it all comes together cohesively." The Guardian said Khruangbin make "their intricate music sound so gentle that it lulls the listener into a newly imaginative state."

Although they formed in 2010, the Grammy administrators chose Khruangbin as a best new artist nominee alongside Benson Boone, Sabrina Carpenter, Doechii, RAYE, Chappell Roan, Shaboozey and Teddy Swims. The rules of the category have changed over time and now offers inclusion for any act that has "attained a breakthrough or prominence."

The members of the band see their albums like snapshots in time. If their third, "Mordechai," was the sound of energy and movement as the band toured relentlessly, then "A La Sala" is more sedate, born from the pandemic and with a title that means "To the Room."

It's a more chilled-out sound, even cozy. One song, "Three from Two" even celebrates the home birth of Lee's first child. "We needed some quiet, and it felt nice to put out something quiet in a world that's not so quiet anymore," she says.

The band has heard their music playing at the oddest places, like "Texas Sun" becoming a popular tune played on TikTok by people making out in Australia or "Two Fish and an Elephant" heard at yoga studios.

"I hope that our music is malleable enough to communicate to later generations in whatever way it works," says Speer. "That's how language happens. That's how music happens, that's how cultures happen. So, I'm super into it."

A practice is to overcome suffering in ourselves

Mindfulness is about 'remembering' – returning to the now

By Jeremy David Engels
Penn State

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts. The Conversation is wholly responsible for the content.



To many, New Year's Day represents the possibility for beginning anew.

Of late, individuals are welcoming the start of another year with a resolution to practice mindfulness, a type of meditation. Many believe mindfulness will help them relax, lessen stress and anxiety, reduce chronic pain and generally improve the quality of their lives - and the research bears this out.

Over the past 40 years, mindfulness has become a popular meditation practice around the world. What began as a Buddhist practice for relieving suffering has been secularized and reframed as a modern science with very little connection to its Buddhist roots.

Based on the extensive research at universities showing meditation's benefits, mindfulness is now practiced in schools, government offices, professional sports, prisons, police departments, and the military. Popular apps, including Headspace, Calm and Insight Timer, make it easy for anyone to access guided meditations.

Businesses and corporations have taken note and often advise their workers to practice mindfulness to be more productive. Mindfulness has become so business friendly that it has been called a new "capitalist spirituality."

I am a scholar of mindfulness, communication and ethics, as well as a long-

time meditation teacher. For those who are considering practicing mindfulness this year, I want to return to the Buddhist roots of mindfulness in order to highlight one aspect of this practice that might be surprising and counterintuitive: Mindfulness means "remembering."

According to the Vietnamese Zen master, Buddhist monk, poet and peace activist Thich Nhat Hanh, mindfulness is "the heart" of the Buddha's teaching.

He defines mindfulness as a practice of "keeping one's consciousness alive to the present reality." The past is gone, and the future is not yet real. It is only in the present moment that we have any control or freedom.

In the ancient Indian language of Pali, the word now translated into English as "mindfulness" is "sati," which is closely related to the verb "sarati," "to remember." But remembering, in this sense, does not mean dwelling on the past or ruminating over bygone events. It means "remembering to come back to the present moment."

Our culture, which scholar Jenny Odell calls an "attention economy," has transformed individual attention into a commodity to be bought and sold.

Much of contemporary life is designed to distract us from what is happening right here and right now. This is especially true of social media, which at its worst is a flood of distracting, disorienting content. Each day presents constant temptations to forget to be present and to lose ourselves in our screens.

Sometimes the hardest thing to remember is to be present. Mindfulness is therefore a practice of remembering to come back home to the now, when there are so

many distractions and forces encouraging us to forget.

In Buddhist traditions, mindfulness also means remembering why we practice meditation in the first place.

Originally, mindfulness was one of eight practices that the Buddha described to overcome suffering. Known today as the Noble Eightfold Path, these practices include right view, right thinking, right speech, right action, right diligence, right concentration, right mindfulness and right livelihood.

Though mindfulness is traditionally placed seventh in this list, Nhat Hanh suggested that it could be placed first, since mindfulness is required for every step along the path. Taken as a whole, these eight practices are designed to help people face their suffering, transform it and find joy in life.

According to Buddhist teachers, the reason to practice mindfulness is to overcome suffering in ourselves. The point of mindfulness is not to be more productive at work. The point is not just to relax, either. The point is personal transformation. By cultivating deep, unwavering, honest, openhearted attention, it becomes possible to look deeply at our suffering and to identify its causes.

Once the causes and conditions are identified, then we can work to transform them, so that we suffer less. The less we suffer, the easier it is to meet the present moment - and our lives - with open arms and without adding to the suffering in the world.

Perhaps, if we are sufficiently resolved, we can even relieve some of the world's suffering. (AP)



This screen image captured at Beijing Aerospace Control Center on July 3, 2024 shows Shenzhou-18 astronaut Li Cong going out for extravehicular activities. (Xinhua)

Moon's magnetic history

China's commercial satellite constellation completes test

SHANGHAI, Jan. 4, (Xinhua): Spacesail Constellation, a Chinese commercial low-orbit satellite constellation, has completed a network connection test, the first application test since the launch of its commercial networking.

According to information provided by the constellation's developer Shanghai Spacesail Technologies Co., Ltd. on Thursday, the test was to see if the low-orbit satellite broadband network data could be accessed by a cruise liner.

The cruise liner managed to connect to the network cloud management platform of China Mobile Hong Kong Company Limited when passing the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on Wednesday, securing a high-speed network connection service.

The application test also proved that the quality of internet services provided to various maritime vessels, including cruise liners, can be significantly enhanced via the Spacesail Constellation.

During the test, the digital terminal successfully docked with the Spacesail Constellation ground commercial terminal -- underlining the commercial value of this domestic large-scale low-orbit internet constellation.

Moon: A new analysis of samples collected by China's Chang'e-5 mission has revealed that the moon possessed a weak yet still running dynamo magnetic field approximately 2 billion years ago.

Understanding the strength, structure and evolution of the lunar magnetic field is crucial for unraveling its internal structure, thermal history and surface environment.

The researchers led by those from the Institute of Geology and Geophysics (IGG) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences have analyzed 9 basalt samples returned by Chang'e-5 from the Oceanus Procellarum at the mid-latitudes of the moon.

These rocks offer a unique chance to explore the moon's magnetic history from 3 to 1 billion years ago, a period of time that still has ample room for exploration. This gap raises the interesting question of whether the moon had a long-lasting "dynamo" effect.

The result shows that the moon had a weak dynamo magnetic field during this period, around 2 to 4 microteslas or fewer than 10 percent Earth's current field strength, according to the study published on Thursday in the journal *Science Advances* as a cover story.

This finding helps fill a major gap in our understanding of the moon's magnetic evolution and suggests that the lunar dynamo lasted at least until its middle years, said Cai Shuhui, a corresponding author of the paper.

The researchers also hinted at an ongoing thermal convection in the moon's deep interior that may have provided extra heat for volcanic activity before the moon's magnetic field totally vanished.

Mpox cases

IOM ramps up cholera action

JUBA, Jan. 4, (Xinhua): The International Organization for Migration (IOM), a UN migration agency, said Friday that it had scaled up its response to the ongoing cholera outbreak in South Sudan with crucial aid supplies.

Muhammad Assar, IOM's head of Operations, said the essential water purification tablets, commonly known as Aqua Tabs, are part of a co-ordinated effort of the Core humanitarian pipeline to curb the spread of cholera, which has been exacerbated by flooding, limited access to clean water, and constrained health services.

"With support from the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance, we are working tirelessly to provide critical health and sanitation services to the most vulnerable populations," Assar said in a statement issued in Juba, the capital of South Sudan.

The UN agency said it has also scaled up its water, sanitation, and hygiene interventions as part of the response by providing clean, safe, and sufficient water in key areas such as the Renk transit center, the IDP camp, and sites in Bentiu and Malakal, where IOM is the main actor in providing water to the vulnerable communities.

IOM said it's also expanding emergency water supply interventions to encompass parts of nearby towns of Rubkona, Bentiu, and Malakal, with a particular focus on health facilities, cholera treatment centers, oral rehydration centers and other identified cholera hotspot areas lacking access to reliable water resources. Disinfection campaigns and community hygiene awareness programs focusing on handwashing, safe water handling, and cholera prevention measures have also been activated in displacements and high-risk areas.

Mpox: Zambia's health authorities reported the country's fourth case of mpox on Friday.

The case involves a one-year-old boy who possibly contracted the virus through close contact with a known case, said Minister of Health **Elijah Muchima**.

"The child is under home isolation, receiving medical care, and in stable condition," he told reporters during a press briefing.

Last month, the health authorities reported two cases from the Kitwe city in the Copperbelt province.

'The virus is still with us'

5 things we know and still don't know about COVID after 5 years

NEW YORK, Jan 4, (AP): Five years ago, a cluster of people in Wuhan, China, fell sick with a virus never before seen in the world.

The germ didn't have a name, nor did the illness it would cause. It wound up setting off a pandemic that exposed deep inequities in the global health system and reshaped public opinion about how to control deadly emerging viruses.

The virus is still with us, though humanity has built up immunity through vaccinations and infections. It's less deadly than it was in the pandemic's early days and it no longer tops the list of leading causes of death. But the virus is evolving, meaning scientists must track it closely.

Where did the SARS-CoV-2 virus come from?

We don't know. Scientists think the most likely scenario is that it circulated in bats, like many coronaviruses. They think it then infected another species, probably racoon dogs, civet cats or bamboo rats, which in turn infected humans handling or butchering those animals at a market in Wuhan, where the first human cases appeared in late November 2019.

That's a known pathway for disease transmission and likely triggered the first epidemic of a similar virus, known as SARS. But this theory has not been proven for the virus that causes COVID-19. Wuhan is home to several research labs involved in collecting and studying coronaviruses, fueling debate over whether the virus instead may have leaked from one.

It's a difficult scientific puzzle to crack in the best of circumstances.

The true origin of the pandemic may not be known for many years - if ever.

How many people died from COVID-19?

Probably more than 20 million. The World Health Organization has said member countries reported more than 7 million deaths from COVID-19 but the true death toll is estimated to be at least three times higher.

In the US, an average of about 900 people a week have died of COVID-19 over the past year, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"We cannot talk about COVID in the past, since it's still with us," WHO director Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

What vaccines were made available?
Scientists and vaccine-makers broke speed records developing COVID-19 vaccines that have saved tens of millions of lives worldwide - and were the critical step to getting life back to normal.



This undated electron microscope image shows the Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, yellow, emerging from the surface of cells, pink, cultured in the lab. Also known as 2019-nCoV, the virus causes COVID-19. The sample was isolated from a patient in the US. (AP)

Less than a year after China identified the virus, health authorities in the US and Britain cleared vaccines made by Pfizer and Moderna. Years of earlier research - including Nobel-winning discoveries that were key to making the new technology work - gave a head start for so-called mRNA vaccines.

Today, there's also a more traditional vaccine made by Novavax, and some countries have tried additional options. Rollout to poorer countries was slow but the WHO estimates more than 13 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered globally since 2021.

Like flu vaccines, COVID-19 shots must be updated regularly to match the ever-evolving virus.

Which variant is dominating now?

Genetic changes called mutations happen as viruses make copies of themselves. And this virus has proven to be no different.

Scientists named these variants after Greek letters: alpha, beta, gamma, delta and omicron. Delta, which became dominant in the US in June 2021, raised a lot of concerns because it was twice as likely to lead to hospitalization as the first version of the virus.

Then in late November 2021, a new variant came on the scene: omicron.

But on average, the WHO said, it caused less severe disease than delta.

Scientists believe that may be partly because immunity had been building due to vaccination and infections.

The omicron relative now dominant in the US is called XEC, which accounted for 45% of variants circulating nationally in the two-week period ending Dec. 21, the CDC said.

What do we know about long COVID?

Millions of people remain in limbo with a sometimes disabling, often invisible, legacy of the pandemic called long COVID.

It can take several weeks to bounce back after a bout of COVID-19, but some people develop more persistent problems. The symptoms that last at least three months, sometimes for years, include fatigue, cognitive trouble known as "brain fog," pain and cardiovascular problems, among others.

Doctors don't know why only some people get long COVID. It can happen even after a mild case and at any age, although rates have declined since the pandemic's early years. Studies show vaccination can lower the risk.

It also isn't clear what causes long COVID, which complicates the search for treatments. One important clue: Increasingly researchers are discovering that remnants of the coronavirus can persist in some patients' bodies long after their initial infection, although that can't explain all cases.

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BMW M Drive event thrills car enthusiasts at Kuwait Motor Town with launch of new BMW M5



KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: Ali Alghanim & Sons Automotive, the official importer of BMW vehicles in Kuwait, recently unveiled the new BMW M5 at an exciting BMW M Drive event hosted at Kuwait Motor Town.

This legendary model, which features M HYBRID technology, took centre stage in a showcase of BMW M's signature raw power, cutting-edge innovation, and timeless design.

Set against the backdrop of Kuwait Motor Town, the country's iconic motorsports venue designed to meet FIA Grade 1 standards, the event brought together car enthusiasts and adrenaline junkies to experience the best of automotive engineering and design at the dynamic circuit.

The track venue offered drivers the perfect environment to explore the limits of speed, handling, and precision, at a setting that aligned seamlessly with the spirit of the BMW M5 and provided the ideal setting for BMW M machines to shine.

Attendees were not only thrilled by the powerful performance of the BMW lineup but were also immersed in an action-packed day filled with test drives, heart-racing track experiences, and an engaging display of BMW's innovative technologies.

The spotlight was firmly on the BMW M5, a car that pushes the boundaries in performance and efficiency. Boasting a 4.4-litre V8 engine paired with an electric motor, the M HYBRID system delivers an astonishing 727 horsepower and 1,000 Nm of torque. This powerhouse can sprint from 0 to 100 km/h in a mere 3.5 seconds and achieve a top speed of 305 km/h.

Pierre Malo, Marketing and Sales Director at Ali Alghanim & Sons Automotive, commented on the launch: "The BMW M5 is not just a car; it's a statement of what's possible when engineering meets artistry. The BMW M Drive event at Kuwait Motor Town was the perfect platform to showcase the very best of BMW M—the height of innovation, performance, and luxury. Coupled with the world-class track here, this was an unforgettable moment for motoring enthusiasts in Kuwait. The event wasn't just about cars; it created experiences in tune with BMW's ethos of offering excitement, passion, and driving pleasure."

BMW M family showcases innovation with adrenaline While the M5 was the star of the show, attendees were also treated to a display of BMW's elite M family, including the compact dynamism of the BMW M2, the aggressive agility of the BMW M3 sedan, and the track-

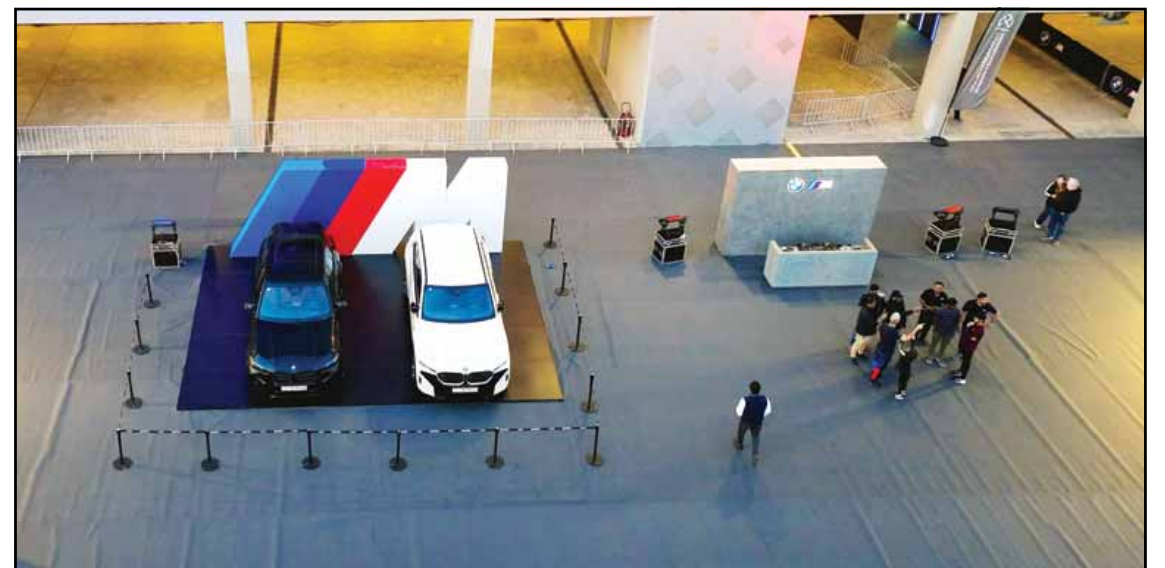
inspired thrill machine BMW M4. The BMW M2 renders that motorsport spirit with its high-performance M TwinPower Turbo inline 6-cylinder engine with 480 hp, capable of producing 600 Nm torque and go from 0 to 100 km/h in 4 seconds, with power transfer through the M Steptronic transmission with Drivelogic. The BMW M3 is a sports car icon with exhilarating performance and unrestricted everyday useability, courtesy of a M TwinPower Turbo engine again, but with 530 hp, and highly developed technologies derived from motorsport, such as the M specific suspension with Active M Differential. It accelerates to 100 km/h from standstill in a mere 3.5 seconds. The M4 blends aesthetics with all the sportiness expected from a BMW M. Motorsport tech enriches the driving dynamics of the M4, with the output being exceptional performance both on the racetrack and in everyday driving situations.

The BMW XM, a luxury high-power SUV, is where X and M collide in a groundbreaking fusion of BMW M high performance and progressive plug-in hybrid technology. For the very first time, an M vehicle comes to life with an M TwinPower Turbo V8-cylinder petrol engine with plug-in hybrid technology that generates a whopping 748 hp. Its design language is extroverted, while the interior features are luxurious – such as M lounge in the rear, vintage leather materials, and indirectly illuminated headliner.

The other SUV pair – BMW X5M and X6M – showcased muscle, bold design and sporty agility in their class. The BMW X5M takes the Sports Activity Vehicle to new heights with its mix of exclusive M design elements paired with an M TwinPower Turbo V8 engine with M xDrive and luxurious interiors, for a flamboyant and dominant drive. The BMW X6M is the perfect driving experience for those looking for the best of both worlds. It takes the style and interior space of a premium Sports Activity Coupé and injects it with the power of a sports car, which is made possible with the impressive M TwinPower Turbo V8 engine with M xDrive.

Each of these models embody the premium auto maker's focus on perfection, combining iconic design with motorsport-inspired performance, and setting the gold standard for performance vehicles.

For more information on BMW cars in Kuwait, visit one of Ali Alghanim & Sons Automotive's showrooms or www.alialghanimsons.com.kw



Top and above: photos from the event.



Real Madrid's Luka Modric, center, celebrates with his teammates after scoring his side's first goal against Valencia. (AP)

Sports

HH the Amir applauds Khaleeji Zain 26 success

Crown Prince thanks officials, departments that gave hand in organizing Gulf Cup

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Saturday some cables of thanks on the occasion of the end of the Arabian Football Cup, Khaleeji Zain 26, hosted by Kuwait from December 21 until January 4.

The cable was sent to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Chief of Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, Minister of Information and Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi as well as some ministers and officials.

In the cables, His Highness the Amir expressed great thanks and appreciation to all ministries and governmental bodies for their efforts made in preparing this tournament in a manner that has contributed to the success of the event.

His Highness the Amir also appreciated the audience's interaction which made all happy.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled al-Hamad Al-Sabah on Saturday addressed cables of gratitude to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, his Cabinet members and other senior officials on the conclusion of the Arabian Gulf Cup (Khaleeji Zain 26) held between December 21 and January 4.

His Highness the Crown Prince expressed deep gratitude to the Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Chairperson of the Kuwaiti Football Association Sheikh Hamad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah.

The cable was also addressed to the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, Minister of Information and Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi as well as other ministers and officials.

However, he expressed deep thanks and appreciation to all ministries and government departments for organizing the championship, lauding the great interaction of the fans who created a joyful atmosphere during the matches.



Participants perform during the closing ceremony of Khaleeji Zain 26 in Kuwait.

Blues eye strong comeback

Kuwait heads to Croatia for Handball World Cup

By Khaled Al-Enzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: The Kuwait national handball team departed for Croatia recently to compete in the 29th World Handball Championship, taking place from January 14 to February 2 in Croatia, Denmark, and Norway. The team is set to compete in Group Three, alongside Qatar, Austria, and France, with all group matches hosted in Croatia.

Kuwait's campaign will begin against Austria on January 14, followed by a match against Qatar on January 16, and concluding the group stage against France on January 18.

The delegation, led by the Federation's Secretary General Qaed Al-Adwani, includes Faisal Saywan (Director of National Teams), Abdulaziz Al-Zaabi (Director of the First Team), and the technical staff, headed by Algerian coach Saeed Hijazi. The 18-player squad features:

Goalkeepers: Abdullah Al-Khamis, Abdulaziz Al-Shammari, Haider Dashti

Players: Mohammed Amer, Fawaz Mubarak, Abdulaziz Salmeen, Fawaz Al-Shammari, Mohammed Al-Hindal, Ali Naseer, Saif Al-Adwani, Mishaal Al-Harbi, Saleh Al-Moussawi, Mohammed Al-Sanea, Abdulrahman Al-Shammari, Mohammed Ghadan-

far, Hassan Safar, Abdulaziz Al-Dhafiri, Mohammed Bouyabes

To prepare for the championship, the "Blue Hand" team held external training camps in Croatia and Tunisia, where they played a series of friendly matches. The technical staff focused on enhancing physical fitness and implementing tactical strategies, both defensive and offensive.

Assistant Secretary General of the Handball Federation, Abdullah Al-Dhiyab, emphasized the team's readiness for the World Championship, stating:

"The Federation's Board of Directors, in collaboration with the coaching and technical staff, developed a comprehensive plan to elevate the players' performance and prepare them for this prestigious international event, especially after a 14-year absence from the World Championship."

Al-Dhiyab also expressed gratitude to all those who supported the team during the preparation phase, highlighting the importance of the international friendly tournament hosted in Kuwait. He voiced confidence in the team, hoping they will deliver a commendable performance, reflecting Kuwait's rich handball history, with eight prior World Cup appearances.

The team aims to make a strong comeback and proudly represent Kuwait on the global stage.



The Kuwait handball team holds final training before departure for the World Cup.

Pontevedra stuns Mallorca in Copa

Real Madrid tops La Liga after 10-man fightback

MADRID, Jan 4, (Xinhua): Real Madrid came back from a goal down with 10 men to go top of La Liga with a 2-1 win away to struggling Valencia.

Madrid looked dead and buried, but Jude Bellingham helped inspire a late fightback against a rival that remains deep in the relegation zone.

Hugo Duro put Valencia ahead in the 26th minute with a close-range finish after Thibaut Courtois could only parry Javi Guerra's powerful shot.

The goal was just a reward for Valencia's positive start in Carlos Corberlan's first game as coach after replacing Ruben Baraja in the home dugout. Still, his side rode their luck in the opening minutes of the second half.

Bellingham sent a penalty against the post in the 55th minute after Kylian Mbappe had been brought down. Shortly afterward, Mbappe had a goal ruled out for a tight offside Madrid pressed hard.

Madrid was down to 10 men in the 77th minute when Vinicius Jr was sent off after aggression on Valencia goalkeeper Stole Dimitrievski, and the forward could face a long ban after turning on the referee after the decision.

However, despite having a man less, Madrid turned the game around with Bellingham setting up Luka Modric to level six minutes from time, and the England international won the game deep into injury time when he took advantage of a horrific mistake between Valencia defenders Dimitri Foulquier and Hugo Guillamon to score the winning goal.

Luis Rioja then hit the post for Valencia in the closing seconds.

In the Copa del Rey, fourth-tier

Pontevedra produced the first upset in the three games from the third round of the competition played earlier in the day when they hammered last season's beaten finalist Mallorca, 3-0.

The impressive Dalisson de Almeida scored a magnificent goal to put his side ahead in the 21st minute, and any suspicion that the goal was down to luck was overturned in the second half when Yelko Pino and Rufo Sanchez scored second-half goals to confirm Pontevedra's second top-flight scalp after beating Villarreal in the second round.

Getafe needed a goal in extra-time

from striker Borja Mayoral to get past second-division high-fliers Granada in a tight game, with the striker taking advantage of some excellent work from Bertug Yidirim to score from close range in the 93rd minute.

Jorge de Frutos scored twice as Rayo Vallecano won 3-1 away to second-division Racing Ferrol. De Frutos scored from a tight angle and with a near-post header after Alfonso Espina put Rayo ahead in the eighth minute with a thumping shot from around 35 meters.

Ferrol's consolation came in the closing minutes when the match had long been decided.



Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior front, and Valencia's Andre Almeida battle for the ball during the Spanish soccer match at Mestalla Stadium. (AP)



Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser, Ghazi Al-Jariwi with the winners on the podium.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser celebrates Kuwait's int'l equestrian milestone

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 4: The Chairman of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser, expressed his pride in Kuwait hosting the first international show jumping championship qualifying for the World Cup in the 2024-2025 sports season. The event, held amidst strong competition among male and female riders, highlights the nation's commitment to equestrian excellence.

Speaking at the Kuwait International Championship at the Kuwait Equestrian Center in Subhan, Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser said, "Today, we witness the first international championship qualifying for the World Cup in equestrian show jumping, hosted at the Kuwait Equestrian Center track. This is a moment of immense pride for the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee and local sports federations as we continue to bring such prestigious international events to Kuwait."

He also congratulated the Chairman and members of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation on the Equestrian Society's nomination to lead the sport through the 2024-2028 electoral cycle. Sheikh Fahad noted the significant progress

made in equestrian sports over the past four years, including hosting numerous international two-star and three-star show jumping events.

He expressed confidence in the leadership of Masoud Jawhar Hayat, Chairman of the Federation, along with Vice President Sheikh Yousef Mishaal Al-Sabah, Secretary Ghazi Al-Jariwi, and the rest of the team. Sheikh Fahad commended Ghazi Al-Jariwi, a dedicated member of the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee, for his passion and expertise, emphasizing his ability to further elevate Kuwaiti equestrianism alongside his colleagues.

On the second day of the championship, Saudi rider Abdulrahman Al-Rajhi clinched first place in the Grand Prix category, jumping at a height of 145 cm. His compatriot Abdullah Al-Sharbatli secured second place, while Abdullah Al-Awadhi took third. The winners were crowned by Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser, Director General of the Sports Authority Bashar Abdullah, and Ghazi Al-Jariwi, marking a triumphant conclusion to a thrilling day of competition.

ARAB TIMES

Editor-in-Chief

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THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IN FREE KUWAIT

Published by: Arab Times Publishing House

Editorial Office:

Tel: 24826912 - Airport Road, Shuwaikh

P.O. Box: 2270, 13023 Safat, Kuwait

E-mail: arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com

Advertising:

Tel: 99659717 - 50232062

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