



# Kuwait and US ties built on solid ground: Sheikh Fahad

Collaboration bolsters regional security, stability



Ministry of Defense photo  
Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior visits Camp Buehring (formerly Camp Udaire'), northwest Kuwait on Saturday.

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18, (KUNA):** First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah on Saturday affirmed that Kuwait and the United States of America have been bonded with solid ties.

The Ministry of Defense said in a statement that the minister was speaking on the heels of his visit to Camp Buehring (formerly Camp Udaire'), northwest Kuwait, where he met with General Patrick Frank, the

Continued on Page 5

## Israel-Hamas ceasefire starts Sunday morning, says Qatar



People gather to celebrate a newly reached ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas, in Damascus, Syria, Jan. 17, 2025. (Xinhua)

**CAIRO, Jan 18, (AP):** The ceasefire between Hamas and Israel will go into effect in less than 24 hours, said Qatar's foreign ministry on Saturday.

In a post on X, Qatar's Foreign Minister Majid al-Ansari, said the

ceasefire will start at 8:30 a.m. (0630 GMT) Sunday. He advised people to exercise caution when the agreement goes into effect and wait for directions from officials.

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## Manila mulls deployment ban to Kuwait after OFW tragedies

**MANILA, Jan 18:** The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) is weighing the possibility of banning the deployment of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to Kuwait following the recent deaths of two OFWs, Dafnie Nacalaban and Jenny Alvarado, according to Philippine news outlets.

Nacalaban was reported missing by her second employer in October and

was later found dead at the residence of a Kuwaiti individual. Meanwhile, Alvarado died from coal smoke inhalation at her workplace, along with her Nepalese and Sri Lankan colleagues. Compounding the family's grief, a wrong cadaver was initially sent back to the Philippines.

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## 25 caught in Bneid sweep

**By Munif Naif Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff**

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18:** Security campaigns by the Ministry of Interior continued in various areas and governorates, with the latest being held in Bneid Al-Gar under the field supervision of the First Deputy

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### News watch

**KUWAIT CITY:** The Amiri Diwan on Saturday mourned the passing away of **Sheikh Abdullah Rakan Naif Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah** at the age of 14.

The funeral service was to take place in the afternoon after Asr prayers Saturday. (KUNA)

**MANAMA:** The State of Kuwait Ambassador to Bahrain **Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah** has praised the volunteering campaigns launched by the Kuwaiti citizens.

Sheikh Thamer was speaking to KUNA during his participation in the voluntary academic campaign launched by Kuwaiti students who study at the Arab Gulf University. (KUNA)

## Sahel app introduces smart device update

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18:** Yousef Kazim Abbas, the spokesperson for the unified government electronic services application Sahel, announced the release of a new update now available on digital stores for various smart devices, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

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## Frost alert in Kuwait

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18, (KUNA):** Kuwait is currently affected with high altitude pressure accompanied by cold winds from eastern Europe along with unsteady northwesterly blows.

The temperature is ebbing particularly in farming and desert areas as of tonight, said Derar Al-Ali, the acting director of

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**9** Al Mulla Auto launches SOUEAST and inaugurates brand's showroom in Kuwait

**10** Burgan Bank signs purchase agreement to acquire United Gulf Bank in Bahrain

# Beyond Horizons



## LOCAL



Talal Al-Roumi addressing the firemen.



KFF photos

Participants of the course getting certificates.

## KFF honors 'Khaleeji Zain 26' fire-fighters

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Chief of the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Major General Talal Mohammad Al-Roumi, honored the personnel who participated in securing the Arabian Gulf Cup Football Championship "Khaleeji Zain 26" in recognition of their efforts that contributed to the success of the tournament.

According to a press release issued by KFF, Major General Al-Roumi expressed his gratitude to the KFF Committee for their role in securing Khaleeji Zain 26.

He praised their efforts in organizing the tournament, developing a comprehensive plan to protect the public and guests of Kuwait from any emergencies, and their fruitful cooperation with the relevant authorities. This collaboration resulted in the successful execution of the event and the appearance of the participating force in a manner that reflected the professionalism and honor of Kuwait's firefighters.

In another development, the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) concluded an introductory course

on hazardous materials last Thursday at the Shadadiya Center for Hazardous Materials for members of the General Department of Coast Guard at the Ministry of Interior.

According to a press release issued by KFF, this course is part of the ongoing cooperation between KFF and the Ministry of Interior with the aim of educating personnel handling hazardous materials on the best professional methods for their initial management and response.

# Court upholds death sentence for Bedoun in father's murder

Man attempted to kill mother, injured brother

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: The Court of Cassation upheld the verdicts of the Criminal and Appeal courts, and sentenced a young man, a bedoun, to death for shooting to death his father in May 2023 and attempting to kill his mother inside the family home in the Al-Firdous area.**

The defendant was apprehended by security forces shortly after committing the crime.

During interrogation, he claimed that he was under the influence of drugs given to him by a friend, and that he was not fully conscious at the time of the incident, and only realised the following day when the police informed him that he had killed his father.

However, the three court rulings rejected this claim, ruling that he does not deserve leniency or a reduced sentence.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendant with premeditated murder of his father, stating that he had planned and intended to kill him.

He left his vehicle at the crime scene, headed to a remote area, retrieved a firearm that was buried there, and returned to the scene. He then

fired a single shot that struck his father's chest, with the intention to kill him, as confirmed by the autopsy report.

The defendant also committed domestic violence by attempting to premeditatedly kill his mother, but he failed to do so.

In addition, he used a firearm (a machine gun) and ammunition in residential areas, an activity that is forbidden by law.

He possessed ammunition for the firearm in question without authorization. He also committed domestic violence by intentionally assaulting his mother, causing injuries documented in the case files, and attacked his brother, resulting in injuries described in the report.

## Road closure announced

981 traffic citations issued, 27 cars seized, 2 arrested

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: The General Traffic Department launched an extensive security traffic campaign in Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential area, during which 981 traffic citations were issued, 27 vehicles were seized, and two individuals - one found in an abnormal condition and the other in possession of narcotics - were arrested.

During the campaign, which was aimed to apprehend violators and wanted individuals, nine vehicles wanted by the judiciary were seized and three absconding individuals were arrested and referred to the competent authorities.

The General Traffic Department reiterated its warning to drivers about the importance of fastening seat belts for both the driver and the front-seat passenger.

It emphasized the enforcement of ministerial Resolution No. 963/1993, which mandates that "drivers of cars and passengers in the front seats must use the seat belt while the vehicle is moving."

Meanwhile, the General Traffic Department has announced the continuation of maintenance work on the Maghreb Road at the Fourth Ring Road intersection, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The GTD report said the second phase will involve closing the secondary exit from Maghreb Expressway towards Jabriya for drivers coming from Ahmadi and moving to the city.

The closure will affect access to Salmiya and Jabriya via the Fourth Ring Road and is expected to last until next Friday.

Motorists are advised to plan alternate routes during this period.

## Two Kuwaiti brothers die in accident on Salmi Road

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: A tragic traffic accident occurred on Salmi Road, resulting in the death of two brothers and the injuries to an individual.

According to a security source, when the Ministry of Interior's Operations Room received a report about the collision of two vehicles on Salmi Road, police officers and firefighters from the Shaqaya Fire Station immediately rushed to the location. Upon arrival, they discovered that two Kuwaiti brothers had died, and a third person had been injured.

The bodies of the victims were referred to the Forensic Medicine Department. The injured individual was taken to the nearest hospital for treatment. A case has been filed.

## MoE open to accept Grade 12 exam result grievances

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: The Ministry of Education has announced that students can now submit grievances regarding their Grade 12 exam results for the first semester of the 2024/2025 academic year in the scientific, literary and religious education sections, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The grievances will be accepted over three days, starting Saturday, until January 20.

Students are allowed to submit grievances for up to three academic subjects and all submissions must be made through the Ministry of Education's official website.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## Germany, Islamic world must work towards inclusive future

"THE recent statement by German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, delivered with a trembling voice and stern demeanor during her visit to Syria, has left us both surprised and perplexed. Her declaration that Germany does not provide financial support to 'Islamic structures' raises question marks," columnist Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Jeeran wrote for Al-Rai daily.

"What does she mean by this? Is the Levant, with its ancient and vibrant history, being dismissed as a mere temple akin to the alleged Temple of Solomon? Has Damascus, a city that has stood at the crossroads of civilizations, been reduced to a void?"

"More importantly, what of Syria's present reality? After years of turmoil under a corrupt regime propped up by foreign invasions that left behind thousands of dead, wounded, displaced and disabled, Syria is now gradually recovering."

"It extends a hand to friends and allies, seeking support rooted in humanity rather than imposed guardianship. Baerbock's comments, however, seem to ignore this context entirely."

"Equally baffling is Baerbock's apparent disdain when she refused to shake hands with Ahmad Al-Shara'a, an act she may frame as personal freedom. Yet, the very same principle of personal freedom allowed her to choose her attire for this diplomatic visit."

"Is this not a double standard? For a country like Germany, whose constitution and people pride on secularism, such actions seem incongruent. They stand in stark contrast to the secular ideals that Germany upholds and the lived reality of its diverse society."

"This inconsistency may stem from a lack of understanding of the historical ties between Islam and Germany. It risks reducing a complex relationship to superficial judgments about attire and gestures."

"The truth is that Europe -- and Germany in particular -- relies on the Middle East, not just for resources but for the shared legacy of human history and culture. To ignore this interdependence is to turn a blind eye to reality."

"The history of Islamic-German relations is rich and instructive. In 732 AD, during the Battle of Tours, the tide of Islamic expansion was halted at the Byzantine kingdoms."

Yet, relations between the German Empire and the Islamic Caliphate evolved, with diplomatic exchanges under Emperor Karl Martel and Caliph Harun al-Rashid. Such interactions aimed to secure safe passage for Christians traveling to Jerusalem.

"This collaboration continued over centuries. In 1590, Germany saw the establishment of its first chair in Arabic studies at Heidelberg University, reflecting a deep engagement with Islamic scholarship. The contributions of Orientalists and translators enriched German academic and cultural life."

"Today, Germany is home to over five million Muslims, a community shaped by history and migration. From the Ottoman soldiers left behind after World War II to the modern influx of workers and refugees, this population has grown alongside Germany contributing to its economy and cultural fabric."

"Despite this shared history, recent trends in Germany reveal a troubling disconnect. A 2023 study from the Institute for Criminal Research in Saxony found that 67.8 percent of surveyed Muslim students prioritize the Qur'an over secular laws."

"This belief is not exclusive to Germany but shared by over a billion Muslims worldwide. Instead of fostering fear, Germany could view this as an opportunity to engage with its Muslim population through dialogue and mutual respect."

"Secularism, after all, guarantees freedom of belief. If Muslims abide by German laws, their faith should not be seen as a threat. The rise of far-right movements and extremist rhetoric against Muslims and people of color only underscores the urgency of bridging this divide."

"Germany and the Islamic world have a long history of coexistence and collaboration. To dismiss Islam or its adherents is to overlook this shared past and jeopardize a shared future."

"Diplomatic etiquette and mutual respect must guide international relations, especially with regions like the Middle East, whose history and resources are indispensable to Europe."

"Minister Baerbock's visit to Syria was an opportunity to strengthen ties and foster understanding. Instead, her statements and actions have raised questions about Germany's approach to Islam and its place in a secular, diverse society."

"Moving forward, Germany must reflect on how it engages with the Islamic world -- not as a threat but as a partner in building a better, more inclusive future."

— Compiled By PFX Fernandes



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Naser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah visits the zoo in Omariya.

Plan to woo more tourists

## Kuwait Zoo to be refurbished, all needs will be met: Al-Athbi

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Naser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah visited Kuwait Zoo in Omariya on Thursday morning to inspect its latest developments and deal with its most pressing needs.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the governor was welcomed by the acting Director General of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Nasser Taqi, Director of Farwaniya Security Command Brigadier General Mohammad Mutlaq Al-Mutairi, Deputy Director of Farwaniya Security Command Brigadier General Nayef Al-Hajraf, Director of Kuwait Zoo Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Kandari, and other officials.

The governor and the concerned officials were given a general tour of the zoo's facilities and were briefed on existing projects and the future plans to develop the facility. Discussions focused on

the zoo's basic requirements and needs with the aim of enhancing the role of the tourist park and exploring ways to cooperate with relevant authorities.

This visit is part of the governor's efforts to monitor the vital facilities and strengthen cooperation to achieve sustainable development, protect the environment, and improve tourist facilities.

The Kuwait Zoo, which was established in 1966 and opened in 1968, has since undergone continuous development, becoming an agricultural, tourist, and recreational heritage site with special significance for Kuwaiti families.

At the end of the visit, Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser affirmed the importance of dealing with the existing deficiencies and evaluating the main development plans for this vital facility, which is part of Kuwait's agricultural and animal wealth.

He stressed the need for continued collaboration with all relevant authorities to meet the zoo's needs.

## Kuwait stresses GCC cyber ties boost to counter new threats

DOHA, Jan 18, (KUNA): A visiting Kuwaiti official underscored significance of the 2025 Gulf Cybersecurity Forum for swapping expertise among the GCC countries in the present times where digital challenges have alarmingly soared.

Speaking to KUNA at end of the two-day forum today, Ghaida' Al-Mazkour, an assistant undersecretary from the Ministry of Higher Education, said the forum grouped cybersecurity experts from the GCC countries to discuss latest technologies in the sphere and security systems for protecting information in the face of rapidly increasing threats.

The State of Kuwait had presented a

scientific paper at the gathering including a project about the Quantum computing application -- presented by Dr. Omar Al-Ibrahim.

The Kuwaiti team had also addressed the gathering about the experience of the central information technology apparatus (the government cyber shield), presented by Nasser Al-Azmi.

Al-Mazkour noted that youth from GCC countries took part in the workshop and congratulated the Kuwaiti student Abdullah Al-Mekhal for winning "the research stamps award." Teams from other GCC countries were also honored in the final session.

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Kuwait Fire Force participates in the introductory seminar for the Sharjah Award in Public Finance.

### KFF joins Sharjah Award seminar on Public Finance

The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) participated in the introductory seminar for the Sharjah Award in Public Finance, which was held Wednesday morning at the Regency Hotel in Kuwait.

According to a press release issued by KFF, the award aims to promote best financial practices in public administration, enhance the efficiency of financial and administrative performance through the use of the latest technologies, and honor distinguished institutions and individuals in the field. The award also encourages government insti-

tutions and individuals to participate, enhances regional cooperation to improve financial practices, and serves as a platform for sharing knowledge and experiences through the publication of its results.

During the seminar, introductory sessions covered the objectives of the award, evaluation criteria, and participation requirements, along with a specialized training workshop in public finance.

KFF was represented at the seminar by Director of the Financial Affairs Department Brigadier Wael Ali Yousef.

# MEW seeks CSC approval to fill 200 vacant leadership positions

Leadership reshuffle to support strategic goals

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18:** The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has requested the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to approve the terms and conditions for filling up 200 vacant leadership positions.

Sources from the ministry said the vacant

leadership positions are in various sectors and departments and the ministry aims to fill them in order to improve its operations. Sources confirmed that filling up these vacant posts is a priority for the ministry's leadership, with expectations that the coming period will witness the filling of these vital positions.

Sources said the ministry is keen on completing all necessary procedures to fill the vacancies, with the goal of improving work efficiency in its departments. "The list of vacancies includes lead-

ership and technical positions that are crucial for enhancing the ministry's performance. The ministry is committed to filling these positions with highly qualified candidates to ensure smooth operations and to achieve the strategic objectives of each sector," sources added.

In a related development, a ministerial decision was issued two days ago appointing Director of the Program Planning and Follow-up Department in the Power Plants and Water Distillation Sector Eng Khalaf Al-Kafifa to also assume the responsibilities of the Director of the Undersecretary's Office effective immediately.

### Meeting needs of labor market

## Al-Jalal updates list of top global universities for Kuwaiti students

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

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18:** The Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Abdullah Al-Jalal issued a ministerial decision to approve the updating of the lists of distinguished higher education institutions and specializations in the United States for both undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

The decision also includes updating the lists of distinguished higher education institutions according to specialization in the United Kingdom, as well as in several European countries, including:

Republic of Austria, Republic of Belgium, Kingdom of Denmark, Republic of Finland, Federal Republic of Germany, Republic of Ireland, Republic of Italy, Luxembourg, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Kingdom of Norway, Kingdom of Spain, Kingdom of Sweden, and Swiss Confederation.

In a press statement, Minister Al-Jalal affirmed that this ministerial decision to update the lists is part of the ministry's ongoing efforts to ensure the quality of education provided to Kuwaiti students.

He explained that this decision reflects the Ministry of Higher Education's commitment to providing a distinguished academic environment that aligns with the aspirations of students and meets the needs of both the local and international labor markets, and thereby enhancing national competencies in various fields.

The update of the lists of distinguished higher education institutions followed a thorough study and comprehensive evaluation by the National Authority for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance, based on internationally recognized standards, with the aim of ensuring scientific and research excel-

lence for the students.

The minister encouraged students planning to study at distinguished universities to periodically review the updated lists of educational institutions provided by the National Authority for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance, before enrolling, to ensure they receive an education that aligns with global developments in science and technology and meets the expectations of both students and their families.

He affirmed that the ministry will continue to support students' academic progress, and offer guidance and assistance to help them achieve their educational goals.

Al-Jalal highlighted that investment in higher education is the basis for building an advanced knowledge-based society and for enhancing Kuwait's position on the global education map.

In addition, the Director General of the National Authority for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance Dr. Jassim Al-Ali explained that the Board of Directors of the authority, chaired by His Excellency the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, approved the update of the lists of distinguished higher education institutions outside the State of Kuwait, including those in European countries, the United Kingdom, and the United States, for both undergraduate and graduate programs.

He affirmed that the authority is continuously working to evaluate international educational institutions and track periodic updates in line with global academic developments through specialized committees to ensure that the quality of academic programs adheres to the best international standards.

Dr. Al-Ali encouraged all students, parents, and relevant governmental and private entities to visit the official website of the authority at <https://nbaq.edu.kw> to view the latest updated lists of distinguished and accredited higher education institutions and to ensure their compliance with these standards.



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Minister of Social Affairs during the delivery of wheelchairs to people with disabilities. KUNA photo

### Broader plan to enhance services

## Wheelchair aid for special needs to resume, says Minister Al-Huwailah

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18, (KUNA):** Minister of Social Affairs, Family Affairs and Childhood, Dr. Amthul Al-Huwailah declared on Thursday resumption of distributing wheelchairs to cases of special challenges after years of stoppage.

The decision is part of a full-scale plan to back up the rights of the handicapped and ensure that they get the services they need, she said in a statement.

The minister declared that she is tackling

the issues that had led to halting delivery of such aid equipment to this segment of the people of Kuwait.

Moreover, Minister Al-Huwailah affirmed her keenness on exerting intensive efforts to overhaul the infrastructure and the services for the disabled -- including medical equipment, training programs, social and psychological support. She also pledged to ensure that they be able to merge into the society and boost their rights.

### Claims must be submitted by March 16

## MoE sets deadline for financial closure of fiscal year 2024/2025

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

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18:** In preparation for the conclusion of the current fiscal year -- 2024/2025, Assistant Undersecretary for Financial Affairs at the Ministry of Education Mohammad Al-Khalidi issued a circular to all sectors and departments, stating the necessary procedures to close accounting entries and prepare the final account for the fiscal year.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the circular, indicating that the ministry is keen on appropriately allocating expenses and revenues for each fiscal year in accordance with the directives of its finance counterpart to guarantee compliance with the regulations and procedures followed by government agencies.

Al-Khalidi underscored the importance of submitting all financial claims related to the ministry's sectors and departments,

along with the supporting documents, to the Financial Affairs Sector by March 16, 2025. "This deadline is crucial to ensure that financial dues for fiscal 2024/2025 are paid before the period ends," he explained.

He also stressed that adherence to the instructions in the circular is essential for the accurate completion of the financial accounts for the current year. "This step is intended to improve the efficiency of financial operations and prevent delays that could disrupt the ministry's workflow," he asserted.

The circular was distributed to the concerned departments and entities to guarantee full cooperation between them. This collaborative effort aims to ensure the smooth and timely closure of accounting entries to achieve financial discipline and improve the quality of financial management. These steps are in line with the State's broader goals of improving public spending efficiency and managing government funds more effectively.

## Kuwait upgrades food supply centers

**KUWAITCITY, Jan 18, (KUNA):** Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel on Wednesday affirmed that the strategic supplies centers' project contributes to enhancing the national food security.

Such a goal is attainable with larger storage capacities that are also more effective in addition to an expanded space for displaying the items, as well as updating the services for the citizens, the minister said in a statement o KUNA.

In addition to the larger storage spaces, the venture envisages electronic applications including delivery services to the houses, in line with the Government keenness on ensuring comfortable means of living for the nationals, Minister Al-Ajeel added.

The advanced services will benefit more 70,000 citizens from each center, he said, revealing that each center's storage capacity will range between 500 and 1,000 square meters.

## LOCAL



KUNA photo

Participants at the Leadership Empowerment Workshop in London.

## 12 government heads gain insights

## CSC concludes leadership workshop in London

LONDON, Jan 18, (KUNA): In the presence of Kuwait Ambassador to the United Kingdom Bader Al-Munayekh, the Civil Service Commission concluded a contractual program, themed "workshop on leadership empowerment" in London on Friday.

Heads of 12 government bodies

took part in the program between January 13 and 17, according to a CSC statement.

The commission's overseas training department organized the program under a memorandum of understanding between Kuwait and the UK.

The workshop aimed to improve the reliability of civil servants the strate-

gies for qualifying future leaders of government institutions, drawing on the experience of the UK Civil Service.

As part of the program, participants visited both chambers of the UK Parliament and were apprised of the development of the lawmaking process in the UK in the course of time.



KUNA photo

Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadi inaugurates the exhibition accompanying the conference.

## Al-Sabah Hospital as one of Kuwait's leading medical institutions: minister

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi said Al-Sabah Hospital has a rich medical experience and is one of Kuwait's top scientific and medical facilities.

In a speech at the opening of the hospital's first scientific conference

on Saturday, the minister underlined the recent achievements of Al-Sabah Hospital, including opening an epilepsy monitoring unit for children, the first of its kind in Kuwait, which reduced the numbers of patients who need medical treatment abroad.

He also mentioned the expansion

in the Gastroenterology Department, to receive more patients and reduce the time period on waiting lists.

Moreover, minister Al-Awadhi noted the launch of critical medical care unit for children in 2022, as well as providing specialized surgery treatments.

## KISR launches 7th Scientific Exhibition for Children

Initiative to foster scientific creativity and research skills among Kuwait's youth



Opening of the Seventh Children's Science Exhibition.

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

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), in collaboration with the American University of the Middle East (AUM), launched the 7th Scientific Exhibition for Children yesterday at the Capital Mall, and it will continue until December 18.**

In a statement, the acting Director General of KISR Dr. Faisal Al-Humaidan affirmed that organizing this exhibition reflects KISR's commitment to enhancing the culture of scientific creativity among children and developing their research skills. This initiative is part of KISR's ongoing efforts to prepare a scientifically aware and creative generation.

He said the exhibition coincides with the selection of



KUNA photos

Group photo of children participating in the exhibition.

"Kuwait as the Capital of Arab Culture" this year, an occasion that confirms the distinguished position of Kuwait in the field of culture. It also reaffirms the dedication of Kuwait's political leadership to enhancing culture and scientific research.

Dr. Al-Humaidan called for further cooperation and collaboration among scientific, cultural, and educational institutions to simplify the outputs of science, technology, and innovation, and to push for greater interest in scientific culture among children and youth.

Meanwhile, the Director of Marketing and Commercial Operations at KISR Abdul Mohsen Al-Haroun highlighted the importance of such events in shaping future scientists, particularly in light of rapid technological advancements and the continual renewal of knowledge.

He stressed that investing in children from a young age is the basis for both scientific and societal progress.

Al-Haroun explained that AUM is participating in the exhibition for the second consecutive year by presenting



Part of the Seventh Children's Science Exhibition.

eight innovative scientific experiments that complement the research activities offered by KISR's various centers, including the Energy and Construction Research Center, the Petroleum Research Center, and the Environmental and Life Sciences Research Center. The experiments cover various topics, including the impact of dust, rehabilitation of desert areas, soil types, and studies on desert birds and plants.

During the exhibition, researchers will assist children in conducting 11 simplified and diverse scientific experiments in several fields, such as desert birds and plants, soil and its types, the impact of dust, and rehabilitation of desert areas.

The exhibition, which was first launched in 2018, has attracted over 5,087 children in seven sessions.

Al-Haroun affirmed that KISR will continue to organize it as an educational platform that blends entertainment with learning with the aim of enhancing children's intellectual abilities and supporting their academic excellence.

## Continued from Page 1

## Kuwait and

Commander of the US Central Command Ground Force, and the US Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Hideko Sasahara.

It quoted him as affirming the two states' keenness on bolstering the partnership in the fields of training and defense coordination for serving mutual interests, strengthening regional security and stability.

The statement added that the Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef examined tasks at the camp, operating plans and the forces' missions. Moreover, senior officers briefed him about the troop preparedness and mutual coordination.

He was accompanied during the visit to the camp by the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwait Army, Staff Air Vice Marshal Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and senior officers.

## 25 caught

Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef. The campaign resulted in the issuance of 1,521 traffic citations and the arrest of 25 wanted individuals.

The Ministry of Interior explained that the campaign involved officers from the Traffic, Operations, and Special Security sectors. It resulted in the arrest of two individuals in a disoriented state, 12 wanted persons, four violators of residency laws, four individuals without identification papers, and three individuals who were reported as absconding. Also, two vehicles that were reported as stolen, along with 53 vehicles and motorcycles were seized due to traffic violations.

The ministry reiterated its commitment to continuing security and traffic operations throughout the country to apprehend violators, criminals, individuals with enforceable judicial rulings, residency and labor law offenders, suspects in cases, and anyone breaking the law.

It urged the public to cooperate with security personnel and report any vio-

lations or unlawful activity by calling the emergency No. 112.

## Sahel app

The update includes several enhancements to improve user experience, speed and account security.

Key features of the update include a complete redesign of the login interface for smoother navigation, a new alert box at the top of the screen for easy access to the latest data and improved organization of notifications, with color-coded alerts for better prioritization.

The update also introduces a 'Favorite Notifications' feature, allowing users to save important alerts for quick access and provides direct contact information for government agencies in the settings menu for easier communication.

Users are advised to reactivate protection for their accounts after updating the application, which supports both Arabic and English languages.

## Manila mulls

Migrant Workers Secretary Hans Cacadac revealed that the possibility of a deployment ban has been brought to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s attention. While details remain unclear, the potential ban could either target specific types of workers, such as domestic helpers, or apply to all Filipino workers in Kuwait.

Currently, the Philippines already prohibits first-time domestic workers from being deployed to Kuwait. Cacadac also hinted at the possibility of stricter regulations for OFW deployments to the Gulf country. "If our review finds that a suspension of deployment will help, we will implement it," Cacadac said, adding that the welfare and safety of OFWs are paramount, though employment opportunities must also be considered.

With around 215,000 OFWs currently in Kuwait, any decision will significantly impact many Filipino families relying on remittances. The DMW is conducting further assessments to determine the best course of action.

## Frost alert

the meteorology center, in remarks to KUNA, on Saturday.

The weather is tending to remain cold during the days and very cold at nights until Wednesday, with the temperature forecast to ebb less than three degrees Celsius, forming frost in the farming and arid regions, he said.

## Israel-Hamas

Early Saturday morning, Israel's Cabinet approved the deal for a ceasefire in Gaza that would release dozens of hostages and pause the 15-month war with Hamas, bringing the sides a step closer to ending their deadliest and most destructive fighting ever.

Despite the ceasefire news, sirens sounded across central Israel on Saturday, with the army saying it intercepted projectiles launched from Yemen. The Iran-backed Houthis have stepped up their missile attacks, in recent weeks. The group says the attacks are part of their campaign aimed at pressuring Israel and the West over the war in Gaza.

There were also continued Israeli strikes into Gaza. The Palestinian Health Ministry said at least 23 people were killed in the previous day.

Under the first phase of the ceasefire, 33 hostages are set to be released over the next six weeks, in exchange for hundreds of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. The remainder, including male soldiers, are to be released in a second phase that will be negotiated during the first. Hamas has said it will not release the remaining captives without a lasting ceasefire and a full Israeli withdrawal.

According to the ceasefire plan, approved by the Cabinet and signed by Israel's national security adviser, the exchange will begin Sunday at 4 p.m. (1400 GMT). During each exchange, prisoners will be released by Israel after the hostages have arrived safely.

The plan says that during phase one, some 1,900 Palestinian prisoners will be released, in exchange for 33 Israeli hostages, both alive and dead.

## Lifeline continues, boosting relief efforts

## Kuwait's sixth humanitarian plane with ten tons of aid arrives in Syria

DAMASCUS, Jan 18, (KUNA): The sixth Kuwaiti airplane carrying humanitarian aid to Syria arrived at Damascus International Airport on Saturday, with ten tons of essential items on board, as part of the "Kuwait by Your Side" campaign.

The campaign is organized by Kuwait Society for Relief, with the participation of charity societies, in coordination with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense.

Kuwait, since establishing the relief

air bridge with Syria on December 30, 2024, has dispatched more than 150 tons of relief supplies to the country.

In a statement to KUNA earlier, Chairman of the Board of Kuwait Society for Relief Dr Ibrahim Al-Saleh said that the society continues to provide humanitarian aid to Syrians, under direct orders from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

On his part, the society's Director General Abdulaziz Al-Obaid said the

campaign aims to ease the suffering of Syrians during the harsh winter months and provide them with daily essential items.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Board of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity Society Jamal Al-Nouri said that the society has been aiding Syrians since the crisis broke out in 2011.

The society is eager to take part in the reconstruction of Syria, including building the infrastructure and renovating buildings and schools.



KUNA photo

Kuwaiti relief aid arrives at Damascus International Airport.









'Important milestone in the history of our strategic growth journey in the automotive industry'

# Al Mulla Auto launches SOUEAST and inaugurates brand's showroom in Kuwait



Talal Al-Mulla in the middle between the Chinese Ambassador Zhang Jianwei and Liu Tan and the Economic and Commercial Counselor of the Chinese Embassy Hu Hanming and Imad Flayhan and Hisham Faqih.



Talal Al-Mulla and the Chinese Ambassador and Imad Flayhan with members of the Executive Management.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: At a momentous celebration by Al Mulla Auto, a member of Al Mulla Group and a leading distributor of international automotive brands in Kuwait, the company recently announced the launch of the SOUEAST brand in Kuwait. The ceremonial activity also included the inauguration of a vibrant state-of-the-art showroom, which will become the new home of the iconic vehicles in the country. This strategic expansion marks an important milestone in the history of the company with the introduction of innovative and stylish automobiles by Fujian SOUEAST Automobile Sales Co. Ltd., a world-renowned Chinese car manufacturer.

The announcement was made in the presence of Mr. Talal A. Al Mulla, Board Member and Chief Executive Officer of Al Mulla Group, who was accompanied by H.E. Ambassador Zhang Jianwei, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in the State of Kuwait, as well as senior management representatives from SOUEAST including the Vice President of SOUEAST International Mr. Liwei Tan, Sales Manager of SOUEAST Kuwait Mr. Eric Zhao among others. The inauguration ceremony was also attended by senior management teams from Al Mulla Group including Mr. Imad Flayhan, Managing Director of Al Mulla Automotive, the Director of Al Mulla Automotive Mr. Hisham Fakih, and other senior management representatives from Al Mulla Group.

The celebration of launching the brand SOUEAST and the inauguration of the showroom follows the recently signed agreement between Al Mulla Group and Wuhu Jetour Automobile Sales Co. Ltd., which appointed Al Mulla International Auto Trading Company as the authorized distributor for SOUEAST vehicles in Kuwait. This partnership aims to deliver a range of dynamic vehicles by SOUEAST combining cutting-edge technology, comfort, and style to meet and exceed the growing diverse needs of Kuwaiti drivers. Furthermore, this collaboration reflects the commitment of Al Mulla Automotive to offering high-quality, innovative and seamless automotive solutions tailored to modern Kuwaiti consumers, whilst continuing to experience the Al Mulla Group's promise of unsurpassed commitment to offering the best products and services backed-up by our unparalleled dedication to excellence and professionalism in



Part of the attendees at the event.

every sector we operate.

Commenting on this important development, Board Member and CEO of Al Mulla Group Mr. Talal A. Al Mulla said: "We are delighted today to announce the official launch of the SOUEAST brand in Kuwait by Al Mulla International Auto Trading Co, and the inauguration of this iconic showroom for the brand. Today's celebration marks an important milestone in the history of our strategic growth journey in the automotive industry both in Kuwait and the region. Our new business partners SOUEAST Motor, are one of the leading manufacturers of Chinese automobiles in the global market and we look forward to representing their brand and taking it to new heights, a reputation that has become synonymous with Al Mulla Automotive."

Vice President of SOUEAST International Mr. Liwei Tan, said: "Kuwait is a nation of wisdom and passion. Its future is full of opportunity and hope, and we are all looking forward to a great time. In such

a dynamic and promising environment, SOUEAST aims to achieve long-term success with local partners and customers through innovative technology, superior quality, and user-centric services."

The SOUEAST showroom in Al Rai is designed to offer a premium customer experience, featuring sophisticated interiors that reflect modern aesthetics and advanced technology. Visitors will be welcomed into an environment where they can explore the latest models, engaged by knowledgeable staff dedicated to providing personalized service.

With over 20 years of international experience, SOUEAST Motors is celebrated for its innovative automotive solutions that merge advanced technology with comfort and reliability. Guided by the motto "Ease Your Life," SOUEAST vehicles are designed to connect people, cities, and embracing ease of life, emphasizing style and warm-tech features. SOUEAST offers versatile SUVs designed to appeal to urban youth, prioritizing cutting-edge technology

and effortless mobility.

The SOUEAST lineup introduces the S06, S07 and S09 models, all designed to captivate the adventurous spirit of young drivers.

This new line of vehicles comes with exclusive introductory packages, as well as 6 years/200,000 KM warranty, and 10 years/1 million KM engine warranty. Furthermore, the Al Mulla brand promise of delivering best sales & aftersales experience will ensure that our customers receive the best customer service, spare parts support, and maintenance service at the 3S Service Facility that comes equipped with the industry's highest standards of advanced technologies and quality of service to ensure full customers' satisfaction and convenience.

#### Looking into the future with upcoming models:

SOUEAST Motor, a subsidiary of Chery Automobile Company, plans to launch 13 innovative models within the next five years globally, which will include Internal Combustion Engine (ICE), Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV), and Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) options across SUVs and Sedans, covering all mainstream market segments, from the B to the D segments. In addition to an extensive portfolio of vehicles, SOUEAST Motor has constructed a 6,500-square-meter spare parts warehouse in Dubai to meet all regional spare parts demands, serving as a testament to SOUEAST Motor's focus on the Middle East market. Some of the new models from SOUEAST that in the pipeline for future releases include the Sedans: E05 and E07 respectively B type and C-type Sedan. Also the SUV: S05 and S08 respectively segment B and C-SUV.

With SOUEAST entering the Kuwaiti market, Al Mulla Auto is excited to offer a range of vehicles that emphasize quality, innovation, and easy lifestyle. Our partnership with SOUEAST represents a transformative moment in our commitment to the evolving needs of our customers, showcasing vehicles that not only meet but exceed expectations. We invite all automotive enthusiasts and prospective buyers to visit our new showroom in Al Rai and discover how SOUEAST vehicles embody the blend of style, performance, and cutting-edge technology all for the main purpose of making their lives easy.



The car SOUEAST S06



The sports car SOUEAST S07



The car SOUEAST S09

#### SOUEAST S06: Compact Excellence for Urban Life

The S06 redefines modern driving with its advanced technology, seamlessly integrated to enhance every journey. Designed for the connected drivers of today, it offers intuitive controls and smart features that keep you in sync with your world. Sophisticated yet effortless, the S06 embodies the perfect balance of innovation and practicality for today's on-the-go lifestyle. The S06 model comes with 1.5L Turbo charged engine & 1.6L Turbo charged engine with horsepower up to 197.

##### Unique selling points include:

- 15.6" Infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, 6-way electrical seats,
- 50W wireless fast charger,
- 540 degrees panoramic visual parking assist,
- 8 SONY speakers,
- Leather seats and intelligent air purification.
- 8 Airbags
- Lateral & backward collision warning and electric stability control (ESC)

#### SOUEAST S07: Bold and Stylish SUV for Adventurers

This dynamic SUV is tailored for the modern urbanite, combining sleek design with robust performance. The S07 boasts a powerful engine, intuitive infotainment system, and spacious interiors, making it perfect for those who crave a vehicle that aligns with their active lifestyle. With advanced safety features and efficient fuel consumption, this model ensures peace of mind without sacrificing style. The S06 model comes with a 1.5L Engine, Turbo charged engine & 1.6L Turbo charged engine and horsepower: Up to 197.

##### Some of its unique selling points include:

- 7 seater
- Unique LED front & Rear light strips,
- 20" Wheel Hub,
- 12.3" Connected screens,
- 50W fast wireless charging,
- Apple CarPlay & Android Auto.
- Adaptive cruise control (ACC).

#### SOUEAST S09: Premium SUV for Families

The S09 is more than just a car; it's a statement of innovation and sophistication. With its bold exterior and premium finishes, this SUV is perfect for those who want to stand out from the crowd. The S09 offers cutting-edge technology, including advanced driver-assistance features and a state-of-the-art multimedia system. Its versatility caters to both daily commuting and adventurous excursions, making it the ideal choice for the stylish and daring. The S09 model comes with 2.0L Turbo charged engine and horsepower up to 187.

##### Some of its unique selling points include:

- U-Shaped Grill,
- Seat Ventilation
- 3 Row Seats
- Multi-functional Ergonomic Seat,
- 15.6" LCD Dashboard and 10.25" Console Screen,
- 50W fast wireless charging.
- Spacious interior (3 rows, 7 Seats)
- Adaptive cruise control (ACC)





R-L: Haitham Al-Tarkait, Khaled AlShamlan, Hamad Al-Marzouq, Abdulaziz Al-Nafisi, Khaled Al-Nisf, and Dalal Al-Nouri



R-L: Dalal Al-Nouri, Moath Al-Asimi, Nasser Al-Roudhan, Ahmed Al-Fares, Ahmed Al-Sumait, and Fawaz Al-Anzi.

Maintaining growth and commitment to innovation in the digital era

# KFH unveils new visual identity ... beyond horizons



KFH Chairman Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq.



The New Visual Identity



Khaled Yousef AlShamlan



Salma Al-Ayubi



KFH Chairman Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq and Abdulaziz Al-Nafisi.



Event host Abdullah Al-Sayegh



Thamer Al-Baz

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has unveiled a new visual identity to align with its growth, significant achievements, and expanding global presence. The rebranding also reflects KFH's aspirations and reinforces its dedication to embracing technology, progress, and innovation in the digital era, solidifying its position as a leader in Islamic banking.

The new visual identity was unveiled at a grand ceremony held at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre. This special event was attended by the Chairman, Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq and Board members, Group Chief Executive Officer, Khaled Yousef AlShamlan, along with other members of KFH executive management and employees.

KFH Chairman, Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq said: "We are delighted to announce the dawn of a new chapter for Kuwait Finance House, characterized by a distinct experience and an exceptional vision for the future. This phase marks a transformative milestone in our journey, signified by the launch of our new visual identity. This identity embodies the future and reflects the Group's leading position in digital excellence, innovation, and global leadership in the development of Islamic financial services."

He added: "Last year, by the grace of Allah, we accomplished a historic mission. We achieved a significant milestone by successfully implementing the first and largest merger project in the Kuwaiti banking sector. This merger was part of the strategic acquisition of Ahli United Group – Bahrain, the largest such deal in the region. Following the acquisition, KFH has become the largest bank in Kuwait by market capitalization and the largest Kuwaiti private sector company listed on Boursa Kuwait, with a market capitalization of approximately KD 13 billion. Furthermore, KFH has emerged

**Al-Marzouq:**  
 ■ This phase marks a transformative milestone, embodies the future, and reflects the Group's leadership

as the world's second-largest Islamic bank, achieving significant milestones and reaping substantial benefits across all areas of the institution. This has positively impacted our valued customers and shareholders."

Al-Marzouq pointed out that KFH Group boasts a substantial financial network encompassing 12 countries worldwide. Among the most prominent of these are Kuwait, Bahrain, Turkey, Egypt, the United Kingdom, and Germany. KFH's global presence confirms its standing as a global leader of Islamic banking services.

He said that the new visual identity encompasses more than just a logo. It represents a significant step towards a new era in modern Islamic banking, serving as a driving force in our pursuit of becoming one of the world's top 100 banks.

Al-Marzouq expressed his gratitude to all who contributed to shaping this new identity for KFH, wishing everyone success.

**KFH Group Chief Executive Officer – Khaled Yousef AlShamlan**

Meanwhile, KFH Group Chief Executive Officer, Khaled Yousef AlShamlan said: "Today, we unveil the new visual identity of Kuwait Finance House, the Group's banks and subsidiaries, marking the beginning of a new chapter and a launch toward the future. This milestone reinforces our excellence in the various aspects of banking, innovative financial solutions, and pioneering financial

**AlShamlan:**  
 ■ The launch of the new visual identity aligns with KFH's growth, leadership, and extensive global reach

technology. It will directly reflect on performance levels and work methodologies, enhancing the banking experience to align with our new identity."

AlShamlan added that the launch of the new visual identity aligns with KFH's growth, leadership, and extensive global reach. It also underscores the bank's commitment to digital transformation, sustainability, and innovation, while emphasizing its dedication to enhancing customer experience and providing innovative banking solutions.

He explained: "During the rebranding process of KFH, we were keen to maintain our legacy and Islamic heritage while reflecting our commitment to excellence in the Islamic banking industry, in accordance with the highest global standards of technology and innovation."

AlShamlan said: "Today, we begin a new chapter in our journey and a strategic shift towards achieving our forward-thinking plans. At KFH, we take pride in our unprecedented success and leadership throughout decades, reaching a remarkable position as the largest bank in Kuwait in terms of market cap and the second-largest Islamic bank in the world. We will continue our efforts to sustain our leading position and fulfill the aspirations of our shareholders and customers, our core priority. We continue to play a significant role in advancing the future of Islamic finance. We remain a distinctive, credible, and reliable brand renowned for high financial solvency, consistent profitability, sustainable growth, competitive performance, and a global reach."

Al-Shamlan expressed gratitude to employees for their exceptional contributions and indispensable role in KFH's success. He emphasized that they are the true wealth and core assets of KFH, and the foundation upon which its leadership journey is built. "We are advancing our pioneering vision and leadership in Islamic banking worldwide, emphasizing continuous development and innovation in the age of digital transformation. We aspire to further growth and prosperity to fulfill the aspirations of our shareholders and customers. We believe in a brighter future."

**The new visual identity**  
 The rebranding process necessitated concerted efforts, encompassing extensive research and gathering feedback from customers, employees, and design experts. The objective was to create a logo that authentically reflected the brand's identity and its vision for the future.

**Symbol:** The redesigned symbol reflects our global reach, digital focus, and innovative spirit. It embodies KFH's commitment to providing cutting-edge banking solutions while remaining grounded in cultural heritage and Islamic values.

**Lettering:** The bold, clean lines of KFH's new custom font symbolize solidity, reliability, and stability, blending tradition with modernity.

**Employees:** It opens new opportunities for growth, innovation, and collaboration within a forward-thinking, value-driven environment. It enhances the sense of pride in working for a trusted, international brand that is committed to integrity and Islamic banking principles.

**Customers:** The rebranding signifies KFH's continued commitment to providing modern, innovative, and accessible financial solutions, ensuring access to world-class services, enhanced digital tools, and a broader range of offerings and empowering customers to achieve their financial goals with a trusted, future-focused partner.



A crowd of employees.



Unveiling the New Visual Identity

## Gibson, Voight, and Stallone named 'Special Ambassadors'

# Donald Trump vows to help 'troubled' Hollywood

NEW YORK, Jan 18, (AP): Donald Trump wants to make Hollywood "bigger, better and stronger" and has cast Mel Gibson, Jon Voight and Sylvester Stallone as stars of what he is calling his "Special Ambassadors to a great but very troubled place, Hollywood, California."

On Wednesday, the President-elect announced on his social media site that the three actors would be his eyes and ears to the moviemaking town.

"It will again be, like The United States of America itself, The Golden Age of Hollywood!" he wrote on Truth Social.

He also called the trio special envoys. Special ambassadors and envoys are typically chosen to respond to troubled hot spots like the Middle East, not California.

Gibson said in a statement that he got the news "at the same time as all of you and was just as surprised. Nevertheless, I heeded the call. My duty as a citizen is to give any help and insight I can."

Gibson, who lost his home in the Palisades fire, added, "Any chance the position comes with an Ambassador's residence?"

U.S. film and television production has been hampered in recent years, with setbacks from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hollywood guild strikes of 2023 and, in the past week, the ongoing wildfires in the Los Angeles area. Overall production in the U.S. was down 26%

from 2021, according to data from ProdPro.

In the greater Los Angeles area, productions were down 5.6% from 2023 according to FilmLA, the lowest since 2020. This past October, Governor Gavin Newsom proposed expanding California's Film & Television Tax Credit program to \$750 million annually (up from \$330 million). Other U.S. cities like Atlanta, New York, Chicago and San Francisco have used tax incentives to lure film and TV productions to their cities. Actor Mark Wahlberg is even making plans for a Las Vegas production hub.

"I'm old enough to have touched some years of the Golden Age of Hollywood, and I've seen its slow deterioration since. Today, we are in pretty bad shape," Voight said. "Very few films are made here now, but we are fortunate to have an incoming President, who wants to restore Hollywood to its former glory, and with his help, I feel we can get done."

It's unclear what exactly Gibson, Voight and Stallone will be doing in this effort to bring productions back to the U.S. Representatives for Stallone did not immediately

respond to request for comment.

Trump's decision to select the actors as his chosen "ambassadors" underscores his preoccupations with the 1980s and '90s, when he was a rising tabloid star in New York, and Gibson and Stallone were among the biggest movie stars in the world.

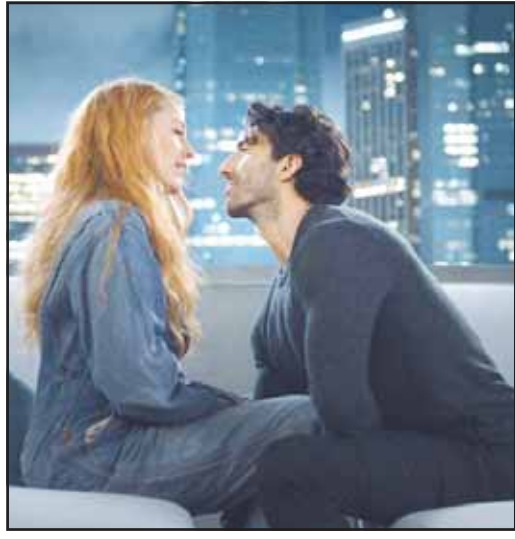
Stallone is a frequent guest at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club and introduced him at a gala in November shortly after the election.

"When George Washington defended his country, he had no idea that he was going to change the world. Because without him, you could imagine what the world would look like," Stallone told the crowd. "Guess what? We got the second George Washington. Congratulations!"

The decision also reflects Trump's willingness to overlook his supporters' most controversial statements.

Gibson's reputation has been altered in Hollywood since 2006, when he went on an antisemitic rant while being arrested for allegedly driving under the influence. But he's also continued to work in mainstream movies and directed the upcoming Wahlberg thriller "Flight Risk."

Voight is a longtime Trump supporter who has called Trump the greatest president since Abraham Lincoln.



This image released by Sony Pictures shows Justin Baldoni, (right), and Blake Lively in a scene from 'It Ends With Us.' (AP)

## 'It Ends With Us' fight

# Baldoni sues Lively, Reynolds for \$400M

LOS ANGELES, Jan 18, (AP): "It Ends With Us" actor and director Justin Baldoni has sued his co-star Blake Lively and her husband, "Deadpool" actor Ryan Reynolds, for defamation and extortion on Thursday in the latest move in a bitter legal battle surrounding the dark romantic drama.

The suit filed in federal court in New York by Baldoni and production company Wayfarer Studios seeks at least \$400 million for damages that include lost future income. It alleges that Lively and Reynolds hijacked the production and marketing of "It Ends With Us" and manipulated media to smear Baldoni and others on the production with false allegations of sexual and other harassment.

"This is a case about two of the most powerful stars in the world deploying their enormous power to steal an entire film right out of the hands of its director and production studio," the suit says. "Then, when Lively and Reynolds' efforts failed to win them the acclaim they believed they so richly deserved, they turned their fury on their chosen scapegoat."

The lawsuit comes about two weeks after Lively sued Baldoni and several others tied to the film, alleging they retaliated against her for coming forward about her treatment on the set.

Her lawyers called Baldoni's new lawsuit "another chapter in the abuser playbook."

"This is an age-old story: A woman speaks up with concrete evidence of sexual harassment and retaliation and the abuser attempts to turn the tables on the victim," they said in a statement Thursday night. "This is what experts call DARVO. Deny. Attack. Reverse Victim Offender."

"It Ends With Us," based on the bestselling 2016 novel by Colleen Hoover, was released in August and exceeded box office expectations with a \$50 million debut. It begins as a standard romantic drama before taking a dark turn into domestic violence. The fallout in its aftermath has made major waves in Hollywood and led to discussions of the treatment of female actors both on sets and in media.

"Heartbreakingly, a film that Baldoni envisioned years ago would honor the survivors of domestic violence by telling their story, with the lofty goal of making a positive impact in the world, has now been overshadowed beyond recognition solely as a result of Lively's actions and cruelty," the lawsuit says.

## Harassment

Lively's allegations of sexual and other harassment followed by retaliation are utterly false, Baldoni's suit alleges.

"Lively was so close and comfortable with Baldoni that she freely breast-fed in front of him during meetings," the suit says.

She would later take moments like these that she encouraged and recast them as sexual harassment and misconduct, his lawsuit alleges.

Lively's Dec. 31 lawsuit came just hours after Baldoni sued the New York Times for libel, alleging the paper worked with Lively to smear him. The Times said it stood by its reporting and planned to "vigorously defend" against the allegations.

Baldoni's new suit also says that counter to Lively's allegations, every request she made for an intimacy coordinator to help with sensitive scenes on the film was honored. It focuses especially on a birthing scene, saying Lively's contention that she was "mostly nude" with non-essential people present including the film's financier were "knowingly false."

Baldoni says that at another point during the production, because he has back problems, he privately and politely asked Lively her weight so that he could work with his personal trainer to be able to safely lift her in the film.

Reynolds later "swore at Baldoni and accused him of fat-shaming his wife," the suit says.

"In fact, Lively had earlier expressed insecurity about her postpartum figure, and Baldoni made every attempt to genuinely reassure her," his lawsuit says.

Baldoni took a backseat in promoting the film while Lively took center stage along with Reynolds, who was on the press circuit for "Deadpool & Wolverine" at the same time.

The backlash against Baldoni led to his being dropped by his agency WME, which also represents both Lively and Reynolds. The suit alleges Reynolds was responsible for this, saying that he approached a WME executive at the "Deadpool & Wolverine" premiere and "expressed his deep disdain for Baldoni, suggesting the agency was working with a 'sexual predator.'"

Prior to "It Ends With Us," Baldoni starred in the TV comedy "Jane the Virgin," directed the 2019 film "Five Feet Apart," and wrote "Man Enough," a book pushing back against traditional notions of masculinity.

"Lively knew full well that making those allegations would be a career death sentence for Plaintiffs, especially given that Baldoni has lived his private and public life as an impassioned advocate for gender equality and healthy masculinity," his lawsuit says.

But Lively's lawyers' statement said that evidence will show that other cast members had similar experiences with Baldoni.

"In short, while the victim focuses on the abuse, the abuser focuses on the victim," the attorneys said. "The strategy of attacking the woman is desperate, it does not refute the evidence in Ms. Lively's complaint, and it will fail."

Lively came to fame through the 2005 film "The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants," and bolstered her stardom on the TV series "Gossip Girl" from 2007 to 2012. She has since starred in films including "The Town" and "The Shallows."

Baldoni's lawsuit says Lively's cruelty even extended to her serving the papers from her lawsuit on Baldoni and his co-defendants in the days after she filed it during the onset of the wildfires that have ravaged the Los Angeles area, saying that on a day when they were "gathering their kids and pets, preparing 'go bags' and monitoring evacuation orders while fearing for their homes, Lively - from the safety of her penthouse in New York - deployed process servers."

## Film



Cameron Diaz, (left), and Jamie Foxx pose for photographers at the photo call for the film 'Back In Action' on Friday, Jan. 17, in London. (AP)

## Glam spies turned dorky parents

# Diaz is 'Back in Action' with Foxx

LOS ANGELES, Jan 18, (AP): But, we do Wordle!! Er, OK. That's how former secret agent Matt (Jamie Foxx) explains that he and wife Emily are now living a boring, mundane, glamour-free life and nobody would ever be looking for them.

To which the rest of us Wordle players say: Whoa, speak for yourself, Matt! Lots of us play Wordle and we don't think We're boring or mundane.

Anyway! More to the point is that Matt's explanation obviously doesn't work, because within a moment he and Emily are, yes, "Back in Action." It's not only the title of director Seth Gordon's film, but the story of Foxx's co-star, Cameron Diaz. Back in movies after more than a decade, Diaz retains her easy charm and has chemistry with Foxx.

But this doesn't mean their lines are funny or logical. Often, they are neither.

We start 15 years ago, in a pre-credits sequence featuring our ultra-cool co-spies (also lovers). Their job is to pose as French arms dealers visiting the home of a shadowy Russian terrorist - then break into a safe and steal a key to the entire world's infrastructure or something.

On the private jet headed back home, Emily reveals a secret we already knew: her home pregnancy test was positive. Actually, all six of them were.

Matt says he's all in. They break out the champagne (well, for him.) And then all heck breaks loose and they end up needing to kill a bunch of people and parachute into the snowy mountains. It's indeed funny when Matt observes: "We can't keep doing this, especially with that baby on the way."

Flash forward 15 years and the couple, having gone underground, live in a comfy suburban house with two lovely (and barely annoying) teenagers. Matt coaches the soccer team. The teens, Alice and Leo (McKenna Roberts and Rylan Jackson, both appealing), are not



This image released by Netflix shows Cameron Diaz, (left), and Jamie Foxx in a scene from 'Back In Action.' (AP)

aware of their parents' high-flying past; Matt and Emily want their lives to be normal.

Director Gordon, who co-wrote the script with Brendan O'Brien, has said he was aiming to explore what might happen when spies become parents. (This was brilliantly addressed in "The Americans" on FX, but that was a whole different thing.) Now, without knowing too many spy couples, or any, I'm pretty sure what happens is NOT that the parents become SO uncool SO fast that they buy binoculars on Amazon to spy on their daughter's social life from the car at school dropoff. Guys, at least hide so she doesn't see you. Did CIA training teach you nothing?

Equally unartful is the way they explain their past to their kids. We join this conversation as the kids wonder why Dad was speaking Russian to the AC guy. The parents explain they picked it up during their time in the Peace Corps. But they don't even have their story straight: Were they in Colombia, Belize, or Russia? Again, they had 15 years to get this straight.

All is peaceful in suburbia, sort of, except Emily is having trouble connecting with daughter Alice (could this be because she spies on her?) She's also getting bored, and wonders if she and Matt can briefly skip down to South America and stop a coup somewhere - or, heck, start a coup! Either way! And then the doorbell rings with a long-lost contact, and Matt and Emily claim Wordle and Etsy, but soon they're dragged back in, and the whole fam is on the run.

You also should know that Emily has both a past with a jealous MI6 agent (Andrew Scott) and a complicated relationship with her mother (Glenn Close, game for broad comedy), who lives on a huge estate in England, was also a spy, and has enthusiastic but terrible taste in men.

The action comes fast and furious, and the banter is pleasant enough. Diaz, especially, makes the proceedings decently enjoyable and some of the sillier lines believable.

It all leads to some predictable questions: Will Emily and her estranged mother find some common ground? Will the kids come to understand their parents? Will Emily and Alice forge a truce? Will a good time be had and lessons learned on the family adventure?

Also, what's Matt's Wordle streak? "Back in Action," a Netflix release, has been rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association "for sequences of violence and action, some suggestive references and strong language, and brief teen partying." Running time: 114 minutes. Two stars out of four.

## New gene discovery offers hope for obesity treatment

## UAE develops stem cell therapy for diabetes treatment

DUBAI, Jan 18, (Xinhua): The Abu Dhabi Stem Cells Center (ADSCC) has introduced a new approach to diabetes management using umbilical cord-derived mesenchymal stem cell (MSC) therapy, the United Arab Emirates state news agency WAM reported on Thursday.

Mesenchymal stem cells have the ability to self-renew and can differentiate into a variety of cell types. MSCs can be isolated from a variety of tissues, such as umbilical cord.

The treatment was successfully administered to a 20-year-old Emirati patient with type 1 diabetes. Within a month, the patient's blood sugar levels showed significant improvement, and diabetes-related antibodies were reduced, with further progress anticipated, according to the report. The procedure involved a two-hour intravenous infusion carried out under strict medical protocols.

Maysoun Al Karam, chief medical officer at ADSCC, emphasized the therapy's potential to reduce insulin dependency. The patient's condition is being closely

monitored through regular checkups.

Antonio Bencomo, general manager at ADSCC Research Center, stated that plans are underway to expand the therapy's application to patients with type 2 diabetes.



**Obesity:** A team of New Zealand and international researchers have discovered how a gene regulates human appetite and bodyweight, raising hopes for new and effective treatments for obesity.

The finding of a gene that controls expression of the Melanocortin 4 Receptor (MC4R), which plays a pivotal role in regulating appetite and bodyweight, could help diagnose and treat people whose obesity is caused by gene mutation, the researchers from the University of Auckland said on Friday.

More than two decades of human genetic data showed mutation in a particular

gene was associated with obesity, and the team found this was because it controlled a second gene, causing appetite and bodyweight changes in mice. When they modified the first gene in mice to have the same mutation found in a child with severe obesity, the mice ate more and became obese, but could be treated by medication targeting the second gene, the study showed.

"It will be a challenge, but it offers a potential way of treating obesity in the general population," said Kathy Mountjoy, who researches molecular medicine and pathology at the University of Auckland, also the co-author of the study published in the Science Translational Medicine.

Subtle changes in the gene can cause obesity, which showed that the amount of the MC4 receptor that is expressed is important in regulating appetite and bodyweight, Mountjoy said, adding drug companies have attempted to target the MC4 receptor for years to find molecules that could activate it to treat obesity, but the drugs they have discovered have had unwanted side effects.



Taormina Lepore, (foreground), who has low vision, walks with a white cane during an accessible field trip to the San Andreas Fault organized by the International Association of Geoscience Diversity Thursday, Sept. 26, 2024, in San Bernardino, Calif. (AP)

## Breaking barriers

## Experts with disabilities redefine field, lab work

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif., Jan 18, (AP): The path to Lost Lake was steep and unpaved, lined with sharp rocks and holes.

A group of scientists and students gingerly made their way, using canes or a helping hand to guide them. For those who couldn't make the trek, a drone brought the lake - blue and narrow - into view. The field trip was designed to illustrate the challenges disabled researchers often face - and how barriers can be overcome.

"Just because you can't do it like someone else doesn't mean you can't do it," said Anita Marshall, a University of Florida geologist leading the outing. The group included scientists with sight, hearing and mobility disabilities.

Marshall's organization ran the field trip to the lake along the San Andreas Fault, outside of San Bernardino. Her group - the International Association for Geoscience Diversity - and others are working to improve access to field and lab work so that those with disabilities feel welcome and stay.

Taormina Lepore, a Western Michigan University paleontologist who went on the trip, said scientists tend to value a single, traditional way of getting things done. At Lost Lake, everyone got a view - even if they couldn't physically get there.

"It's really about empathy, as much as it is about science," said Lepore, who also researches science education. Disabled people make up about 3% of the science, technology, engineering and math workforce, according to 2021 data from the National Science Foundation.

Scientists with disabilities say that's in part because labs, classrooms and field sites aren't designed to accommodate them. Students and faculty are still told that they can't work in a lab or do research safely, said Mark Leddy, who formerly managed disability-related grants

for the National Science Foundation.

The Americans with Disabilities Act, passed in 1990, sets minimum regulations for new buildings and labs, including ramps and wheelchair-accessible walkways.

But modifying older labs can be a complicated and lengthy process.

Alyssa Paparella is working on her doctorate in biology at Baylor College of Medicine and founded an online community for disabled scientists. She said a science building at one of her former schools had no automatic buttons to open doors.

"What is that saying about who you want actually working in the laboratories?" she said. "That's the front door that they're not even able to get in."

Leddy said researchers with disabilities are invaluable because of their life experiences. They have to constantly come up with creative ways to get past barriers in their lives - a problem-solving skill that's indispensable in a lab.

"If they don't feel welcome, if they don't get access, then how can they contribute that talent?" Leddy said.

Venu Varanasi, a biomaterials engineer at the University of Texas at Arlington who has low vision, prints out signage using high-contrast color combinations and encourages his students to keep floors and counters clutter-free so he can navigate the lab more easily.

He said those modifications also keep accidents to a minimum for non-disabled students.

"When you realize that you have a person with a disability, you have an opportunity, not a problem," he said.

At Purdue University in Indiana, engineering professor Brad Duerstock helped design an accessible biomedical lab years ago with support from the school and a National Institutes of Health grant, removing cabinets under sinks and fume hoods so that wheelchairs can easily pull up.

## MVD outbreak

## Mpox kills over 1,321 in Africa

ADDIS ABABA, Jan. 18, (Xinhua): The number of mpox cases reported in Africa since the start of last year has surpassed 77,800, with the death toll rising to 1,321, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) has disclosed.

Africa CDC Director-General Jean Kaseya, addressing an online media briefing on Thursday evening, said the African continent has reported 77,888 mpox cases since the start of 2024, including 16,767 confirmed cases and 1,321 deaths.

Sierra Leone became the latest African country to report mpox cases as it confirmed its first outbreak on Jan. 10, bringing the total number of affected countries to 21, according to Kaseya.

Data from the African Union's specialized healthcare agency show that among the 21 affected countries, 13 are currently experiencing active transmission of the mpox virus.



**Marburg virus:** Uganda has intensified border surveillance with neighboring Tanzania following a suspected Marburg virus disease (MVD) outbreak that has claimed eight lives, a senior government official said Friday.

Ugandan Minister of Health Jane Ruth Aceng told reporters that the World Health Organization (WHO) had alerted Uganda about the suspected outbreak in Tanzania's Kagera region, which shares a border with Uganda.

Aceng said health authorities have identified Uganda's border districts of Kyotera, Isingiro, Rakai, Kalangala, and Ntungamo as being at immediate high risk of disease importation.

According to the ministry, no confirmed or suspected cases of MVD -- characterized by symptoms such as headache, high fever, back pain, diarrhea, vomiting with blood, body weakness, and external bleeding -- have been reported in Uganda.



**Cholera:** The number of cholera cases in Uganda has risen to 67 since the disease outbreak was announced in the northern part of the country on Jan. 7, the Ministry of Health said Friday.

Daniel Kyabayinze, director of public health at the Ministry of Health, told reporters that out of the 67 cases, seven are laboratory confirmed, while the rest remain suspected cases.

Of the 67, all reported in the northern border district of Lamwo, 21 remain hospitalized, while the rest have been treated and discharged, Kyabayinze said, adding that one death has been registered. He said it is suspected that the disease was imported into the country from neighboring countries.

## Focus on primary care and mental health

## WHO announces executive plan for health response after Gaza ceasefire

GENEVA, Jan 18, (KUNA): The World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday announced its executive plan for the health response in Gaza and the West Bank which will span 60 days following the immediate implementation of the ceasefire.

Speaking online from Jerusalem during a UN briefing in Geneva, WHO representative for the occupied Palestinian territories Rik Peepkorn said that the plan exists but has been updated to reflect the current situation.

He explained that the plan focuses on supporting the health response including providing integrated primary healthcare child health maternal and child health care mental health emergency care and primary healthcare with a focus on deploying specialized medical teams and expanding health services in hospitals and medical facilities.

Peepkorn welcomed the announcement of the ceasefire agreement and expressed hope that all parties would fully commit to implementing the deal following through on the three phases of the ceasefire in pursuit of a comprehensive and lasting peace.

He added that the execution of the plan cannot proceed without coordination with the organization's health partners emphasizing that the priority is to expand operations and ensure the delivery of essential supplies and resources to meet immediate needs and support early recovery efforts in the region.

Peepkorn stressed the necessity of removing the security and political barriers that hinder the delivery of aid



A woman walks at a tent camp for displaced Palestinians in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip, Thursday Jan. 16, 2025. WHO aims to strengthen health services in Gaza, West Bank amid ceasefire. (AP)

to affected areas.

He also emphasized that rebuilding Gaza's health system must be a collective effort in close collaboration with the Palestinian Ministry of Health. "Solutions must be 'Palestinian' for all issues related to the health sector," he stressed.

Peepkorn called on international donors to provide flexible funding to support a rapid and effective response to humanitarian needs in Gaza and the West Bank.

He reaffirmed WHO's commitment to continue supporting basic health services and noted that many hospitals in Gaza and the West Bank are facing

shortages of equipment and supplies due to ongoing barriers.

WHO official confirmed that access to healthcare in West Bank also faces some restrictions due to ongoing violence checkpoint closures and security obstacles.

He stressed the need to improve access to these areas and ensure the continued operation of hospitals and health centers that struggle to provide basic health services.

Peepkorn expressed hope that the ceasefire would facilitate better access to healthcare allowing medical teams to provide support across Gaza and the West Bank.

## Health benefits reported for adult smokers

## US OKs sales of Zyn nicotine pouches

WASHINGTON, Jan 18, (AP): Federal health officials have backed the public health benefits of nicotine pouches, authorizing Philip Morris International's Zyn to help adult smokers cut back or quit cigarettes.

The Food and Drug Administration OK'd 10 Zyn flavors, including coffee, mint and menthol. It's the first time regulators have authorized sales of nicotine pouches, which are the fastest-growing segment of the US tobacco market.

The pouches have been available for more than a decade as FDA reviewed company data intended to show the products can serve as an alternative to cigarettes and other traditional tobacco products. The decision doesn't mean that Zyn is safe, just less harmful than older alternatives.

To remain on the market, companies generally must show that their products will reduce disease among adult

tobacco users without attracting teens and adolescents.

FDA officials said Thursday that Zyn contains fewer harmful ingredients than cigarettes and various types of chewing tobacco, including snuff, which are linked to cancer and other life-threatening diseases. Company data also showed "a substantial portion of adults" who previously smoked switched completely to Zyn, regulators said. The pouches are sold in two different strengths.

"The data show that these nicotine pouch products meet that bar by benefiting adults who use cigarettes or smokeless tobacco products," said Matthew Farrelly of FDA's Center for Tobacco Products.

The FDA has previously granted similar authorization to several brands of e-cigarettes, a tobacco-heating device, and snus, a type of pasteurized tobacco that is popular in Scandina-

vian countries. Unlike snus, Zyn and other nicotine pouches don't contain tobacco, only nicotine and flavoring.

For decades, tobacco companies have tried to develop alternative products to replace dwindling sales of cigarettes, as smoking levels in the U.S. and worldwide continue to fall. E-cigarettes became popular more than a decade ago, but faced a backlash after they triggered a multiyear spike in underage vaping.

In recent months, antismoking groups have warned that nicotine pouches could follow a similar path, pointing to videos of young people popping Zyn and other pouches that have racked up millions of views on social media platforms.

But the FDA pointed to government survey data showing fewer than 2 percent of American high school and middle school students used nicotine pouches last year.

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## Marmoush transfer to Man City imminent

## Dortmund's woes continue with loss to Frankfurt

FRANKFURT, Germany, Jan 18, (AP): Omar Marmoush didn't play though he still made it onto the field to bid what seemed like a farewell as Eintracht Frankfurt beat struggling Borussia Dortmund 2-0.

Frankfurt left Marmoush out of its squad and confirmed he is close to completing a transfer to Manchester City. He will remain out of the team while negotiations continue.

After Frankfurt won the Bundesliga game, Marmoush joined the team on the field to acknowledge the cheers of the home crowd before being swarmed by his teammates.

The Egyptian striker has scored 15 league goals this season, raising questions over whether his departure will derail Frankfurt's bid to qualify for the Champions League.

For now at least, Frankfurt stayed on track, and 10th-placed Dortmund's losing run dragged on, piling pressure on coach Nuri Sahin. He called the team's plight "catastrophic" in comments to broadcaster DAZN, minutes after sporting director Sebastian Kehl said the club would carry on with Sahin as coach.

Marmoush has played most of his breakout season in a two-striker formation with Hugo Ekitike, who scored the opening goal in the 18th minute with a low shot through defender Waldemar Anton's legs to finish off an incisive counterattack.



Frankfurt's Hugo Ekitike, back, challenges Dortmund's Nico Schlotterbeck during the German Bundesliga soccer match between Eintracht Frankfurt and Borussia Dortmund in Frankfurt, Germany. (AP)

Oscar Hojlund made sure of the win in added time, catching Emre Can in possession on the halfway line to start a breakaway that he ended with a low shot past stranded goalkeeper Gregor Kobel.

Frankfurt is third in the Bundesliga, six points off leader Bayern Munich.

Serhou Guirassy hit the post early on and Jamie Gittens had a penalty appeal turned down late in Dortmund's third straight loss to start 2025.

In each of those games, Dortmund struggled to deal with counterattacks and it was the same story on Friday as Sahin's team had 63% possession. Ansgar Knauff, in for Marmoush, could have scored a second goal for Frankfurt when he hit the post.

Dortmund coach Sahin was already under pressure before kickoff after his team - the Champions League runner-up last season - dropped to 11th in the Bundesliga following a shock 4-2 loss on Wednesday to relegation-threatened Holstein Kiel.

Dortmund has won just one of its last eight games in all competitions in a run stretching back nearly two months.

The one bright spot has been solid Champions League form ahead of Dortmund's visit to Italian club Bologna on Tuesday. Dortmund is ninth in the 36-team standings and is a strong contender to be one of the top eight teams who qualify directly for the round of 16 and skip the playoff stage.

## Al-Nemshan wins Air Pistol gold

Sheikh Ali Al-Sabah Shooting Championship concludes

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18, (KUNA): The annual Sheikh Ali Al-Sabah Shooting Championship wrapped up the 2024-2025 season on Saturday, crowning the winners in both the men's and women's categories.

Sheikh Sabah Badr Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor, emphasized the significance of this event in a statement following its conclusion. Organized by the Kuwait Shooting Club, he expressed his support for the competition, highlighting its role in recognizing the achievements of Kuwaiti shooters who have consistently excelled in international tournaments. He also commended the club's dedication in organizing the event at the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Range.

In comments to KUNA, Duajj Al-Otaibi, president of the Kuwait Shooting Club, explained that the competition featured various categories, including the gun, pistol, rifle, and bow and arrow.

The standout performances included Hamad Al-Nemshan, who claimed first place in the air pistol (10 m) division, Abdullah Al-Harbi in the air rifle (10 m), Hassan Al-Failakawi in the pistol shooting (25 m), and Saud Al-Subaiee in the rifle competition (50 m). In the Olympic bow and arrow category, Habes Al-Sehamari took

first place, with Mohammad Madi also securing the top position in the 30 m category. Abdullah Malallah emerged as the champion in the bow and arrow contest.

In the women's competition, Ghezlan Ali won gold in the air pistol (10 m) division, while Mariam Al-Rezouqi triumphed in the air rifle (10 m) event. Nour Al-Sherhan excelled in the Olympic bow and arrow category, and Hessa Mohammad claimed victory in the same event (30 m). Additionally, Hanan Al-Mayyas won gold in the compound bow and arrow category.

For the juniors, Nasser Al-Rabah emerged as the champion in the air rifle (10 m) category, while Rataj Al-Zayadi claimed the top spot in the same event for female athletes.

## Al-Nassr slips to 4th after draw with Al-Taawoun in Saudi league

RIYADH, Jan 18: Al-Nassr continued to drop points, settling for a 1-1 draw against hosts Al-Taawoun at King Abdullah Sports City Stadium in the 15th round of the Saudi Roshn League. This result pushed Al-Nassr down to fourth place with 29 points, while Al-Qadisiyah climbed to third after defeating Al-Wehda 3-0. The gap between Al-Nassr and league leader Al-Hilal widened to 11 points.

Al-Khaleej secured a dominant 3-0 victory over Al-Orouba.

Al-Qadisiyah A comfortable 3-0 win pushed it to third.

Al-Fayha edged Al-Kholood 2-1.

Al-Ittihad showcased attacking prowess to beat Al-Raed 4-1.

Al-Hilal delivered a historic 9-0 win over Al-Fateh, matching its earlier 9-0 triumph over Al-Hazm.

Al-Hilal's emphatic 9-0 vic-



Al-Hilal player celebrates after scoring.

tory over Al-Fateh in Round 15 marked another milestone in the league's history. The match also recorded the highest number of yellow cards (6) and a single red card, emphasizing its intensity.

Round 15 delivered thrilling matches and memorable moments, keeping the competition fierce in the Saudi Roshn League.

## Basel Al-Sabah Club celebrates victories in the Arab Drag Racing

DOHA, Jan 18: The director of Basel Al-Sabah Club for Car and Motorcycle Racing, Saif Al-Mutairi, expressed his pride in the club's racers for securing top positions in the second round of the Arab Drag Race Championship held in Qatar.

Al-Mutairi highlighted that the club's champions consistently achieve leading results in competitions hosted by the Qatar Club for Car and Motorcycle Racing, emphasizing their dedication to representing Kuwait on the international stage.

In the Index 00.9 category, Saleh Al-Misbah clinched first place, followed by Salem Al-Yamani in second. In the Index 50.8 category, Khaled Al-Amiri took the top spot.

For the 50.8 motorcycle racing category, Abdulwahab Bouqmaz secured first place, while Muhammad Ismail finished third.

In the Street Bike category, Fahad Al-Harbi claimed first place, with Mohammed Al-Matrouk taking third. In the Index 80.4 category, Mohammed Al-Farihi emerged as the winner, followed by Abdullah Al-Kandari in second place.

The Index 50.4 category saw Abdullah Al-Yassin finish second, while in the Index 00.4 category, Bader



Saif Al-Mutairi

Khorshid won first place. In the Super Street Bike category, Bader bin Eidan took first place, Yaqout Al-Awad secured second, and Ahmed bin Bilal finished third.

In the Pro Bike category, Mishal Al-Saber earned second place. Turki Al-Dhafiri triumphed in the Super Street Pro category, with Jaber Al-Maghribi taking second. Ali Ibrahim emerged victorious in the Pro NE category, followed by Sayed Al-Haddad in second place.

These impressive achievements underline the skill and determination of the Basel Al-Sabah Club racers, reaffirming their status as a driving force in the Arab drag racing circuit.

## Best of the Rest

**Lille sends Fernandes to Rangers:** French club Lille has loaned defender Rafael Fernandes to Glasgow Rangers until the end of the season.

The 22-year-old Fernandes joined the Ligue 1 club in January last year but didn't see any playing time.

Fernandes, who honed his skills at Sporting Lisbon's youth academy, has represented Portugal at youth levels.

Rangers said it has an option to make the move permanent.

"He will come in to provide competition and cover in the defensive line, with an aim to contribute this season and potentially develop into the future, should the club exercise the option on his loan," Rangers said in Saturday's announcement. (AP)

**FIFA bans Venezuelan official:** FIFA has banned a Venezuelan soccer official from the sport for five years for financial wrongdoing and fined him nearly \$1 million.

Manuel Alvarez was secretary general of the Venezuelan soccer federation when his conduct enabled the "misappropriation and misuse" of its and FIFA's money, soccer's world body said announcing the verdict late Friday.

FIFA's ethics committee had also charged Alvarez with breaching "duty of loyalty" and "general duties" under its code.

FIFA, which makes at least \$2 million available in funding each year to all 211 member federations, gave no details about the financial misconduct. The verdict can be challenged on appeal.

It is unclear how FIFA can enforce payment of the fine if Alvarez does not return to soccer.

Venezuela is the only member of the 10-nation CONMEBOL group of South American federations that has never qualified to play at the men's World Cup. (AP)

**Solskjær appointed Besiktas coach:** Ole Gunnar Solskjær was hired as Beşiktaş coach on Saturday in his first managerial position since being fired by Manchester United more than three years ago.

The Turkish club said Solskjær has been given an 18-month contract, taking the Norwegian through to the end of next season, with the option for a further year.

"We believe Ole Gunnar Solskjær will make significant contributions to our club, and we warmly welcome him to the Beşiktaş family, wishing him great success," Beşiktaş said in a statement.

Beşiktaş, which was playing third-place Samsunspor later on Saturday, is sixth in the Turkish league standings and has been without a coach since Dutchman Giovanni van Bronckhorst was fired in late November. (AP)



Winners of the Sheikh Ali Al-Sabah Shooting Championship with officials.

KUNA photo

## Kluivert scores another hat trick

## Bournemouth ends Newcastle's winning run in Premier League

LONDON, Jan 18, (AP): Justin Kluivert scored his second hat trick of the season in the Premier League to inspire Bournemouth to a 4-1 victory at Newcastle, whose nine-match winning run in all competitions came to an end emphatically on Saturday.

The Dutch midfielder netted in the sixth and 44th minutes, and again in the second-half stoppage time to complete his hat trick at St. James' Park. Milos Kerkez added a fourth goal in the sixth minute of added-on time.

Bruno Guimarães had equalized for Newcastle.

Kluivert also scored three goals against Wolverhampton in November. In that match, all of Kluivert's goals were penalties, but he scored from open play each time against Newcastle.

Six of Newcastle's nine straight victories had come in the league, helping to lift the Saudi-controlled team into the top four in its bid to return to the Champions League.

Newcastle striker Alexander Isak failed to score, having previously netted in eight league games in a row. That left him three games short of Leicester striker Jamie Vardy's record for the longest scoring run in Premier League history.

Bournemouth climbed to sixth place, tied for points with fifth-place Chelsea.

Meanwhile, Everton avoided another points deduction when a complaint brought by the Premier League regarding spending rules was discontinued.

The Merseyside club staved off the threat of relegation last season despite having been docked a total of eight points for breaching the league's spending rules.

The Toffees were hit with a deduction of two points in April for overspending in a three-year period. That

followed a reduction of six points - reduced from 10 following an appeal - for breaching spending limits.

The independent regulatory commission that issued the two-points deduction deferred one part of the case relating to the accounting treatment of interest payments on the club's new stadium. The pause allowed Everton to supply more information about its accounting.

Everton, which has since come

under new ownership following the purchase of the club by the Friedkin Group, said that the matter was closed because the club "has resolved all outstanding profit and sustainability rules (PSR) charges brought by the Premier League."

The league and Everton said in a joint statement that the club will face "no further action" related to the period ending the 2022-23 season.

"After considering the further in-

formation and documents provided by the club in detail, the Premier League Board has concluded that it would not be appropriate or proportionate to continue to pursue the second part of their complaint," the joint statement said. "The club and the league agree that this brings to an end all proceedings between the league and the club in relation to the club's breaches of the PSR for the financial years ending 30 June 2022 and 30 June 2023."



Bournemouth's Illya Zabarnyi, left, and Newcastle United's Alexander Isak, right, challenge for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Newcastle United and AFC Bournemouth in Newcastle upon Tyne, England. (AP)

