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Opinion

Either this is how it is, or the Lebanese must pull out their thorns with their own hands

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

GIVEN the sensitivity of the situation, we must speak clearly. This message is directed to the new Lebanese political leadership, which must be aware not only of the regional changes but also the internal challenges facing Lebanon and the world.

The Lebanese political leadership must understand that the current opportunity for progress will not remain open indefinitely. As it waits for political settlements, Lebanon must learn from the past three

decades of turmoil, which have left the country devastated on many fronts.

Lebanese officials must first realize that Lebanon is no longer the sole tourist destination for Gulf Cooperation Council citizens. In addition to Lebanon's picturesque landscapes, towering mountains, and tourist hotspots, countries like Saudi Arabia and Oman have made great strides in opening up and establishing their own tourist and entertainment facilities. Over the past three decades following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Gulf citizens have discovered many alternative tourist destinations that offer quality services at lower costs than Beirut.

Therefore, betting on this aspect will not serve their interests, and this must be taken into consid-

eration, especially after the last thirty years when Hezbollah ruled Lebanon and caused it to be transformed from a beautiful, thriving country that was known for its literature, art, and beauty into a haven for terrorists and a drug production hub.

The group carried out many operations and crimes targeting both Lebanese citizens and Gulf countries. As a result, Gulf countries have grown wary of investing in or traveling to Lebanon. Also, Gulf countries have imposed strict conditions on Lebanese citizens who wish to visit our countries.

This shift has undoubtedly contributed to the lack of foreign currency entering Lebanon. Rather than appreciating the historical relationship between the GCC countries and Lebanon, the country's leader-

ship began harming Gulf citizens, particularly during the Lebanese banking crisis when deposits from individuals and Gulf governments were confiscated and still remain unpaid. Meanwhile, Hezbollah's illegal banking entity, Al-Qard Al-Hassan, has only deepened its influence and control over the Lebanese economy in line with Iranian interests.

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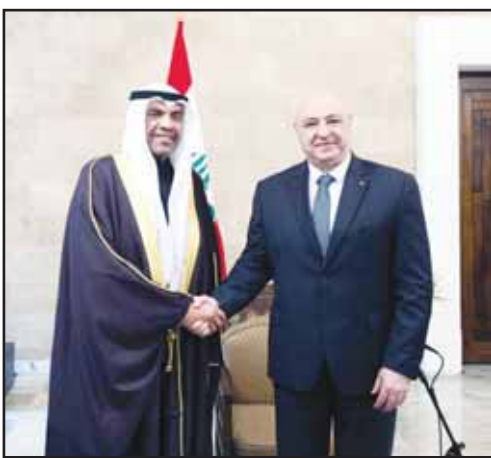
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KUNA photo
Lebanese President Joseph Aoun receives Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya on Friday.

Commitment special

Lebanese president hosts Kuwait's foreign minister

BEIRUT, Jan 25, (KUNA): Lebanese President Joseph Aoun received on Friday Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya.

GCC commitment to support Lebanon and its reformative steps towards a more safe and stable future were discussed during the reception, also attended by GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi.

The visit comes within the framework of GCC States' efforts seeking to boost bonds of unity and collaboration, with Kuwait being current chair of the Gulf Cooperation Council and based on outcomes of the 46th ministerial meeting held in that regard on December 26, 2024 to address current situations in Lebanon and Syria.

Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs and head of GCC ministerial council Abdullah Al-Yahya reaffirmed on Friday the bloc's special commitment to Lebanon's stability.

The trip to the war-torn Arab country comes within the framework of GCC States' efforts seeking to boost bonds of unity and collaboration, Al-Yahya; whose country is heading the current chair of the Gulf Cooperation Council, told a press conference upon concluding a visit to Lebanon, along with GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi and with the presence of Foreign Minister Abdullah Buhabib.

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Cosmetic procedures account for 60% of medical errors in Kuwait

Some cases settled out of court through waivers, study finds

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: According to a legal study, which is the first of its kind, nearly 3,000 cases related to the medical sector were registered in the last three years, with the majority concerning violations in private medical clinics.

Approximately 600 of these cases were related to medical errors, and 60 percent of medical error cases stem from cosmetic surgeries performed in private clinics.

The study, which was prepared by lawyer Hawra Al-Habib, revealed that some medical error cases may not make it to court, as they are often resolved through waivers or agreements.

It explained that medical error cases are difficult to prove, but they are also extremely serious because they involve human lives. In many instances, the damage caused by medical errors cannot be reversed and may lead to severe complications if not discovered and dealt with promptly.

While medical errors occur worldwide and their rates vary from one country to another, they cannot be entirely prevented even with all precautionary measures in place. However, there are certainly ways to reduce their occurrence. In the United States, academic studies indicate that medical errors are the third leading cause of death for patients.

Continued on Page 5

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Amiri Diwan on Friday mourned the passing of Sheikh Fadhel Khaled Al-Salman Al-Sabah at the age of 75.

The funeral service took place at 3:30 pm local time on Saturday. (KUNA)

TEL AVIV: Four female Israeli soldiers who had been held hostage by Hamas returned safely to Israel Saturday after the militants paraded them in front of a crowd of thousands in Gaza City and then handed them over to the Red Cross. In exchange, Israel released 200 Palestinian prisoners as part of the fragile cease-fire in the Gaza Strip.

Israel's Prison Service later said it had completed the release of 200 Palestinians. They included 121 who had been serving life sentences after being convicted of deadly attacks against Israelis. (AP)



KUNA photo
A replica of the Kuwait Towers, illuminated with vibrant lights, stands amidst the dazzling decorations in Subiya, celebrating the Gulf Week event. - See Page 5



8
Gulf Bank renews strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait to support, train, and empower youth



9
Al-Bahar shares career insights with Kuwaiti youth at Tamakan Program



10
Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait wins 'Best Corporate Governance Bank' Award 2024

Jabriya steps into the fast lane as Kuwait roads revival begins

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Ministry of Public Works has initiated a new road maintenance project today, Saturday, as part of its new radical maintenance contracts aimed at improving highway and internal road networks. These contracts include 18 major road maintenance efforts across various regions of the country.

Minister of Public Works, Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, announced the commencement of the radical maintenance works in the Jabriya area, emphasizing the ministry's commitment to continuing road maintenance projects nationwide.

She assured that these projects will adhere to the highest quality standards and international specifications, with the goal of advancing infrastructure development as part of the new contracts signed by the ministry.

Al-Mashaan confirmed that the ministry is dedicated to continuing road maintenance projects across various regions, adhering to the highest quality standards and international specifications to ensure the development of modern infrastructure.

She emphasized that the concerned teams thoroughly assessed the road conditions before starting the maintenance work.

The initial focus will be on the most damaged areas, she said, and explained that the road maintenance projects are a key component of the Ministry's strategic plan to enhance the road network, ensuring a safe and sustainable environment for both citizens and residents, in line with urban development and increasing transportation demands.

The Minister also highlighted the Ministry's commitment to monitoring all stages of the project, from design to execution, ensuring full compliance with technical specifications and international quality standards to achieve optimal road performance.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: In continuation of what was published by the Al-Seyassah daily on Jan 13, 2025, the Central Tenders Committee announced the awarding of the contract for the study, detailed design and preparation of tender documents for the first phase of the railway project by the Turkish global company PROYAPI.

In a statement to KUNA recently, the committee clarified that the first phase of the project involves providing detailed design services and preparing the tender documents for the railway.

The duration for the completion of this initial phase is set at 12 months, after which the execution tender will be issued.

The statement also noted that the planned timeline for the completion of the railway construction is set for 2030.

It added that the length of the railway route connecting Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia spans 111 kilometers, with Kuwait serving as the northern station for the project.

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Committee revokes citizenship of 38 individuals over terrorism, Hezb ties

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Kuwaiti Supreme Committee for Nationality Investigations, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, has decided to strip the citizenship of 38 individuals due to what he called their disloyalty to the nation, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This decision is in accordance with Article 14, Paragraph 3, of the Kuwaiti Nationality Law.

Additionally, the committee revoked the citizenship of 82 individuals who acquired it through fraudulent means, as per Article 21 (repeated A) and the newly added Paragraph 1 of Article 13 in the Nationality Law. Moreover, 3,725 individuals lost their citizenship based on their status as wives of Kuwaiti nationals, according to Article 13, Paragraph 1 and 11 individuals with dual nationality were also affected.

According to Al-Seyassah sources, those stripped of their citizenship include individuals convicted of terrorism-related offenses, specifically those involved in the Black Island case, the Abdali Cell case and the hanging of Hezbollah.

The individuals linked to the Black Island case were sentenced in June

2007, while 11 individuals connected to Hezbollah funding were convicted earlier this month. Additionally, 22 individuals associated with the Abdali Cell, which was convicted in June 2016, also had their citizenship revoked.

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Kuwait moves to unify media law

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Ministry of Information is reviewing the Unified Media Draft Law, in cooperation with the Legal Advice and Legislation Department.

Sources confirmed to the newspaper that the new law aims to cancel all current media laws and unify them into one comprehensive law, which ensures better regulation of the media sector.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait's railway vision moves forward with PROYAPI awarded key design role

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: In continuation of what was published by the Al-Seyassah daily on Jan 13, 2025, the Central Tenders Committee announced the awarding of the contract for the study, detailed design and preparation of tender documents for the first phase of the railway project by the Turkish global company PROYAPI.

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Prayer Timings

Fajr	05:19	Asr	15:00
Sunrise ..	06:41	Maghrib ..	17:20
Zohr	12:00	Isha	18:40

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Mild and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times northerly wind changing to southwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

By Night: Cold and cloudy with

Weather

light to moderate freshening at times northerly wind changing to southwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance for fog forming over some areas.	Kuwait Airport	22	09
	Abdaly	21	07
	Bubyan	19	10
	Jahra	22	11
	Failaka Island	21	14
	Salmiyah	18	15
	Ahmadi	21	11
	Jal Aliyah	20	08
	Nuwaisib	22	10



KUNA photo

Some of the leaders in Kuwaiti government institutions who took part in the workshop.

CSC Tokyo workshop targets boost in leadership expertise

TOKYO, Jan 25, (KUNA): Kuwait's Civil Service Commission (CSC) organized a workshop on leadership in the Japanese capital, Tokyo, with several Kuwaiti officials attending, as part of international cooperation and leadership efficiency promotion.

The workshop, which came in the context of a memo of understanding concluded with Japan International Cooperation Center (JICC), targeted senior leaders at Kuwaiti state institutions, the CSC said in a press release.

The event, held from January 20-24, was mainly meant to upgrade participants' leadership skills through a comprehensive training centered on strategic leadership and data-based decision-making, change management and effective communication promotion, it said.

The workshop also focused on empowering participants to have strategic thinking and

long-term planning and boosting team management skills and stimulating innovation at institutions, according to the CSC release.

The CSC considered the workshop a step towards achieving comprehensive development and promoting institutional innovation by qualifying leaders with the best world practices that contribute to boosting government performance efficiency and buttressing Kuwait's future vision. Acting Charge d'Affaires of the Kuwaiti Embassy in Tokyo Khaled Al-Zeer hosted a luncheon in honor of the Kuwaiti team and Japanese officials participating in the workshop.

KUNA Director-General Dr. Fatma Al-Salem, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Ziyad Al-Najem, Assistant Foreign Minister for GCC Affairs Ambassador Najeeb Al-Bader and Assistant Foreign Minister for Saud Nasser Al-Sabah Kuwait Diplomatic Institute's Affairs Ambassador Nasser Al-Sabeeh.

Owners, occupants warnings discussed

Metro project, abandoned buildings on MC agenda

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Technical Committee of the Municipal Council, chaired by Munira Al-Amir, is set to hold its eighteenth meeting on Tuesday to address several important items on its agenda, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Among the key issues to be discussed is the executive body's response to a question submitted by the Vice-Chairman of the Municipal Council, Khaled Al-Mutairi, regarding the Metro Project.

Additionally, the committee will review a proposed amendment to Table No. 16, which pertains to the requirements and specifications for buildings within the Shuwaikh Free Trade Zone.

This amendment is part of Ministerial Resolution No. 278 of 2021, which organizes construction work in the zone and aims to intro-

duce some proposed new activities.

Another major topic on the agenda is a proposal by member Fahad Al-Abduljader concerning abandoned properties.

The municipality has informed the council chairman about the formation of a committee tasked with inventorying dilapidated and near-collapsing properties, particularly those that negatively affect the general appearance of the area.

The committee will also discuss the procedures for dealing with these properties, including the identification of cases and the appropriate period for restoring or removing the buildings, as

outlined in technical reports.

Moreover, they will evaluate the method for issuing warnings to building owners and occupants in the event of evacuation, as well as the steps to take if owners fail to comply with demolition or restoration requirements.

The committee will consider various options for enforcing compliance, including issuing comprehensive or individual tenders, or contracting out machinery, equipment and labor for demolition and restoration.

Additionally, the possibility of charging building owners for the costs incurred by the municipality in carrying out the work will be examined.

The outcomes of this meeting are expected to have significant implications for urban development, building regulations and property management in Kuwait.



Munira Al-Amir

'Kuwait stands out globally in intensive care discipline'

First-ever 'Critical Care Medicine' confab from Jan 30-Feb 3

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The State of Kuwait will host the 20th Conference of the Arab International Society of Critical Care Medicine from Jan 30 to Feb 3, coinciding with the First Arab Conference of the World Federation of Intensive Care and Critical Care Societies.

Consultant of Internal Medicine and

Intensive Care and Head of the Department of Anesthesia, Intensive Care and Pain Management at Amiri Hospital, and Chairman of the conference Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Fares said the conference includes many workshops and scientific events like the Ninth Conference of the Arab International Society of Critical Care Medicine, 16th Asia and Africa Conference of the World Federation of Intensive Care and Critical Care Societies, 12th Kuwait Conference on Intensive Care, Second Kuwait Conference on Extracorporeal Life Support, and Sixth Regional Meeting on Neuro-critical Care of the

Neurocritical Care Society - Middle East and North Africa (MENA) branch.

Al-Fares pointed out that choosing Kuwait for the first time as a venue for these conferences embodies the prestigious scientific status of the country in the intensive care field, which contributes to the advancement of the health system here.

He said about 150 international and local lecturers will participate; expecting the number of participants in the conference to reach about 1,500 people from various intensive care specializations for children and adults, in addition to surgery, accidents, neurological diseases, extracorporeal life support, intensive care nursing, physiotherapy, clinical pharmacy, nutrition, and speech and swallowing interventions.

Other Voices

Interior Ministry deserves thanks

By Ahmad alsarraf

The Kuwait Football Association issued a circular signed by its Secretary-General, Mr. Saleh Nasser Al-Majroub, which made rounds on the social media, bearing the number 2025/2, addressed to all employees, administrators, coaches and assistant coaches working at the Kuwait Football Association, informing them, after offering them its best regards that it would like to inform them that the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Football Association has decided not to renew their employment contracts when they expire, and that the renewal will be, if any, by a decision from the Board of Directors!

Certainly, we do not wish to dispute this right, and while we acknowledge the linguistic and stylistic errors in the circular -- which should not have been included in a document issued by an entity of both local and international standing -- we believe it would have been more appropriate, at the very least, out of respect, to avoid issuing a general notice to all union employees regarding the termination of their contracts.

The circular, which may have been widely disseminated through communication channels, included unwelcome remarks that could have been avoided. Instead, the Secretary-General should have sent personalized, official letters to each individual within the union, informing them of the Board of Directors' decision.

A circular that mixes both positive and negative messages is not the best approach, as each person holds a unique position, and every employment contract has its own distinct nature and

terms, particularly when it comes to contract termination.

Furthermore, informing employees of contract termination in such an impersonal and harsh manner will leave a bitter impression that won't easily fade, even if the Board later decides to reinstate them.

The Secretary-General should also have emphasized the importance of safeguarding the financial and moral rights of all employees, ensuring fair compensation for contract termination, and protecting their rights during the notice period.

Moreover, considering that some of the individuals involved have made valuable contributions and efforts in their roles, the Secretary-General should have communicated any intentions to honor them, rather than dismissing them in such a disheartening manner.

Lastly, since the Secretary-General is operating on assignment, and perhaps the entire Board of Directors is as well, one may wonder: If a new Board of Directors is appointed, will we see a counter-circular addressing this matter?

The security forces succeeded, in record time, in arresting two expatriates from an African country, who stole large sums of money from an exchange office.

The achievement of Fahad Al-Yousefi men deserves praise, and we demand that they reveal the identity of the citizen who facilitated their entry into the country!

The Ministry of Interior also deserves thanks for its decision to lift the block ban that was imposed, since the liberation, on the entry of certain Arab nationalities into the country.

And thanks for its decision to facilitate family visits. We hope that it will make an effort to prevent some of those who will come during Ramadan, as usual, for the purpose of begging.

□ □ □

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alsarraf



Korean Embassy staff and KOC personnel planting trees at the Abdali Natural Reserve marking the Go Green Kuwait Event.



Korean Embassy and KOC co-host tree planting event

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Embassy of the Republic of Korea and Kuwait Oil Company co-hosted a tree planting event Go Green Kuwait at the KOC's Al-Abdali Nature Reserve today.

Go Green Kuwait is an environmental drive aimed at supporting the Kuwaiti Government's Vision 2035 focusing on expanding green areas through afforestation and developing natural reserves.

In a significant gesture of collaboration,

KOC designated an exclusive tree planting zone for the Korean community within its natural reserve.

The 3rd environmental initiative was attended by South Korean Ambassador Park Chong-suk, Vice President of the Korean Community Association in Kuwait Oh Sung-dae, the Kuwait branch manager of the Korean Peaceful Unification Advisory Council (PUAC) Hyeon Bong-cheol with a number of Korean and KOC volunteers.

The Go Green Kuwait campaign is a testament to a shared commitment to environmental conservation and cross-cultural cooperation.

The ecological drive will show once again that the Korea-Kuwait relations are as strong as the Vachellia tortilis and Rhazaria -- specific tree species capable of thriving in the challenging conditions like Kuwaiti desert, cementing the enduring bonds between Kuwait and South Korea.

Smart fingerprint presence soon for all MoE employees

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education Affairs at the Ministry of Education (MoE) Mansour Al-Dhaifi has commenced the start of receiving new teacher candidates from the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to complete their appointment procedures, reports Al-Anba daily.

Al-Dhaifi said in a letter addressed to the educational districts: As part of ongoing efforts to organize the educational process, prepare for the next academic year (2025/2026) and protect the rights of new appointees; we extend our sincere greetings and appreciation to you.

Please instruct the concerned staff to start receiving candidates from the new teacher category and provide them with medical examination papers. We hope you deal with this as an urgent matter, so we can complete the appointment procedures before a calendar year passes since their graduation.

In a separate context and on the occasion of launching the first phase of the fingerprint attendance system through the smart phone application of the ministry, the Information Systems Department set up an awareness corner in the lobby of the headquarters of the ministry under the supervision of a specialized team from the department to explain the service and respond to the employees' questions.

The Information Systems Department affirmed that this step aims to enhance technical awareness on using the smart application. It also clarified the instructions for using the application, indicating that the smart fingerprint attendance system has been activated for employees at the headquarters and educational districts, and that it will be activated for all employees in the coming months.

In the event of any problem in the system; the employees must access the suggestions and problems service in the application, the department added.

Blood Bank plans intensive blood donation campaign in end of Feb

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: According to health sources, the Blood Bank is preparing to organize an extensive blood donation campaign during the last ten days of February, coinciding with Kuwait's National Day and Liberation Day celebrations.

As part of its emergency preparedness, the Central Blood Bank recently conducted a mock evacuation drill, in line with the emergency plan approved by the Blood Transfusion Services Department.

The drill was part of routine preventive measures to enhance preparedness and ensure the readiness of working teams to deal with any emergencies that could impact the safety of the facility or its workers.

In this regard, Director of the Blood

Transfusion Services Department Dr. Reem Al-Radwan stated that the exercise was carried out in coordination with the Ministry of Interior, represented by the General Directorate of Civil Defense and the General Traffic Department, and the Emergency Medical Services Department of the Ministry of Health.

She affirmed that this reflects the ministry's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of safety and security.

Dr. Al-Radwan explained that the drill was based on the simulation of an emergency evacuation scenario involving a three-storey building. The employees successfully evacuated 379 individuals in just four minutes. The exercise also tested the efficiency of the medical teams and departments in implementing the emergency plan effectively.

MEW working on sustainable supply

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: According to reliable sources from the Ministry of Electricity and Water, the procedures for purchasing energy from external sources have not been completed yet. Once these procedures are finalized, the implementation of independent supplier projects will be considered.

The sources explained that implementing independent supplier projects requires

several years to complete and generate electricity. The ministry is exploring other alternatives for the 2025 and 2026 seasons to ensure safe electricity production and meet demand. Multiple initiatives related to independent suppliers are currently being studied, with mechanisms for their implementation under development. Building any power station, even through independent suppliers or private sector involvement, requires a long time.



KUNA photo

The Japanese governor of Miyagi prefecture praises Kuwait's support after the earthquake and tsunami disasters.

Kuwait aid in quake, tsunami hailed

TOKYO, Jan 25, (KUNA): Governor of Miyagi Prefecture, Yoshihiro Murai, voiced his gratitude and appreciation for the State of Kuwait's aid granted to Japan in the aftermath of the destructive quake and tsunami of March 2011.

This was relayed in a press release issued by Kuwaiti Embassy in Tokyo on the backdrop of Acting Charge d'Affaire Khaled Al-Zeer's participating in the Miyagi Am-

bassador Summit upon an official invite by Governor Murai.

The Kuwaiti donation of about USD 500 million, helped accelerate pace of reconstruction after the calamity, noted Murai before the Summit.

On his part, Counselor Al-Zeer expressed, during his meeting with Murai, deep appreciation for the gracious invite, underlining sturdiness of

Gov't committed to creating sustainable, thriving Kuwait

OVER the past year, Kuwait has made significant strides in its quest for a comprehensive economic and developmental renaissance. Columnist **Sultan Mesaed Al-Jazzaf** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

The country's ongoing reforms reflect an ambitious vision for the future, grounded in sustainability, justice, and equity. These reforms are not just political and economic, but touch on every aspect of governance, aiming to build a stable and prosperous Kuwait for its people.

One of the most notable achievements has been the government's focus on tackling corruption and protecting public funds. Under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, there has been a clear commitment to accountability, transparency, and legal equality.



Sultan Al-Jazzaf

The government has prioritized reforms to improve the administrative performance of state institutions, ensuring that every individual, regardless of their status, is treated equally under the law. This has led to a more politically stable, economically resilient, and secure Kuwait, instilling greater confidence among its citizens.

The fight against corruption has been a top priority, with efforts aimed at bringing those who misappropriated public funds to justice.

The government has also focused on leadership renewal, replacing older figures with younger, more dynamic leaders who are better suited to driving productivity.

Additionally, security system upgrades have been a key part of these efforts, ensuring that the country remains safe and well-governed.

The government's focus on the citizenship issue has also been a crucial step in restoring fairness and justice. With concerns over fraud and the illegal granting of citizenships, efforts to correct legal status and adopt a transparent approach to naturalization are vital.

Likewise, the passing of new traffic laws is a significant reform that will address long-standing issues of accidents and violations, ultimately enhancing public safety.

Amendments to labor and human trafficking laws have also been introduced to strengthen protections for vulnerable groups.

The economic sustainability has been another cornerstone of the government's agenda. Efforts to curb unnecessary spending, rationalize public finances, and focus on strategic development projects demonstrate a long-term vision for fiscal health.

By promoting sound financial policies and streamlining expenditures, the government is paving the way for a more financially stable future.

In terms of economic reforms, the introduction of laws to improve the business environment has been key. The Tenders Law, in particular, has removed significant barriers to development by making the tender process more transparent and efficient.

Other laws, such as those regulating real estate and imposing taxes on multinational companies, aim to diversify Kuwait's sources of income and increase government revenue.

The establishment of the Southern Economic Zone and various other housing and energy projects are essential to long-term growth. With strengthened controls over cooperative societies and accelerated completion of stalled projects, the government is laying the groundwork for a thriving, diversified economy.

These reforms are not only about economic development but also about building stronger international relationships.

Kuwait is working to enhance its economic ties within the region and globally, ensuring that its position as a key player in the Gulf continues to grow.

Ultimately, these sweeping changes represent Kuwait's vision for a new and prosperous future. By emphasizing integrity, justice, and balanced development, the country is positioning itself to become a leading force in the region, ensuring stability and prosperity for its people.

The efforts of the government reflect a clear commitment to creating a sustainable, thriving Kuwait that will benefit future generations.

Also:

One of my acquaintances who visits the Diwanias regularly asked me about the duration of the mid-year break. I told him that teachers get just two weeks off, but if you're asking about the students' break, it's much longer. Columnist **Mohammad Al-Owaisi** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

For primary school students, their break started on December 15, 2024, and lasts until Sunday, February 2, 2025.

As for middle school students and those in the 10th and 11th grades, their break began on Thursday, December 26, 2024. That means primary school students get a break of a month and a half, while middle school and 10th-11th grade students get about a month and a week!

Another regular at the Diwaniya asked about the actual number of

school days in public and private schools in Kuwait. One person responded, saying: "I have children studying at an American private school, and the actual school days are 180."

In contrast, the actual school days in public schools range between 130 and 140 days annually. In advanced countries like Japan, the minimum number of school days per year is 210, compared to just 180 days in the United States.

This raises a valid question: Why doesn't the Ministry of Education reduce the students' mid-year break to just two weeks, like the teachers, and increase the actual number of school days instead of having such a long break, which negatively impacts their academic progress?

This is a call for attention to those who are in charge.

Note: A parent called me to inquire about the start of school, and when I told him that school resumes on Sunday, February 2, 2025, he was surprised by the length of the students' holiday -- a month and a half! He said, "Back in our days, the break was only two weeks" which further supports the earlier suggestion.

I address this speech to Iran, the Houthis and Hamas, advising them, enough... enough. In our Arab region, you have enormous potential for development and growth, as well as improving the conditions of your people. Do not tell me that the reasons for our backwardness are colonialism and the interference of foreign powers. No, but I am certain that the reason is the incompetence of officials, especially the finance ministers in certain countries. They do not think deeply. **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Let us take Iran, for example. We are surprised that there is no seasoned finance minister there, who stands up to the government to advise it and say: Enough. If the government has wisdom and insight, it would not have missed many opportunities.

Yes, it missed opportunities, because Iran, could have abandoned the backward medieval ideas, not interfered in the affairs of Arabs, but rather worked on developing and advancing the country. How?

It is better for it to open a new page with the world, and welcome investments -- Gulf, European and American. In this manner, it develops and becomes a successful, advanced country that is pointed out with the finger, not a country that imposes harsh rulings on its people from time to time, and interferes in the affairs of Arab countries. The power today is the power of the economy, as manifested in the progress of South Korea and the backwardness of its northern neighbor.

Let us learn from the events of history. Denmark and Sweden entered into wars. When the countries were destroyed, each of them saw that their interest lies in opening a new page with the other, reconciling and abandoning hateful differences, so they became advanced countries.

We say this not out of love for Iran, but to stop its evil from us.

As for the Houthis' ideas, they are foolish. They destroyed their country,

Yemen. It is known that they are a rebel group that exploited the so-called Arab Spring, took up arms against the government, and overthrew the legitimate government, which moved to Aden. Their group occupied about a third of Yemen's

area, helped by Iran with weapons. They did not ask Iran to stop its hands from their destroyed country, but they continued to ask them for weapons. Then, they opened fire on ships passing through Bab al-Mandab, heading towards the Suez Canal, causing Egypt to incur huge financial losses.

Many ships abandoned the idea of crossing the Red Sea, and headed towards the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa in order to sail north, going towards Europe and elsewhere.

Their argument is that Israeli ships deserve to be bombed because Israel is bombing Gaza. Oh Houthis, think deeply, enough, stop, negotiate with the legitimate government in Aden.

Amazingly, the Creator praised you in the Quran in Surat Saba.

Yemen is rich in natural resources, so work on developing your country. For 60 years, you have been in one coup after another; that is, after overthrowing the monarchy.

You, leaders of Hamas, when the ceasefire agreement between you and Israel began on Jan 19, which will go through three stages, the first stage began with the release of hostages from both sides, and masked gunmen from you set out carrying weapons and cheering as if they achieved victory. You destroyed the Gaza Strip and caused the death of tens of thousands, and those who lived from its being residents returned to see their homes destroyed, amidst hunger, poverty and nakedness. So what kind of victory you are bragging about?

When, this agreement with Israel is fragile. It will fail according to the testimony of political analysts.

-- Compiled by PFX Fernandes / Mahmoud Attiyeh



Kuwait Fire Force boat out in the sea looking for the missing citizen following the collision. KFF photo

KFF continues search for missing citizen

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) has reported ongoing search efforts to locate a missing Kuwaiti citizen following a boat collision off the coast of Ras Al-Ard, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The incident, which occurred on Thursday evening, prompted an immediate response from firefighting

teams and marine rescue units, in collaboration with the Coast Guard Department.

The authorities have confirmed that a marine survey operation has been underway since the report was received. Specialized teams from both the fire and marine rescue centers are working 24/7 to find the

missing man. This coordinated effort underscores the commitment of Kuwait's emergency services to ensuring public safety and responding swiftly to maritime accidents.

The Kuwait Fire Force has assured the public that all necessary resources are being utilized to find the missing person as soon as possible.

Coast Guard, KOTC ink MoU to enhance maritime cooperation

Training courses, seminars to boost expertise

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The General Administration of Coast Guard and the Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen their cooperation in maritime transport and marine environmental protection, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The signing ceremony was attended by

Brigadier General Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, Director-General of the Coast Guard, and Sheikh Khaled Al-Sabah, Acting CEO of the Kuwait Oil Tanker Company.

The MoU outlines various key areas of collaboration, including the exchange of scientific research, reports, statistics, and technical expertise in maritime transport.

Both parties will also work together to organize training courses, seminars, and workshops to enhance national competencies.

The agreement further emphasizes mutual support in regional and international forums and the establishment of a joint committee

to ensure the effective implementation of the MoU.

Legal researcher vacancy: The Public Prosecution has announced that oral tests and personal interviews will be conducted for applicants seeking the position of Junior Legal Researcher, a role that qualifies them to work as a Public Prosecutor (Grade C), reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The Public Prosecution clarified, via its account on the WhatsApp platform, that notifications regarding this process will be sent through the government unified service application, Sahel.

Traffic Dept: Do not drive ATVs on main highways

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The General Traffic Department has warned ATV (all-terrain-vehicle) riders against using highways because of the danger it poses to both the riders and other road users, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The use of these vehicles has been linked to traffic accidents. A video shared by the General Traffic Department on its X platform showed several of these vehicles being seized and taken to the impound garage belonging to the Ministry of Interior.

The department also stated that an extensive campaign was carried out in the Bneid Al-Gar area, during which 18 ATVs were seized. Two minors were arrested for driving without a license and were referred to the Juvenile Prosecution.

This is in addition to issuing 21 traffic violations.

Expat commits suicide: An expatriate, in his 30s, committed suicide by hanging inside the house in Fintas where he worked, reports **Al-Anba** daily. A security source

said a citizen informed the authorities that the expatriate, who worked as a house driver committed suicide. When the emergency medical personnel arrived, they found that the expatriate had passed away.

The Forensic Medicine Department was notified and the body was removed from the house.

The expatriate's mobile phone continued ringing even after his death and while the security personnel were dealing with the matter, a hint that the suicide was due to family problems.



A National Guard member is awarded a certificate after the conclusion of the course. KFF photo

KFF ends search & rescue course for National Guard

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) concluded the basic search and rescue training course for National Guard members on Thursday morning.

According to a press release issued by KFF, the course was aimed at training participants on how to deal with fire incidents in confined spaces, and accidents at heights, as well as supporting collapsed buildings and using rope techniques. It included both theoretical and practical training, and the use of the latest equipment to enhance the readiness and capabilities of personnel in responding to these kinds of emergencies.

One hurt in fire: Firefighting teams from Farwaniya and Subhan fire stations extinguished a fire that broke out in an apartment in Khaitan, which resulted in burns and injuries to an individual.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), the teams managed to bring the situation under control before the fire spread to nearby apartments. The site was then handed over to the relevant authorities for necessary action.

17 juniors caught driving

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Jahra traffic police launched an extensive traffic campaign last weekend on Subiya Road, Abdali Farms, and Saad Al-Abdullah, which resulted in the arrest of 17 juveniles caught driving without a license, who were subsequently referred to the Juvenile Prosecution, and the issuance of 1,266 traffic tickets.

The campaign was also aimed at apprehending reckless drivers and lawbreakers, and it resulted in the arrest of 17 such drivers, the seizure of 21 motorcycles, and the confiscation of a wanted vehicle.

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Agreement set to revolutionize Kuwait's healthcare education by 2026

Abdullah Al-Salem University and MoH sign deal to establish 'College of Medicine and Health Sciences'

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: In a significant move to bolster Kuwait's academic and healthcare sectors, Abdullah Al-Salem University and the Ministry of Health signed an agreement to establish the College of Medicine and Health Sciences, set to commence operations in the 2026-2027 academic year.

The agreement was signed in the presence of prominent figures, including Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal and the Chairman of the University's Founding Board Dr. Moudi Al-Hamoud.

Minister Al-Awadhi hailed the initiative as a pioneering step that will serve Kuwaiti students pursuing medicine and provide them with cutting-edge training opportunities. He emphasized the agreement's goal to foster integration between the academic and health sectors by utilizing available facilities, services and expertise.

This includes access to medical facilities for harnessing state-of-the-art resources for practical training; strengthening scientific and research cooperation and exchanging expertise and resources to enhance healthcare



Part of the attendance of the signing of the cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Health and Abdullah Al-Salem University.

education. Dr. Al-Awadhi highlighted the Ministry's commitment to supporting the establishment of this academic institution, which aligns with

Kuwait's broader national development goals.

Dr. Nader Al-Jalal, representing Higher Education, remarked that the

agreement serves as a foundational milestone, enhancing collaboration to meet Kuwait's development objectives.

He reiterated the Ministry of Higher Education's full support for Abdullah Al-Salem University in advancing its educational initiatives.

Dr. Moudi Al-Hamoud, Chair of the University's Founding Board, lauded the agreement as a critical step in improving the quality of medical education and fostering innovation.

She emphasized the university's commitment to youth development, stating that the college's establishment reflects the country's strategic focus on preparing future generations to lead Kuwait's progress.

The College of Medicine and Health Sciences aims to encourage cutting-edge research and innovation in healthcare prepare students with the skills and knowledge needed to meet modern medical challenges and align academic efforts with Kuwait's vision for sustainable growth and improved healthcare services. The partnership between Abdullah Al-Salem University and the Ministry of Health signals a transformative step for Kuwait's education and healthcare sectors.

By fostering collaboration, investing in human capital and prioritizing research, the College of Medicine and Health Sciences is set to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of medical education and healthcare excellence in the country.

Process in effect

Scholarship doctors' promotion simplified

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: To ease the process of promoting doctors on scholarship, the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi issued a ministerial decision for allowing doctors who have earned the required qualifications to be promoted without having to return to Kuwait, as long as they continue their postgraduate studies in the country of scholarship.

The decision facilitates the promotion process for Kuwaiti doctors on ministry scholarships who have completed the necessary qualifications and wish to be promoted to the position of First Registrar.

These doctors must submit a certificate from their university confirming their completion of the required qualifications, with the certificate also attested by the Kuwaiti embassy in the country where they are studying.

Dr. Al-Awadhi outlined the procedural mechanism for submitting the request, which, after review and verification, will be forwarded to the ministry's undersecretary for approval, thus eliminating the need for the doctor to return to Kuwait or appear before technical committees.

MoH suspends purchase requests for budget review

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Ministry of Health will stop receiving purchase requests directed to the Procurement Department and the General Warehouses Department, starting from Jan 25, 2025 until the end of the fiscal year on March 31, 2025, reports Al-Anba daily.

The decision affirmed that this move is based on the rules for implementing the budget of government agencies; which stipulate the necessity of preventing government agencies from being involved in urgent work, services

or purchases during the last months of the fiscal year without a comprehensive study, with the aim of exhausting the remaining balances of the budget. The decision is also based on Cabinet Resolution Nos. 17/1987 and 9/1988.

The decision explained this procedure aims to ensure that requests submitted by central departments and health districts are processed properly, adhere to the systems in place, complete the settlement of current transactions and submit the final account on time. The ministry

requested all sectors, including the assistant undersecretaries, directors of health districts and central departments, to comply with the decision and not send any new purchase requests during the specified period.

This decision is within the framework of the ministry's keenness to enhance financial transparency and regulate spending in line with regulations and laws, and to ensure the efficient use of financial resources in order to achieve its goals.

Council set to debate critical 'urban' issues

Cultural initiatives on docket

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Municipal Council, led by Abdullah Al-Mahri, will convene its 11th regular session for the third legislative term on Monday, following the mid-year break.

The council will tackle a packed agenda, including the objections raised by Minister of State for Municipal and Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mis-hari regarding certain items from the council meetings held on Nov 25, 2024 and Dec 23, 2024 as follows:

- The council's approval of the project to organize and divide the remaining property under Document No. 1068 dated Feb 9, 2014. This property includes Plots No. 3 and 121 with areas of 3,991 square meters and 50 square meters respectively; located in Shaab, Block 8 and owned by Sheikh Hamad Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. The project aims to divide the land according to the established system for construction and permitting within investment housing areas, after deducting the State's share and completing the necessary administrative procedures as outlined in the owners' submitted schedule.

- The council's decision to approve the proposal of member Nasser Al-Jadaan proposal to change the decision that the council took on Jan 1, 2002 to accept the request of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor to allocate a site measuring 1,600 square meters for the establishment of the Kuwait Accountants and Auditors Association headquarters within Plot No. 54 in the Salmiya neighborhood, East of Hawalli, as long as it includes a vocational training institute for additional study.

- Approval of the final amendments to Table No. 6 detailing the requirements and specifications for agricultural and livestock

development areas attached to the building works regulation for further study.

- Approval of the letter submitted by the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) regarding the request to include the eastern side setback of Plot No. 2A in Plot No. 1 located in Sulaibiya.

- Initial approval of the request submitted by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) regarding the Jableh Cultural Project and coordination with the Kuwait Municipality's executive body and all concerned parties prior to the implementation of the project for further study.

- Non-approval of the letter of the director general of the Municipality regarding the Injaz Market project to address the negatives that were revealed during the implementation of the bidding work. He expressed his opinion to approve the amendment of the council's decision taken on Aug 21, 2017 amended by its decision taken on Aug 11, 2021 and specifying a percentage of not less than 25 percent of the shops located in the Injaz Market project for small and medium enterprises, while the rest of the shops located in the project will be according to supply and demand as per the uses established in the region and for the project according to what was stated in the study submitted by the executive.

Other items in the agenda include the executive body's responses to the questions of member Nasser Al-Jadaan about private schools in Salwa; Abdullah Al-Hedhal Al-Enezi's questions about the location of the tree belt planned around Mutla's residential city and the site of the old car scrapyard; Al-Enezi's request for clarifications regarding the locations of army camps affiliated with the Ministry of Defense in the area between Saad Al-Abdullah City and the Jahra residential area; Dr. Hassan Kamal's questions about the decision to periodically inspect parking lots in investment and commercial buildings and about delaying the heritage village project in the capital; Walid Al-Dagher's questions regarding communication towers, the use of State-owned land for commercial parking services and auction contracts with the Municipality; question of Munira Al-Ameera regarding the timetable for activating the decisions to approve her proposal regarding the city cleanliness; and her proposal to issue a regulation organizing the procedures for allocating land in the country.



Al-Mahri

Employers must meet standards

PAM launches housing compliance drive

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has launched an awareness campaign aimed at ensuring that employers adhere to safety requirements in workers' housing; thereby, maintaining a suitable work environment and protecting employers from potential legal accountability, reports Al-Anba daily.

The campaign emphasized the importance of complying with the conditions specified in the decision on workers' housing; particularly for employers involved in government projects, those with workers assigned in remote areas and those required to provide housing for their workers.

The campaign stressed the need for employers to provide appropriate housing for workers. If housing is not provided, employers are required to pay a housing allowance in accordance with the regulations -- 25 percent of the worker's wage if it meets the minimum wage and 15 percent if the wage exceeds the minimum.

To ensure compliance, PAM has made it easier for business owners to access housing information through the Easel service on its electronic platform. This service allows employers to check the status of workers' housing, review

data registered in their company file, and guarantee that housing conditions meet the requirements. Employers can inquire about the housing registered for workers, including details on housing units and the number of workers each unit can accommodate.

Following are the steps for registration and inquiry:

1. Log in to the Easel Companies portal.
2. Select Inquire about Workers' Housing from the workers' housing services list.
3. Use the building name or automatic building number to search, and press the Search button.
4. A list of all registered and active buildings will appear.
5. By selecting the Details button, information about the housing units and the number of workers each unit can accommodate will be displayed.

PAM also offers other services like updating workers' housing records, adding new housing units, and canceling housing registrations.

This initiative ensures that employers comply with the regulations, and that workers are provided with safe and adequate housing.



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80 bright talents participate

SACGC hosts GCC's brightest mind at Gulf Forum for Gifted Students

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25, (KUNA): Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC) would launch the second Gulf Forum for Gifted Students on Sunday, with the participation of 80 students from the tenth and twelfth grades and 20 supervisors from the GCC countries.

Director General of SACGC Neda Al-Daihani said, in a press statement on Saturday, that the forum would represent Kuwait's efforts in supporting talents and developing the capabilities of Gulf youth, stressing the center's keenness to continue the success achieved in last year's edition and achieve scientific, cultural, and social goals.

Al-Daihani explained that this year's edition would witness participation from the United Arab Emirates represented by delegations from (Rubu Qam Foundation), (Hamdan Bin Rashid Center for Giftedness and Innova-



Al-Daihani

tion), and (Emirates Institutional Education Foundation). Delegations from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain, as well as talented students from (Sabah Al-Ahmad Center) would also participate in the forum, in the presence of supervisors from government agencies and similar talent centers in GCC countries.

The programs would be held at the Joint Talent Academy affiliated with the center, and would include workshops, training programs, and scientific and recreational trips to the most prominent landmarks in Kuwait.

The trips would include Ahmed Al-Jaber Oil and Gas Exhibition affiliated with Kuwait Oil Company, in addition to field visits to Al-Makshat project in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center.

The closing ceremony of the second Gulf Forum for Gifted Students is scheduled to be held on the 30th of January at the Talent Academy under the patronage and attendance of the Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei.

Continued from Page 3

Either this

That is why the speech delivered by Gulf foreign ministers for the new era was clear: If you do not help yourselves, no one will help you.

Anyone who believes that time will solve the problem of forming a government is mistaken. The current opportunity will not repeat itself. Therefore, as the popular saying goes, the Lebanese must pull out their thorns with their own hands. There will be no reconstruction or return of Lebanon to the Arab and international fold as long as there is a group that uses its weapons to strengthen itself against other political forces and Arab countries.

The major regional changes, especially the dramatic changes in Syria and the weakening of Hezbollah, as well as the defeat suffered by Hamas in Gaza and other events in recent months, should push the Lebanese political leadership to act wisely, particularly when it comes to forming a government with major tasks ahead.

From this perspective, when the defeated group sets conditions on the majority of the Lebanese, such as monopolizing the position of Minister of Finance or other positions based on partisan quotas, it is not working to facilitate the new era. On the contrary, Hezbollah is actively obstructing progress, as it has done since 1992 when it first gained power and established a system governed by three heads or the triad as referred to by the Lebanese, relying on possessing excessive power through the use of weapons. Hezbollah has repeatedly proven that its weapons are used not for the defense of Lebanon, but for the destruction of the country.

Perhaps some may view this as interference in Lebanon's internal affairs. However, it is clear to all that the Gulf states' concerns about Lebanon are driven first by their deep love for the country, and second, by the understanding that the stability of any Arab country contributes to the stability of the entire region. It is time for Lebanon to find peace after half a century of suffering, especially as we are just three months away from the 50th anniversary of the Lebanese civil war.

These facts must be at the forefront of the minds of Lebanese leaders, particularly as the world seeks rational solutions. The U.S. President Donald Trump has been clear in his intention to end wars, especially in the Middle East. This does not, however, mean allowing Iran to act unchecked. Let us not forget that Tehran has experience with this man.

Therefore, moving away from the quota system in Lebanon has become a necessity. For 32 years, this system failed to solve any problems, and it instead only deepened the destruction, and allowed one party to act according to Iranian interests rather than the will of the Lebanese people.

This is the reality that should be in the minds of President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister-designate Nawaf Salam. We say this as advice, and not as interference in Lebanon's affairs.

Cosmetic

The study highlighted that penalties for medical errors are typically disciplinary and may include fines or imprisonment, particularly if the error is proven to be the result of intent, negligence, or inadequate care, especially after a procedure, or in cases of incorrect treatment or misdiagnosis. Misdiagnosis, in particular, has been emphasized by the Kuwaiti judiciary as a form of medical error.

Al-Habib explained in her study that there have been cases where individuals were initially diagnosed with malignant diseases. After further examinations and a deterioration in their psychological condition, it became clear that the diagnosis was incorrect and they were not suffering from any illness.

In addition, some patients traveled abroad for treatment based on diagnoses made in government or private hospitals in Kuwait. Upon re-evaluation, it was revealed that the initial diagnoses were entirely wrong, and these patients were found to be suffering from different conditions that did not warrant surgery. Such misdiagnoses should result in compensation.

However, the study also highlighted that in some instances, doctors were not negligent and made every effort, but the outcomes were unsatisfactory to the patient.

Al-Habib went on to explain that proving medical error requires a specialist in research, as it involves long periods of time, correspondence, and

investigation committees, which often take longer to conclude.

It is nearly impossible for any doctor to voluntarily admit to making a medical error, as doing so could result in blame, punishment, a trial, or even suspension from practicing medicine. Therefore, rather than admitting fault, doctors may attempt to remedy the error privately, hoping that the situation improves before informing the patient.

Most rulings issued by the judiciary, if they result in proving harm, generally lead to financial compensation for the patient rather than imprisonment. Imprisonment requires evidence of intentional wrongdoing or clear negligence that leads to the patient's death.

The Kuwaiti judiciary protects the patient, ensuring appropriate compensation when harm occurs. The articles of the relevant law guarantee the protection of the patient's rights, and also sometimes offer the treating physician some leeway. There have been many cases where the final judgment has been financial compensation rather than punitive action.

Al-Habib concluded that the causes of medical errors are many and varied, with the most prominent being infections acquired after surgery, delayed diagnosis despite follow-ups, and incorrect diagnoses, as well as insufficient follow-up after treatment and incorrect medical prescriptions.

In addition, some doctors believe that many errors are caused by the patient's own actions, such as failing to follow medical instructions or guidelines, or being negligent in adhering to prescribed care.

Lebanese president

Reiterating solidarity with Lebanon, the Kuwaiti top diplomat conveyed greeting of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to President Joseph Aoun.

Earlier, Al-Yahya and Al-Budaiwi met with Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, caretaker premier Najib Mikati and premier-designate Nawaf Salam. The GCC sees a historic opportunity for Lebanon to pursue political and economic reforms that would help the country overcome current crises and contribute to regaining decent living for its people.

Al-Yahya stressed the importance of implementing all relevant UN Security Council resolutions; most significant of which 1701 and the Taif Agreement in order to restore permanent stability within Lebanon's sovereignty and internationally recognized borders. He also emphasized the role of the Lebanese armed and security forces in this regard.

Meanwhile, Abuhabib expressed deepest appreciation to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, government and people for their everlasting and supportive stance with Lebanon.

On his part, Al-Budaiwi stressed the bloc's unwavering rejection of Israeli occupation repeated attacks on Lebanon, calling for a full withdrawal from all its lands.

He saw that future reforms promised by President Aoun as the right path for Lebanon's recovery.

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) reaffirmed on Friday its commitment to continue supporting the government of Lebanon in providing quality and inclusive education to all children in the country.

UNICEF Representative in Lebanon Akhil Iyer said, in a press statement on the International Day of Education, that due to the war, the beginning of the 2024-2025 scholastic year was challenging for children, parents and caregivers, teachers and schools.

He said the UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's (MEHE) emergency response to prevent a lost school year by quickly resuming learning when it was safe and practical.

This was not only essential for children's learning and development but also provided them with much needed social and emotional stability, he added.

Iyer urged the government of Lebanon to continue to place education at the top of the political agenda with a commitment to equitable and efficient domestic public financing to ensure that every child can access quality, safe and inclusive education.

He said that progress has been made in the education sector in recent years through Transition and Resilience

Education Fund (TREF), pointing out that there remains a severe education and learning crisis in Lebanon with many children far behind their peers in the region.

He pointed out that the number of out of school children has significantly increased since 2019, with 1 in 3 children of all school aged children in Lebanon now estimated to be out of school or out of learning.

The UNICEF Representative praised their strong partnership with the government to support education in Lebanon, expressing his hope to continue the collaboration to accelerate the reforms initiated by MEHE to build a quality, inclusive, and efficient education system.

Since the establishment of the TREF, UNICEF, with the generous support of international partners, has been allocating over USD 85 million annually to support MEHE programs on education and accelerate progress to improve performance of the education system.

Committee revokes

The Black Island case dates back to 2005, when events first unfolded in the Hawalli area before spreading to other regions, including Salmiya, Umm Al-Hayman and Mubarak Al-Kabir. The case resulted in the deaths of some extremists, the surrender of others and the martyrdom of several security personnel and citizens.

The Court of Cassation had sentenced six defendants to life imprisonment, overturning the death sentences for four of the accused, as decided by the court under the leadership of Judge Ahmad Al-Ajeel.

The charges against the defendants included committing crimes punishable by death or life imprisonment, such as killing friendly foreign forces stationed in Kuwait, destroying state facilities, assassinating members of the State Security Agency and possessing explosives, firearms and ammunition without authorization.

Regarding the individuals convicted in the Abdali Cell case, the Court of Cassation convicted 23 Kuwaiti nationals, one of whom had their nationality revoked earlier.

The charges included espionage for Iran, joining a group with the intent to undermine Kuwait's government and social order and acquiring and storing large quantities of weapons, ammunition and explosives, all of which posed a threat to national security.

In the case involving Hezbollah funding, the Court of Cassation convicted 13 individuals, including 11 Kuwaiti citizens, for belonging to a banned group and illegally funding the organization.

The court sentenced them to three years in prison with hard labor and imposed a fine of 27 million dinars. Two Iranian nationals were also ordered to be deported following the completion of their sentences.

Kuwait moves

They indicated that the Legal Advice and Legislation Department will study the draft law to come up with an appropriate legal form in preparation for the completion of the new law.

Sources said the ministry will address the concerned government agencies with the approval of the Legal Advice and Legislation Department to ensure that there is no duplication or conflict between the Unified Media Law and other laws, such as the laws of the Ministry of Commerce.

Sources disclosed that the new law will simplify procedures, as it stipulates that failure to respond to a license request within a maximum period of one month will be considered automatic approval of the request; thereby, reflecting the ministry's orientation towards simplifying administrative procedures.

Sources added this step is part of the ministry's efforts to develop the legislative framework in line with technical and media developments, while committing to preserving societal values and applicable laws.

Kuwait's railway

The passenger station will be located in the Al-Shaddadiya area, covering an area of two million square meters.

It is worth mentioning that the Gulf Railway route will start from Kuwait and connect directly to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, passing through the other Gulf countries.

Gulf Week reflects cultural bonds among GCC nations



Minister of Information, representatives of GCC embassies and Kuwaiti officials during the Gulf Week event.

Al-Mutairi highlights shared heritage and unity

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25, (KUNA): Minister of Information and Culture, Minister of State for Youth Affairs, and Chairman of the Permanent Committee for Celebrating National Holidays and Occasions, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, stressed that holding the Gulf Week as part of the 'Shining City' activities in Subiya reflects the commitment to strengthening fraternal ties between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and celebrating the common cultural heritage that unites our peoples.

Minister Al-Mutairi told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) during the opening ceremony of Gulf Week on Friday that this event, held under the auspices of the Permanent Committee for National Holidays and Occasions, highlights Gulf unity through art and heritage.

He pointed out that the participation of representatives from the embassies of the GCC countries in this celebration confirms this fraternal bond and a shared commitment to strengthening these strong relations, especially in the cultural field. The participation of a distinguished folk show band from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia confirms this cohesion and demonstrates the strength of cultural relations between our countries.

Minister Al-Mutairi emphasized that such events are not merely celebrations but rather a message reflecting the depth of our Gulf identity and our common aspirations for the future.

He expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Permanent Committee for National Holidays and Occasions and to all those who contributed to orga-



Minister of Information during a tour of the Shining City.



Part of the performances of the Al-Jafr Troupe for Saudi Folk Arts.

nizing this event, which embodies the spirit of pride and honor in Kuwait and its Gulf identity.

The ceremony was attended by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information, Dr. Nasser Muhaisen; the Secretary-General of the National

Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, Dr. Mohammed Al-Jassar; a number of officials from the Ministry of Information; and a group of citizens and residents. The Saudi Al-Jafr Folk Arts Band also presented distinguished songs from the Gulf heritage.

Book wedding halls via 'Sahel' app

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Khaled Al-Ajmi, revealed that the booking process for wedding halls and community development cent-

ers will soon be managed through the 'Sahel' application, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, Al-Ajmi also mentioned that supervisory

positions in the Community Development Department will be filled shortly and highlighted that the ministry has registered 45 volunteer teams to date.

JOINT OPERATIONS
WAFRA

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

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

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Blanket Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from 26 January 2025 up to 24 February 2025 for a non-refundable fee mentioned against tender.

Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057. Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

The closing date for the following Tender will be on **Thursday, 4 March 2025 @ 09:00 AM.**

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	CONTRACT PERIOD	FEES (IN KD)
1	BPT # 261 / 24	BLANKET PURCHASE TENDER FOR HVAC-MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS	3 YRS	35
2	BPT # 268 / 25	BLANKET PURCHASE TENDER FOR HVAC-M/S CARRIER CORPORATION ITEMS	3 YRS	15
3	BPT # 269 / 25	BLANKET PURCHASE TENDER FOR HVAC-M/S PETRA ITEMS	3 YRS	5
4	BPT # 270 / 25	BLANKET PURCHASE TENDER FOR HVAC-M/S TRANE ITEMS	3 YRS	15
5	BPT # 271 / 25	BLANKET PURCHASE TENDER FOR HVAC-M/S SHARJAH & KWT, HASAWI, SKM, AUTOMATED LOGIC ITEMS	3 YRS	5
6	BPT # 272 / 25	BLANKET PURCHASE TENDER FOR M/S NEPTUNE ITEMS	3 YRS	5

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

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INTERNATIONAL



Pete Hegseth, US President-elect Donald Trump's choice to be defense secretary, gives a thumbs up while leaving after his Senate Armed Services Committee confirmation hearing, at the Capitol in Washington on Jan 14. (AP)

Hegseth confirmed as defense secretary in tie-breaking vote

WASHINGTON, Jan 25, (AP) — The Senate confirmed Pete Hegseth as the nation's defense secretary late Friday in a dramatic tie-breaking vote, swatting back questions about his qualifications to lead the Pentagon amid allegations of heavy drinking and aggressive behavior toward women.

Rarely has a Cabinet nominee faced such wide-ranging concerns about his experience and behavior as Hegseth, particularly for such a high-profile role atop the U.S. military. But the Republican-led Senate was determined to confirm Hegseth, a former Fox News host and combat veteran who has vowed to bring a warrior culture, crowding out President Donald Trump's top national security Cabinet officials.

Vice President JD Vance arrived to break the 50-50 tie, highly unusual for Cabinet nominees and particularly defense secretaries, who typically win wider bipartisan support. Hegseth himself was at the Capitol with his family.

"We have a great secretary of defense and we're very happy," Trump said as he boarded Air Force One after surveying the devastation in California.

Trump said he didn't care about the dissent from Sen Mitch McConnell, the influential former Republican leader who joined two other Republicans, Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, in voting against Hegseth — because the important thing is winning.

We're going to need your support: Newsom

Trump proposes 'getting rid of FEMA' while touring disaster areas

LOS ANGELES, Jan 25, (AP) — US President Donald Trump surveyed disaster zones in California and North Carolina on Friday and said he was considering getting rid of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, offering the latest sign of how he is weighing sweeping changes to the nation's central organization for responding to disasters.

In the ravaged California, the state's Democratic leaders pressed Trump for federal assistance that he threatened to hold up, some setting aside their past differences to shower him with praise. Trump, in turn, pressured local officials to waive permitting requirements so people can immediately rebuild, pledging that federal permits would be granted promptly.

Instead of having federal financial assistance flow through FEMA, the Republican president said Washington could provide money directly to the states. He made the comments while visiting North Carolina, which is still recovering months after Hurricane Helene, on the first trip of his second term.

"FEMA has been a very big disappointment," the Republican president said. "It's very bureaucratic. And it's very slow."

Trump was greeted in California by Gov Gavin Newsom, a Trump critic whom the president frequently disparages. The duo chatted amiably and gestured toward cooperation despite their bitter history.

"We're going to need your support. We're going to need your help," Newsom told Trump. "You were there for us during COVID. I don't forget that, and I have all the expectations we'll be



US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump walk with Jason Hing, chief deputy of emergency services at the Los Angeles Fire Department, (left), and Capt. Jeff Brown, chief of Station 69, as they tour the Pacific Palisades neighborhood affected by recent wildfires in Los Angeles on Jan 24. (AP)

able to work together to get a speedy recovery."

Newsom has praised Trump before when looking for help from the federal government. In the early months of the coronavirus pandemic, he called Trump thoughtful and collaborative.

Trump flew over several devastated neighborhoods in Marine One, the presidential helicopter, before landing in Pacific Palisades, a hard-hit community that's home to some of Southern California's rich and famous. Accompanied by first lady Melania Trump, he walked a street where all the houses have burned, chatting with residents and police officers.

sure Newsom and other officials do right by their citizens."

Trump said Los Angeles residents who lost their homes should be able to get back onto their properties immediately to clear them, adding several told him it will be months before they can rebuild.

Mayor Karen Bass said residents should be able to return home within the week, but keeping people safe from hazardous materials is a top priority. She said the city was easing the process to get permits, but she was repeatedly interrupted by Trump as she tried to explain the city's efforts. He downplayed the concerns about toxins, saying: "What hazardous waste? We're going to have to do the that."

Trump has a long history of minimizing the risks of asbestos. In his 1997 book, "The Art of the Comeback," Trump called asbestos the greatest proofing material ever used and 100% safe, once applied, and claimed the movement against the insulator was led by the mob. Because it was often mob-related companies that would do the asbestos removal.

Before flying to California, Trump reiterated that he wants to extract concessions from the Democratic-led state in return for disaster assistance, including changes to water policies and requirements that voters need to show identification when casting ballots.

Beyond Trump's criticism of FEMA, he suggested limiting the federal government's role in responding to disasters, echoing comments from conservative allies who have proposed reducing funding and responsibility.

Iowa immigration law remains blocked

State Dept freezes new funding for nearly all US aid programs worldwide

WASHINGTON, Jan 25, (AP) — The State Department ordered a sweeping freeze Friday on new funding for almost all US foreign assistance, making exceptions for emergency food programs and military aid to Israel and Egypt.

The order threatened a quick halt to many of the billions of dollars in US-funded projects globally to support health, education, development, job training, anti-corruption, security assistance and other efforts.

The US provides more foreign aid globally than any other country, budgeting about \$60 billion in 2023, or about 1% of the U.S. budget.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio's order, delivered in a cable sent to US embassies worldwide, specifically exempted emergency food programs, such as those helping to feed millions in a widening famine in warring Sudan.

The cable spells out the execution of the aid-freezing executive order President Donald Trump signed on Monday.

But Friday's order especially disappointed humanitarian officials by not including specific exemptions for life-saving health programs, such as clinics and immunization programs.

A globally acclaimed anti-HIV program, the President's Emergency Relief Plan for AIDS Relief, was among those included in the spending freeze, slated to last at least three months. Known as PEPFAR, the program is credited with saving 25 million lives, including those of 5.5 million children, since it was started by Republican President George W. Bush.

Some aid projects began receiving their first stop-work orders under the freeze Friday afternoon.

Some leading aid organizations also were interpreting the directive as an immediate stop-work order for US-funded aid work globally, a former senior US Agency for International Development official said. Many would likely cease operations immediately so as not to incur more costs, the official said. The official was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition



US Vice President JD Vance speaks before swearing in Secretary of State Marco Rubio, (right), in the Vice Presidential Ceremonial Office in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House campus on Jan 21, in Washington. (AP)

of anonymity.

Suspending funding could have life or death consequences for chil-

dren and families around the world, said Abby Maxman, head of Oxfam America.

By suspending foreign development assistance, the Trump administration is threatening the lives and futures of communities in crisis, and abandoning the United States' long-held bipartisan approach to foreign assistance which supports people based on need, regardless of politics, Maxman said in a statement.

At the United Nations, deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said: "These are bilateral decisions but nonetheless we expect those nations who have the capability to generously fund development assistance."

While Rubio's order exempted military assistance to allies Israel and Egypt from the freeze, there was no indication of a similar waiver to allow vital US military assistance to Ukraine through.

Also:

DES MOINES, Iowa: A federal appeals court on Friday sided with the Biden administration's Department of Justice and kept a temporary block on an Iowa law that makes it a state crime

for a person to be in Iowa if they are in the US illegally.

But a second order from the 8th Circuit US Court of Appeals raises questions on future court proceedings now that President Donald Trump is in the White House.

The department and an immigrant rights group sued Iowa in May over the law, which looks similar to Texas and Oklahoma laws that are also on hold while courts consider whether they unconstitutionally usurp federal immigration authority. A district court judge granted the Biden administration and the immigrant rights group a temporary block on the law, and Iowa appealed.

The law would let state and local officials arrest and charge people who have outstanding deportation orders or who previously have been removed from or denied admission to the U.S.

The federal appeals court said that contrary to Iowa's belief, the state law would likely contradict federal officials' discretion in how to enforce immigration policy and complicate U.S. foreign policy.



Firemen secure a house that was damaged by the winds of Storm Eowyn that hit the country in Belfast, Northern Ireland on Jan 24. (AP)

Ireland, UK clean up after Storm Éowyn brings damage

Emergency crews began cleaning up Saturday after a storm bearing record-breaking winds left at least one person dead and more than a million without power across the island of Ireland and Scotland.

Work was underway to remove hundreds of trees blocking roads and railway lines in the wake of the system, named Storm Éowyn (pronounced AY-oh-win) by weather authorities.

In Ireland, wind snapped telephone poles, ripped apart a Dublin ice rink and even toppled a giant wind turbine. A wind gust of 114 mph (183 kph) was recorded on the west coast, breaking a record set in 1945.

A man died after a tree fell on his car in County Donegal in northwest Ireland, local police said. They named the victim as 20-year-old Kacper Dudek.

Hundreds of thousands of homes

and businesses in the Republic of Ireland, neighboring Northern Ireland and Scotland, remained without electricity on Saturday.

The destruction caused by some of the strongest winds on record has been unprecedented, said Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin, adding that every effort is being made to get high voltage transmission lines up and running, homes reconnected and water supplies secured. (AP)

Putin claims conflict in Ukraine may have been averted if Trump was president

MOSCOW, Jan 25, (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin has echoed US President Donald Trump's claim the conflict in Ukraine could have been prevented had he been in the White House in 2022. He also said Moscow is ready for talks with the US on a broad range of issues.

In an interview with Russian state television, Putin praised Trump as a clever and pragmatic man who is focused on US interests.

"We always had a business-like, pragmatic but also trusting relationship with the current US president," Putin said. "I couldn't disagree with him that if he had been president, if they hadn't stolen victory from him in 2020, the crisis that emerged in Ukraine in 2022 could have been avoided."

Putin's statement was his bluntest endorsement yet of Trump's refusal to accept his defeat in the 2020 election.

Trump also has said repeatedly he wouldn't have allowed the conflict to start if he had been in office, even though he was president as fighting grew in the east of the country between Kyiv's forces and separatists aligned with Moscow, ahead of Putin sending in tens of thousands of troops in 2022.

On Thursday, Trump told Fox News that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy should have made a deal with Putin to avoid the conflict.



Russian President Vladimir Putin speaks during a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Lomonosov Moscow State University in Moscow, Russia on Jan 24. (AP)

Putin emphasized Friday that he's open to talks but pointed to Zelenskyy's 2022 decision to rule out negotiations with Moscow.

"How is it possible to conduct talks if they are banned?" Putin said. "If the talks start in the existing legal framework, they would be illegitimate and the results of those talks could also be declared illegitimate."

He also said the US and Russia have many other items on their agenda, in-

cluding nuclear arms control and economic issues.

"We can have quite a lot of points of contact with the current administration and search for solutions to key issues of today," Putin said.

He said the sanctions against Russia introduced during Trump's first term and under Joe Biden's administration had hurt U.S. interests, undermining the dollar's role in global financial system.

America

Man gets 17 yrs for shooting:

A Kentucky man who shot at Louisville Mayor Craig Greenberg when he was a candidate in 2022 was sentenced Friday to 17 years and 6 months in federal prison after a tense sentencing hearing where Greenberg spoke of the harm the attack has caused.

Quintez Brown was arrested shortly after leaving Greenberg's campaign office, where one of his six shots grazed Greenberg's sweater. Four other staffers were in the room with Greenberg, and one of them rushed to close the door on Brown after he fled.

Greenberg, who was elected

mayor later that year, said in court Friday that he saw a man he didn't recognize come to the door of his campaign headquarters, and when a staffer tried to engage the man in conversation, he saw a gun pointed directly at me and I never forget the sound of those gun shots. (AP)



Greenberg

Greenberg told the court. Greenberg said in the ensuing days, he felt fear and confusion that made me physically numb for days. (AP)

Brown, 24, pleaded guilty in July to federal charges of interfering with a federally protected activity and discharging a firearm in relation with a crime of violence. (AP)

Trooper fatally shoots suspect: A Florida Highway Patrol trooper fatally shot a suspect during an altercation at a central Florida hospital on Friday, authorities said.

The altercation happened in the emergency department at HCA Florida Ocala Hospital in Ocala, Florida, according to a statement from the hospital. The unidentified suspect died when the trooper used deadly force, the Ocala Police Department said in a statement.

No law enforcement officers or hospital staff were injured. (AP)



Thousands of protesters gather to oppose the policies of Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico in Bratislava, Slovakia on Jan 24. (AP)

Tens of thousands protest in Slovakia

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia, Jan 25, (AP) — Tens of thousands of people in Slovakia gathered at squares and street across the country on Friday to voice their opposition to the pro-Russia policies of populist Prime Minister Robert Fico.

The latest wave of anti-government rallies was fueled by Fico's recent trip to Moscow to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, a rare visit to the Kremlin by a European Union leader since Moscow's all-out invasion of Ukraine began on Feb. 24, 2022.

Fico's recent remarks that that it was a possibility to change Slovakia's foreign policy orientation and leave the European Union and NATO were among other recent steps by the prime minister that fueled the anger of protesters.

INTERNATIONAL

South Koreans turn funeral wreaths, K-pop light sticks into political protest tools

SEOUL, Jan 25, (AP) — South Koreans are repurposing flower wreaths and K-pop light sticks as political protest tools amid the nation's deepest political crisis in decades, sparked by President Yoon Suk Yeol's short-lived martial law declaration in December.

Hundreds of wreaths, predominantly directed at Yoon himself, have been sent to his residence and government buildings connected to the impeachment proceedings, with some targeting other officials involved in the martial law controversy. Local media estimate the number of wreaths delivered to government offices as several thousand.

While many wreaths carry moderate messages supporting Yoon or opposing impeachment, several contain extreme rhetoric directed at recipients. The black-ribboned funeral wreaths with white chrysanthemums and celebratory wreaths with vibrant roses and orchids, costing as much as \$75, carry messages reflecting Korea's deepening political divide.

The protest method has gained traction, with media coverage increasing in tandem over the last few years. A search on Big Kinds, which collects and analyzes articles from over 100 local news outlets, shows wreath protests received four times more media coverage in 2024 compared to 2023, reflecting the method's growing popularity. News articles about these protests started to appear in the early 2010s, though experts cannot specify their exact origin.

While dozens of flower shops say they haven't received protest wreath orders, and a handful of online blogs promote wreath sales emphasizing political neutrality, certain shops have become focal points for the movement. Yoon Miyoung, of Seoul-based Dongsung Flower, said she has deliv-



A pedestrian passes by wreaths sent by supporters of impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol outside of the Constitutional Court in Seoul, South Korea, Jan 14. (AP)

ered over 1,000 wreaths since December, exclusively for pro-Yoon supporters. "We've sent out so many wreaths that Seoul is running out of flowers," she said, adding that over one-third of her customers are in their 20s and 30s, with orders coming from outside South Korea including Japan, United States and the Netherlands.

Even though the form remains the same, the types of flowers or the messages differ, said Choi Hang-sub, a sociology professor at Kookmin University. While wreaths avoid physical violence, the messages on funeral wreaths have evolved into a form of offensive speech, similar to malicious online comments but now decorated with flowers.

Professor Kim Hern Sik, from Jungwon University, said wreath protests remain an isolated form of demonstra-

tion limited to certain political groups, making it difficult to gain broader public support.

Experts also raise concerns about wreath protests' environmental impact. Most wreaths use cheap, non-environmentally friendly materials that neither help flower farmers nor the environment, said Kim.

However, Kim sees promise in younger generations' protest methods. K-pop fandom culture, especially centered around young women in their teens and 20s, is now being applied to political rallies, he said.

Last December, outside the National Assembly where lawmakers voted to impeach Yoon, thousands of people wielded K-pop light sticks costing around \$50 from popular bands like BIGBANG, NCT, and Epik High during pro-impeachment rallies.



Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba delivers a policy speech marking the start of the year's parliamentary session in Tokyo on Jan 24. (AP)

Japan PM prepares for tough negotiations with Trump on maintaining US presence

TOKYO, Jan 25, (AP) — Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, struggling to stabilize his minority government, said he will seek to maintain regional security and prepare for tough negotiations with US President Donald Trump to win his commitment to maintain a strong American presence in the Asia-Pacific.

Ishiba has been seeking to meet with Trump since his election victory in November and is arranging a trip to Washington in the coming weeks.

With a minority government following a significant election loss in October due to voter anger over his party's financial scandals, Ishiba is struggling to stay in power at least until the next major elections this summer.

With the balance of power in the region making a historic change, we must further deepen Japan-US cooperation and ensure the US commitment to the region to prevent any power vacuum from destabilizing it, Ishiba said in a policy speech to parliament.

Japan's concern about a U.S. retreat from the region comes as China's military is becoming increasingly assertive and North Korea has repeatedly tested ballistic missiles as it advances its nuclear and missile programs.

Ishiba said Japan faces the most severe and complicated security environment since World War II and needs to bolster its own defense capabilities and elevate the Japan-U.S. alliance while expanding and deepening ties with other partners.

Beijing repeatedly asserts sovereignty

Philippines accuses China of harassing fisheries vessels in sea

MANILA, Philippines, Jan 25, (AP) — Chinese coast guard ships and a Chinese navy helicopter harassed a group of Philippine fisheries vessels conducting a scientific survey in a hotly disputed area of the South China Sea, forcing them to cancel the operation, the Philippine coast guard said Saturday.

Beijing has repeatedly asserted sovereignty over most of the South China Sea and accused rival claimant states, including the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia of encroachment. China has demarcated its territorial claims with a 10 dashed-line printed on maps but has not provided the exact coordinates.

The harassment took place Friday near Sandy Cay, three small uninhabited sandbars flanked by an artificial island base of Chinese forces and a Philippines-occupied island in the Spratly archipelago, the coast guard said.

The Chinese coast guard ships approached two larger vessels, which maneuvered to avoid a collision, and a navy helicopter flew low over two smaller boats deployed by the ships, forcing the survey to be called off.

Videos released by the Philippine coast guard show a Chinese coast guard ship sailing very close to a vessel officials identified as belonging to the Philippines. Another video shows a Chinese military helicopter hovering low over the rough seas near a vessel flying a Philippine flag.

There was no immediate response from Chinese officials. The latest flare-out of the long-sim-



In this image released by Philippine Coast Guard, a Chinese Coast Guard boat sails around Sandy Cay in the South China Sea on Jan 24. (AP)

mering territorial disputes in one of the world's busiest trade and security passageways could test President Donald Trump's commitment to maintain America's role as a counterweight to China, which has increasingly carried out assertive actions in the disputed waters.

His predecessor, Joe Biden, strengthened an arc of security alliances in Asia while in office in a bid to curb China's aggressive actions in the South China Sea, East China Sea and around Taiwan, a self-governed island which Beijing has vowed to take by force if necessary.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio in a telephone call on Wednesday with his Philippine counterpart, Enrique Man-

alo, discussed issues of mutual concern, including the People's Republic of China's dangerous and destabilizing actions in the South China Sea, State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said.

Rubio conveyed that the PRC's behavior undermines regional peace and stability and is inconsistent with international law, Bruce said in a readout of the call.

Rubio underscored the United States' ironclad commitments to the Philippines under our Mutual Defense Treaty, Bruce said.

Biden and his administration had repeatedly warned China that the US is obligated to help defend the Philippines, its oldest treaty ally in Asia, if

Filipino forces, ships and aircraft come under armed attack including in the South China Sea. China has warned the US to stay away from what it says is a purely Asian dispute.

In 2017, China accused the Philippine military of secretly plotting to occupy and build a structure on one of the three sandbars, about 2.5 nautical miles (4.6 kilometers) from the Philippine-occupied Thitu Island, two senior Philippine officials told The Associated Press at the time.

China protested and surrounded the sandbars with three navy ships, a coast guard ship and 10 suspected militia ships, according to a confidential Philippine government security report seen by the AP at the time.

Chinese and Philippine diplomats resolved the issue by agreeing that forces from both sides should not set foot on the sandbars, the two Philippine officials said.

Chinese ships, however, have continuously kept watch off the sandbars since then, according to the Philippine military.

Separately, the Philippine coast guard said it has been ordering Chinese coast guard ships to stay away from the Scarborough Shoal, another disputed area about 124 nautical miles (230 kilometers) off the northwestern Philippines.

The Chinese coast guard ships have approached up to 60 nautical miles (111 kilometers) from the Philippines coast in recent weeks, well within the country's exclusive economic zone.



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio greets people as he arrives to speak to State Department staff followed by his family, at the State Department on Jan 21 in Washington. (AP)

China tells Rubio to behave himself in veiled warning

BEIJING, Jan 25, (AP) — China's veteran foreign minister has issued a veiled warning to America's new secretary of state: Behave yourself.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi conveyed the message in a phone call, their first conversation since Marco Rubio's confirmation as President Donald Trump's top diplomat four days earlier.

"I hope you will act accordingly," Wang told Rubio, according to a Foreign Ministry statement, employing a Chinese phrase typically used by a teacher or a boss warning a student or employee to behave and be responsible for their actions.

The short phrase seemed aimed at

Rubio's vocal criticism of China and its human rights record when he was a U.S. senator, which prompted the Chinese government to put sanctions on him twice in 2020.

It can be translated in various ways - in the past, the Foreign Ministry has used "make the right choice" and "be very prudent about what they say or do" rather than "act accordingly."

The vagueness allows the phrase to express an expectation and deliver a veiled warning, while also maintaining the courtesy necessary for further diplomatic engagement, said Zichen Wang, a research fellow at the Center for China and Globalization, a Chinese think tank.



This Planet Labs PBC satellite image shows Sudan's largest oil refinery north of Khartoum, Sudan, on Oct 27, 2024. (AP)

Fighting in Sudan's civil war sets ablaze largest oil refinery, satellite photos show

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Jan 25, (AP) — Fighting around Sudan's largest oil refinery set the sprawling complex ablaze, satellite data analyzed by The Associated Press on Saturday shows, sending thick, black smoke over the country's capital.

Forces loyal to Sudan's military under army chief Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan later claimed they captured the refinery, owned by Sudan's government and the state-run China National Petroleum Corp. The facility represents a long-sought prize for the military in its civil war with the rebel Rapid Support Force.

International mediation attempts and pressure tactics, including a U.S. assessment that the RSF and its proxies are committing genocide, have not halted the fighting.

The al-Jaili refinery sits some 60

kilometers (40 miles) north of Khartoum, the capital. The refinery has been subject to previous attacks as the RSF has claimed control of the facility since April 2023 and their forces had been guarding it. Local Sudanese media report the RSF also surrounded the refinery with fields of landmines to slow any advance.

But the facility, capable of handling 100,000 barrels of oil a day, remained broadly intact until Thursday. On that day, an attack at the refinery set fires across the complex, according to satellite data from NASA satellites that track wildfires worldwide.

Satellite images taken by Planet Labs PBC on Friday for the AP showed vast areas of the refinery ablaze. The images, shot just after 1200 GMT, showed flames shooting up into the sky

in several spots. Oil tanks at the facility stood burned, covered in soot.

Thick plumes of black smoke towered over the site, carried south toward Khartoum by the wind. Exposure to that smoke can exacerbate respiratory problems and raise cancer risks.

In a statement released Thursday, the Sudanese military alleged the RSF was responsible for the fire at the refinery.

The RSF deliberately set fire to the Khartoum refinery in al-Jaili this morning in a desperate attempt to destroy the infrastructures of this country, the statement read.

"This hateful behavior reveals the extent of the criminality and decadence of this militia ... (and) increases our determination to pursue it everywhere until we liberate every inch from their clutches."

Lat/Am

Mexicans protest killing:

Thousands took to the streets to protest the killing of two children in an attempted carjacking in Mexico's troubled northwestern state of Sinaloa.

Mothers and children in school uniforms were among those calling for an end to months of cartel violence that has at times closed schools and businesses in the state capital, Culiacan.

A small group of protesters forced their way into the offices of Sinaloa Gov Rubén Rocha, trashing them and demanding his resignation. Rocha, a close ally of former President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, has been unable to control his state's violence despite the deployment of troops. (AP)

Three youths get 5 years:

A court in El Salvador on Thursday sentenced three youths to five years in prison and put five more on probation after they were arrested last year following the public release of a video of them making gang signs inside a school.

Seven other young people, who were also being prosecuted for alleged links to gangs, were acquitted by the court in the country's capital San Salvador.

The youths, aged 12 to 15, were detained after a video shared on the social media platform TikTok showed them flashing signs connected with the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) gang, according to police.

It comes amid a harsh gang crackdown by El Salvador President Nayib Bukele. (AP)

India and Indonesia deepen cooperation in defense, trade

NEW DELHI, Jan 25, (AP) — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with visiting Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto in New Delhi on Saturday as the two countries signed a series of cooperation agreements on health, defense, digital technology and maritime affairs to expand ties.

Subianto arrived late Thursday on his first official visit to India since becoming the president last year. He will be the chief guest at India's 76th Republic Day event on Sunday, marking the anniversary of the adoption of the country's Constitution on Jan. 26, 1950, nearly three years after independence from British colonial rule.

Modi said the two leaders decided to work together in defense production, manufacturing and supply chain sectors, heightening cooperation in maritime and cyber security.

The agreement signed today in maritime safety and security will



Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, (left), poses with Indian President Droupadi Murmu, (center), and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Indian presidential palace during his ceremonial reception in New Delhi, India on Jan 25. (AP)

further strengthen our cooperation in crime prevention, search and rescue and capacity building, he added.

Afghan refugees appeal to Pakistan to ease visa regime

ISLAMABAD, Jan 25, (AP) — Afghan refugees on Friday appealed to Pakistan's premier to ease a visa regime on humanitarian grounds after President Donald Trump paused the US refugee programs.

Many Afghans whose visas have either expired or will expire soon fear arrest and deportation.

"We don't know exactly when the pause of the US refugee program will be lifted, but we request Pakistan to extend our stay for at least six months after the expiry of our visas," said Ahmad Shah, a member of the Afghan USRAP Refugees advocacy group.

An estimated 20,000 Afghans are currently waiting in Pakistan to be approved for resettlement in the US via an American government program.

Refugees approved to travel to the United States in coming days have had their travel plans canceled by the Trump administration. Among those affected are the more than 1,600 Afghans cleared to resettle in the US.



Trump

Kuwaiti crude oil price dips to \$81.80 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti crude oil price lost 33 cents during Friday trading to reach USD 81.80 per barrel (pb), compared with USD 82.13 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC)

said Saturday.

Brent futures rose by 21 cents to hit USD 78.50 pb and West Texas Intermediate (WTA) went up by four cents to USD 74.66 pb.

Business

Over 22,000 students benefit from Gulf Bank-INJAZ Kuwait partnership

Gulf Bank renews strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait to support, train, and empower youth

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Gulf Bank has renewed its strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait for the 19th consecutive year, reaffirming its commitment to education and youth development in Kuwait. This enduring collaboration underscores Gulf Bank's dedication to training, empowering and equipping the next generation with vital skills, aligning with its core values and Kuwait Vision 2035.

Commenting on the partnership, Gulf Bank's Chief Marketing Officer, Mrs. Najla Aleisa, stated: "We are honored to continue our collaboration with INJAZ Kuwait, supporting their mission to cultivate leadership and entrepreneurial skills in young Kuwaitis. Through innovative programs and activities designed for school and university students, we strive to provide them with the tools needed to succeed in today's dynamic economic environment."

Mrs. Aleisa emphasized the importance of this partnership as part of Gulf Bank's commitment to sustainable community development. "Investing in the next generation is essential to fostering societal and economic growth. By equipping youth with critical skills, we are



Najla Aleisa and Laila Hilal Al-Mutairi after renewing the agreement.

empowering them to become future leaders and innovators," she added.

Gulf Bank remains committed to bridging the gap between education and employment by supporting high school and university students, as well as recent graduates, through programs that focus on business fundamentals, career exploration, and hands-on training. These efforts aim to prepare young individuals for workforce success and entrepre-

neurial endeavors.

Ms. Laila Hilal Al-Mutairi, CEO of INJAZ Kuwait, praised the long-standing partnership with Gulf Bank, which has made a significant impact over nearly two decades. "Our success at INJAZ Kuwait is driven by the steadfast support of private sector partners like Gulf Bank. In the 2023/2024 academic year alone, this partnership facilitated training for over 22,000 students, ranging from elementary stu-

dents to recent graduates," she said.

Participants benefited from a variety of programs, including Innovation Camp, Personal Finance, Career Success, Head Start, Job Shadow, and the Company Program. Ms. Al-Mutairi highlighted Gulf Bank's active role in the programs, with contributions that extend beyond sponsorship to include volunteering and program facilitation. "For example, the Com-

pany Program plays a key role in preparing youth for entrepreneurship and the business world, equipping them with the practical knowledge they need to excel," she added.

Looking ahead to 2025, Ms. Al-Mutairi outlined plans for workshops, awareness seminars, and field programs designed to develop financial and entrepreneurial skills. These initiatives aim to empower youth to pursue innovative career

Najla Aleisa:

■ Fulfilling the Bank's vision of establishing community sustainability by investing in the youth of tomorrow.

Laila Al-Mutairi:

■ The partnership with Gulf Bank has provided training to over 22,000 students during the 2023/2024 academic year.

paths or launch their own businesses, contributing to Kuwait's economic growth and supporting the realization of Kuwait Vision 2035.

INJAZ Kuwait is a non-profit organization affiliated with Junior Achievement Worldwide. Supported by the Kuwaiti private sector, it collaborates with businesses and educational institutions to offer programs in both Arabic and English, focusing on entrepreneurship, leadership, and career readiness, all aimed at helping youth build successful futures.

Other Voices

OPEC+ seeks \$90 pb for stability

US oil executives reject calls for more drilling amid rising costs

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

THE call by the current U.S. administration to drill for more oil is not on.

According to U.S. oil industry executives, more oil could lead to further price weakening, which is not welcomed by American executives, as they are concerned about the rising production costs.

Currently, the industry needs oil prices to be between \$60 and \$80 per barrel to cover all costs and provide good dividends. Shale oil executives are particularly reluctant to embark on another drilling binge, as they are more concerned about the protection of investor capital than pushing for record-breaking production.

The U.S. cannot increase production by more than 1.3 million barrels per day, falling short of the historical 1.9 million barrels per day achieved during the previous administration. Currently, the U.S. stands as the world's largest oil producer at 13.7 million barrels per day. U.S. production is not constrained by any restrictions in terms of how much to produce but it is limited by profitability and

cost reduction efforts, factors that are currently keeping investors satisfied.

Meanwhile, OPEC+ members face different constraints, as they need to balance production levels with budgetary needs. At present, oil prices around \$79 per barrel are not considered optimal, with OPEC+ aiming for prices closer to \$90 per barrel to meet their financial objectives.

It now seems the U.S. cannot ramp up oil production to the levels seen during the shale boom. Unlocking shale resources led to the collapse of oil prices in 2014 and 2020, causing some oil companies to go bankrupt. This prompted both investors and oil firms to pause any plans for increasing production.

Reducing oil prices will not necessarily reduce inflation or bring the prices down. A large oil supply will not magically lower costs. Similarly, OPEC+ cutting oil prices will not create the desired effect. While the U.S. may call on banks to reduce interest rates, oil price cuts will not have the same impact. A decrease in oil prices would make shale producers less profitable, and they won't be quick to embrace the "drill, baby, drill" mentality. Their primary focus is on shareholder interests and returns, not government calls for increased production. It is the rate of return for investors that truly matters.

"Drill, baby, drill" has two sides, not just one.
Email: nafikkuwaiti@yahoo.com



Al-Harami

CAPT approves 5-year travel services deal between Kuwait Airways & KOC

Kuwait Airways boosts profits with new KOC cooperation agreement

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has approved a bilateral cooperation protocol between Kuwait Airways Corporation and the Kuwait Oil Company.

This agreement allows Kuwait Oil Company to directly contract with Kuwait Airways for a five-year period to provide travel services for its employees. The approval is in line with Article 18 of Public Tenders Law No. 49/2016.

This is not the first collaboration between the two companies, as they had previously entered into agreements for travel services to provide both economy class and business class flights for Kuwait Oil Company employees and leaders.

In addition to this, Kuwait Oil Company has a long history of working with Kuwait Airways and the General Administration of Civil Aviation, including agreements for helicopter services for transportation and air ambulance.

Kuwait Airways is actively working to sign cooperation agreements with both public and private sector companies to boost its profits in the coming years.

The current board of directors, led by Abdul Mohsen Salem Al-Faqhian, has been focused on

revitalizing the airline, which has resulted in increased trust and business from other companies.

Kuwait Oil Company selected Kuwait Airways due to its status as a national carrier and its reputation for punctuality. The high quality of service provided by Kuwait Airways was also a key factor in the decision.

In 2024, Kuwait Airways was ranked third in the Middle East and Africa for on-time flight departures.

The signing of the cooperation protocol was announced by Kuwait Airways and attended by officials from both companies, including Chair of Kuwait Airways Abdul Mohsen Salem Al-Faqhian, and CEO of Kuwait Oil Company Ahmed Jaber Al-Aidan.

'GCC leaders discuss economic resilience'

Al-Budaiwi stresses GCC's role in global energy supply

DAVOS, Switzerland, Jan 25, (KUNA): Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Mohamed Al-Budaiwi stated that the GCC countries are among the most stable nations in the world, enhancing their role as reliable energy suppliers globally.

This announcement was made during his speech at the panel session organized by the General Secretariat of the GCC in Davos on the sidelines of the 55th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2025.

Several ministers of economy and finance from the Council member states participated in the session, along with senior economic officials, experts, and business leaders from various countries.

The GCC chief stressed in his address that the GCC remains committed to peace, respect for international law, and striving for sustainable development for the benefit of future generations, despite the challenges it faces.

He spoke about the establishment of the GCC and its objectives, reviewing the significant economic milestones it has achieved, starting with the founding of the Free Trade Area in 1983, which eliminated customs duties on traded goods among the member states, leading to a substantial increase in trade and investment within the region.

He then referred to the creation of the Customs Union in 2003, which implemented a unified tariff on goods imported from outside the council, helping to protect local industries and facilitate trade.

He also touched on the Common Market established in 2008, which allowed for the free movement of goods, services, capital, and labour within the region, enhancing economic integration and creating a

broader market.

Al-Budaiwi affirmed that the GCC countries continue to work together to achieve complete economic integration in accordance with the Gulf Economic Agreement, which outlines the mechanisms for achieving this integration.

He presented a series of facts and statistics that affirm the position and economic strength of the GCC region both regionally and internationally, noting that the member states will continue their mission to ensure prosperity, sustainability, and a better future for all through their active participation and initiatives with regional and international partners.

He added that the council has implemented numerous initiatives aimed at enhancing economic diversification, supporting sustainable development, and encouraging innovation, which has resulted in a significant increase in intra-GCC trade and trade with external partners.

The GCC chief pointed out that this workshop will highlight cooperation opportunities among various economic and financial sectors, contributing to enhancing economic growth at both regional and international levels.

It will also provide suitable solutions to the challenges facing the region, allowing both the private and public sectors to benefit, he said, adding that the workshop will discuss anticipated economic and developmental policies within the framework of joint Gulf cooperation.

During the workshop, the ministers discussed several topics and exchanged views, including the importance of economic diversification and its role in enhancing the resilience of Gulf economies, reducing

reliance on traditional income sources such as oil and gas, and promoting innovation and diversification in economic sectors to enhance regional and global competitiveness.

The workshop also addressed the relationship between economic diversification and the Sustainable Development Goals, investment in renewable energy, technology, and knowledge-based industries.

Participants discussed adopting sustainable economic policies that balance economic development with the protection of natural resources for future generations.

They emphasised the importance of cooperation among the GCC countries and the world to achieve common interests, enhance shared economic opportunities, exchange experiences, and activate strategic partnerships in energy and innovation to achieve sustainable development.

The workshop concluded with discussions on the role of traditional and renewable energy in supporting the economies of GCC countries, as well as reviewing the future development visions of the member states and the challenges they face in their economic diversification journey.

The Secretary General indicated that, in light of the success of the GCC event in Davos and the significant attendance it witnessed, an agreement has been reached between the General Secretariat of the GCC and the World Economic Forum to hold an annual session dedicated solely to the economic, commercial, and investment affairs of the GCC.

Kuwait was represented at the panel session by Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Noura Al-Fassam.

Supporting homegrown talents and local products

Zain title partner of Qout Market's 11th season

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Zain is the Title Partner of the 11th season of Qout Market, the premier gathering of local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) specializing in food, farm, and crafts. This partnership underscores Zain's commitment to nurturing young talent, fostering national creativity, and supporting homegrown products.

This year's first market took place at Mishref Oasis, offering a vibrant winter atmosphere for visitors. Nearly 100 local businesses and creative local projects from various specialties participated, attracting thousands of visitors, including families, children, and youth, who enjoyed a memorable experience. The next market is set to take place on Saturday, 22 February 2025.

Zain takes pride in being one of the earliest supporters of this community-driven initiative over the years, a platform that consistently achieves remarkable success each season. The event is highly regarded by the Kuwaiti community, bringing people together in an inspiring environment



Zain's booth at Qout Market.

that celebrates local products and national creativity. It also provides a space for meaningful dialogue and the exchange of shared passions.

Renewing its support for the 11th edition of Qout Market, Zain reaffirms its strategic commitment to empowering local talent and entrepreneurs. The company aims to con-

tribute to cultivating a new generation of capable young Kuwaitis who can actively and effectively participate in the nation's economic development.

As in previous years, Zain participated in Qout Market through its dedicated booth, which offered interactive games for children and families, exciting competitions, and

prizes. This created a unique atmosphere of fun and engagement, reflecting the company's brand identity, A Wonderful World, and showcasing its close connection with the community.

Since its inception in 2013, Qout Market has aimed to attract and empower local talent and creativity, shining a spotlight on their efforts. The event has successfully established a vibrant platform with high-quality standards, encouraging the community to discover local industries and products, connect with one another, and share experiences and ideas.

Qout Market, run by two young women, seeks to empower small producers, artisans, artists, farmers, musicians seeking an audience, aspiring chefs, and even seasoned chefs looking for creative outlets. It provides small businesses with opportunities to stand out and engage with a passionate and enthusiastic audience, with participants carefully selected based on a number of quality standards.

'US dollar declines'

Gold prices reach 3-month high amid US economic uncertainty

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Gold prices reached their highest level in nearly three months on Friday, continuing their upward momentum as uncertainty surrounding US President Donald Trump's economic policies contributed to a fourth consecutive week of gains, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The spot gold increased by 0.7 percent, reaching \$2,773.57 per ounce by 0805 Kuwait time, marking a rise of more than 2 percent for the week. Earlier, gold prices peaked at \$2,777.10,

the highest level since October 31, when they touched \$2,790.15. US gold futures also saw a gain, rising by 0.6 percent to \$2,781.

The rise in gold prices was largely driven by a weakening US dollar, which experienced a decline of more than 1 percent for the week, heading for its worst weekly drop in two months.

As the dollar fell, gold became more affordable for holders of other currencies, further boosting demand for the precious metal.

Tamakan welcomes Deputy Group CEO of NBK

Al-Bahar shares career insights with Kuwaiti youth at Tamakan Program

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: During a highly engaging panel discussion, the sixth edition of the Tamakan Program welcomed Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait. Drawing on her extensive experience in the banking sector, Al-Bahar shared valuable insights and offered Kuwaiti youth practical advice to help them establish successful careers.

First Steps in Banking
Kicking off her speech, Al-Bahar reflected on the early stages of her career in the banking sector. She remarked, "I began my professional journey as an intern at NBK before transitioning to corporate banking, which proved to be an incredible learning experience. Throughout my career, I had the privilege of participating in numerous training programs, both locally and internationally, at esteemed institutions such as Harvard, Stanford, and the Wharton School of Business. I have always had an insatiable appetite for learning, knowledge, and gaining new experiences. I actively participated in numerous workshops and dedicated countless hours to reading, which helped me overcome challenges and address problems in collaboration with my team," Al-Bahar added.

When asked about her decision to pursue a career in banking, Al-Bahar explained, "I chose to work in this vital sector because it ignited my passion and provided the ideal platform to achieve my goals."

She emphasized that one of the key strengths of the banking sector lies in its widespread influence across various fields, impacting everyone from individual customers to large corporations and even entire nations. She highlighted the sector's vital role in the national economy, noting that it supports the government's economic agenda by financing mega projects across multiple sectors. Additionally, she pointed out the significant contribution of banking in the residential sector, helping citizens realize their aspirations of owning their dream home.

Key Challenges
Reflecting on the major challenges she faced throughout her banking career, Al-Bahar shared, "I encountered numerous challenges, particularly when I began working with international banks and large corporations on significant deals. While it was an incredibly exciting experience, it also placed immense pressure on me to meet deadlines and fulfill obligations on time."

She emphasized that her success in overcoming these challenges was largely attributed to the support of a highly skilled and diverse team, characterized by exceptional efficiency, commitment, and responsibility.

The Private Sector
Al-Bahar pointed out that, in contrast to the public sector, the private sector offers employees the opportunity for faster personal growth. It allows individuals to enhance their skills, gain valuable experience, and learn not only from their colleagues but also from customers. She further emphasized that working in the banking sector provides continuous learning opportunities, exposure to diverse challenges, and access to new markets and customers. Specifically, at NBK, employees benefit from the bank's strong presence not only in the local market but also in regional and global markets.

Furthermore, Al-Bahar offered a set of valuable insights to the participants of the Tamakan Program, stating, "I look forward to seeing many of you join the banking sector. However, to achieve this, you must work diligently, be active team members, avoid focusing solely on individual work, and take on responsibility to add value to the sector, which plays a crucial role in Kuwait's economic development."

Teamwork benefits both the employee and the organization they work for. Therefore, always strive to earn the trust of your colleagues, make them believe in your abilities, and instill confidence in your ability to accomplish tasks. Embrace challenges and never yield to obstacles, as they are part of any job. Focus on finding solutions to the problems you encounter by reading and consulting with your managers and experienced colleagues," Al-Bahar advised.

Al-Bahar also advised young people entering the workforce to remain committed and ensure that the tasks en-



Shaikha Al-Bahar among the trainees of the Tamakan Program



Shaikha Al-Bahar speaking during the panel discussion



Part of the discussion panel.

trusted to them are completed on time. She emphasized the importance of initiating innovative ideas and demonstrating loyalty to their workplace, as this would enhance managers' trust in the employee. Such dedication, she explained, paves the way for career advancement, offering opportunities for excellence, promotions, and ultimately reaching the top of the career ladder.

Al-Bahar emphasized, "Employees must be deeply passionate about their work, showcasing the ability to complete tasks with quality, timeliness, and innovation." She encouraged young professionals to embrace any task assigned by their superiors, regardless of its complexity, and to challenge themselves to successfully complete it.

Personal Skills
She noted that finding solutions to the challenges and obstacles encountered in one's career is one of the most significant hurdles employees encounter. However, being part of a team provides an opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas, enabling the development of solutions to these problems and ultimately achieving success.

Al-Bahar highlighted that employees require two key types of skills: technical skills, which can be acquired through learning, continuous training, and reading, and personal skills, which present a greater challenge. She particularly emphasized the importance of personal skills, especially those that embody leadership qualities.

Leadership is not something that comes naturally to everyone, but as young professionals at the start of your careers, you must focus on acquiring personal skills that will enable you to play a more influential role in the organizations you will work for in the future. This includes interacting with your team effectively and positively, and always being ready to offer assistance to those in need," Al-Bahar explained.

Talent Acquisition
Regarding the qualities NBK seeks when hiring young talent, Al-Bahar stated, "Youth are not only the future and the cornerstone of development in any organization but in

any country. Therefore, NBK is committed to attracting talented Kuwaiti youth, investing in them by providing training and development opportunities, and supporting their career advancement to achieve success. This benefits not only the employee and the organization but also Kuwait as a whole."

"We are always keen to hire young individuals who are eager to develop their skills and advance to higher positions within the organization. We value those who are committed to growth and aspire to contribute meaningfully, rather than those who are simply looking for a paycheck at the end of the month," Al-Bahar concluded.

Al-Bahar emphasized that many Kuwaiti youth are both intelligent and innovative, particularly in the field of technology, aligning perfectly with banks' needs. She highlighted that NBK remains committed to investing heavily in technology and innovation, as they play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the banking sector.

She stated that the adoption of modern technologies helps reduce operating costs and enhances the quality of services offered to customers, thereby increasing customer satisfaction and ensuring the bank keeps pace with their evolving needs.

NBK Tech Academy
Al-Bahar highlighted the Bank's launch of NBK Tech Academy, the first academy in Kuwait dedicated to digital technology and data systems. She remarked, "I was truly impressed to see the creative Kuwaiti youth enrolled in the Academy, particularly those in the field of technology, who possess the potential to play a significant role in shaping the future of the banking sector."

"Many jobs will disappear due to the technological advancements occurring globally, along with the changes they are driving across all sectors and industries, including banking. However, we rely on these young individuals for their creative thinking, their ability to adapt technology to effectively manage and analyze big data, and to then launch new products and services while improving existing ones to meet the evolving demands of customers," Al-Bahar explained.

Al-Bahar:

- Empowering Kuwaiti Youth as the Future of the Country's Growth and Development
- Kuwaiti youth drive innovation in technology, paving the way for the banking sector's growth
- NBK prioritizes substantial investments in technology and innovation as they redefine the future of banking
- Maintaining leadership in digital banking requires a continuous ability to adapt to industry changes
- Technologies reduce operational costs while enhancing customer service excellence
- Big data and analytics play a pivotal role in conducting market research and launching innovative banking products
- The banking sector actively supports the government's economic objectives by financing mega infrastructure projects

Al-Bahar's Guidance for Young Professionals Entering the Workforce:

- Actively contribute to team efforts, prioritizing collaboration over individual pursuits
- Demonstrate responsibility by consistently delivering value to your organization
- Embrace challenges with resilience, viewing obstacles as opportunities for growth
- Seek solutions proactively and leverage guidance when needed
- Strive to fulfill your responsibilities with excellence, timeliness, and a unique approach.
- Ignite and cultivate creative and innovative ideas.
- While acquiring technical skills may come easily, your greatest challenge lies in honing personal and leadership capabilities to excel professionally

Data and the ability to manage it has become a discipline in its own right, and no bank can compete in the field of digital banking without possessing a vast database and a team with the necessary skills to analyze that data and conduct market research to stay in tune with changes," Al-Bahar noted. She also highlighted that NBK has a young and skilled team in the field of data, whose efficiency has allowed the bank to adapt to market changes and maintain its leadership in the banking sector.

Al-Bahar observed that the world may experience a new technological wave within the next 10-15 years. She emphasized the critical need for banks to continuously monitor the market and staying prepared to adapt and respond to any changes or developments in this area.

It is worth noting that Tamakan was honored with the Social Work Pioneer Project Award by the GCC Council of Ministers of Social Affairs and Labor. This prestigious accolade recognizes Tamakan as a trailblazing training initiative for Kuwaiti fresh graduates, fostering professional self-development and empowering them to emerge as a dynamic and effective workforce in the region.

NBK's support for the sixth edition of the Tamakan program, aimed at training Kuwaiti university graduates and organized by Creative Confidence, reflects the bank's commitment to the value of practical experience. The program offers intensive hands-on training to newly graduated national talents, empowering them to transition into an effective and dynamic workforce.

CEO thanks authorities and employees

KIB recognized for excellence in 'Sharia-Compliant' banking

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is proud to announce that it has been named the Best Sharia-Compliant Bank in MENA 2024 by Capital Finance International (CFI.co) magazine. This prestigious award recognizes KIB's unwavering commitment to providing innovative financial solutions that adhere to the standards of Sharia law.



Raed Jawad Bukhamseen



Kuwait International Bank named Best Sharia-Compliant Bank in MENA 2024.

The esteemed judging panel of the magazine selected KIB from a group of nominated banking and financial institutions, recognizing the Bank for its comprehensive range of banking solutions that adhere to Sharia principles, its tailored financial products that meet the unique needs of its customers, its strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing customer experience and operational efficiency, its cutting-edge online and mobile banking platforms, and, locally, its active participation in community development and charitable activities. The panel commended the Bank for its knowledgeable and experienced team, which ensures compliance with the highest standards of Sharia governance, and its leadership in promoting and sustaining Sharia-compliant banking.

Commenting on KIB's latest accolade, Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, Vice Chairman and CEO of KIB, said: "We are thrilled and honored to be recognized once again as the Best Sharia-Compliant Bank in the MENA region by CFI.co. This award is a testament to our commitment to providing customers with financial solutions that are not only Sharia-compliant and adhere to the highest global standards but also tailored to their specific needs, stemming from our main slogan, 'Bank for Life.'"

Bukhamseen added: "KIB has established itself as a leader in the Islamic banking sector by offering a wide range of Sharia-compliant products and services, especially digital ones. The Bank's initiatives focus on developing digital banking solutions, customer-centric services, and sustainable growth. As KIB continues to expand its portfolio of Sharia-compliant products, it remains committed to fostering a culture of innovation and excellence. We will continue setting the benchmark for the Islamic banking industry, helping drive positive change and economic development in Kuwait and

beyond." Concluding his statement, Bukhamseen thanked all regulatory authorities, especially the Central Bank of Kuwait for its supportive role and the rational policies it applies to the banking sector. He also thanked the Chairman and members of the Board of Directors of KIB and the Executive Management for their continued support and tireless efforts aimed at achieving more success, as well as all of the Bank's employees for their dedication and continued cooperation in developing the Bank and meeting the aspirations of customers and shareholders.

It is worth mentioning that London-based CFI.co is recognized as a leading media platform focusing on business, economics, and finance news. Its awards program is among the world's largest forums for recognizing and honoring individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to upholding exceptional standards of innovation and excellence in the global economic and financial sector.

\$12.4 bln non-oil trade reflects growing Kuwait-UAE relations

Kuwaiti-Emirati Week to boost economic cooperation in Dubai

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel said the upcoming Kuwaiti-Emirati Week, set to be hosted in Dubai on February 3-4, will focus on enhancing relations between the two nations and boosting joint economic cooperation, reports Al-Jarida daily.



Khalifa Al-Ajeel

The event aims to explore new investment opportunities across various vital sectors and encourage the growth of inter-trade between the two countries.

Under the patronage of the Vice President, Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, this weeklong event is a strategic initiative to deepen ties between Kuwait and the UAE, with both countries seeking to promote sustainable development and

mutual interests across all sectors. Al-Ajeel emphasized that the event would serve as a platform for sharing knowledge and fostering collaborations between both government and private sectors.

Highlighting Kuwait's ambition to strengthen ties with the UAE in strategic sectors such as tourism, health-

care, energy, and finance, Al-Ajeel pointed out that the two countries' relationship serves as a model of successful bilateral cooperation and economic integration within the Gulf region.

UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade, Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, reiterated the positive momentum in Kuwait-UAE relations and stressed the importance of the event in exploring investment opportunities, strengthening bilateral trade, and supporting the private sector, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs), as key drivers of economic growth.

He also pointed to the growing trade, with non-oil trade between the two nations reaching \$12.4 billion during the first 11 months of 2024.

The Kuwaiti-Emirati Week, organized by the UAE Ministry of Economy in collaboration with Dubai Chambers and the Consulate General of Kuwait, will include discussions and bilateral meetings between government and private sector representatives, aiming to forge new partnerships and explore emerging investment opportunities. Key sectors covered will include energy, healthcare, real estate, logistics, tourism, and more.

Additionally, Dubai Chambers Chairman Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair emphasized that the event would open new avenues for trade and investment between the two countries, noting the growing number of Kuwaiti businesses registered with the Dubai Chamber of Commerce.

At the conclusion of the 47th Engineering Design Exhibition

KFH honors winners of Environmental Sustainability Award

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) granted the Environmental Sustainability Award to the winners from the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University during an awards ceremony for student projects. The event concluded the 47th Engineering Design Exhibition, held under the patronage of the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Professor Nader Abdullah Al-Jalal.



Faisal Alsurayye and university officials with the first place winners (Project Greth).

It is worth noting that KFH is the main and largest supporter of the students at the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University and a key partner of the Engineering Design Exhibition. KFH awarded first and second place awards to the winners of the best engineering projects that focused on environmental sustainability.



Faisal Alsurayye and university officials with the second place winners (Project Blue Horizon Fuel).

This marks the fourth consecutive year that KFH has dedicated an award to environmental sustainability, as part of its commitment to promoting initiatives under its (Keep it green) campaign. This initiative aligns with KFH's comprehensive sustainability strategy and its adherence to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards.

The winning projects were announced during the closing ceremony of the exhibition, which

College of Engineering and Petroleum, Professor Khalid Al-Hazza, along with senior officials and faculty members. The awards were granted based on a rigorous study and comprehensive evaluation by a committee of experts.

The project Greth, developed by students Alaa Shuaib, Manayer Al-Hadhoud, Nuwaier Al-Rashidi, and Haya Al-Azmi, was awarded first place. The second-place award was granted to the project Blue Horizon Fuel, created by students Manayer Al-Marri, Raghad Al-Munini, Shouq Al-Shammari, and Maram Aal-Nasha.

In his remarks, KFH Executive Manager Corporate Relations and CSR, Faisal Alsurayye emphasized that supporting graduate students participating in the Engineering Design Exhibition is a priority for the bank. This aligns with KFH's strategy to support students, youth, and the community by fostering their creativity, encouraging outstanding projects, and promoting scientific initiatives.

He also explained that KFH annually supports over 300 graduates from the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University. This fosters a thriving scientific environment conducive to innovation and achievement, nurturing young talent and empowering students to develop and succeed.

took place on campus in the presence of the Acting Dean of the

Banks' training initiatives contribute to winning Corporate Governance Award

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait wins 'Best Corporate Governance Bank' Award 2024

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) continues to make significant strides in its commitment to excellence, achieving remarkable accomplishments that reflect its outstanding performance and surpass global standards in assessment. The Bank was recently awarded the title of Best Corporate Governance Bank for the year 2024 from The Global Economics Awards, during a ceremony held in Dubai.

The ceremony was attended by Dr. Ayman Al Bloushi, Group Head of Corporate Governance along with Sager Albenali, Chief Communications Officer at ABK.

This accolade was presented after the Bank met the criteria established by the judging panel, which evaluates the controls and procedures related to corporate governance, internal and external auditing processes, protection of shareholders' rights, board of directors' structure and independence, risk management practices, and commitment to disclosure and transparency.

In receiving this new award, ABK reaffirmed its dedication to the highest standards of governance and transparency in banking transactions with all partners. The Bank remains committed to delivering added value that positively impacts all stakeholders, ensuring mutual interests are achieved alongside varying customer needs.

On this occasion, Dr. Al Bloushi stated, "We are proud to receive the Best Corporate Governance Bank award for 2024. This recognition underscores our full adherence to governance rules, seamlessly integrating them into our daily operations, which is a top priority for us and a guiding principle for sustainable growth across all our indicators."



Dr. Ayman Al Bloushi

Dr. Al Bloushi emphasized that this accolade reflects not only the exceptional performance of the Bank's employees but also their commitment to adopting the highest standards in the sector.



Dr. Ayman Al Bloushi accepts Best Corporate Governance Bank Award for ABK.

He pointed out that ABK is dedicated to keeping pace with developments in the banking industry, which helps it earn the trust of all stakeholders, including partners and shareholders.

He further mentioned that ABK has developed comprehensive governance charters and policies to enhance transparency and trust in its operations. The Bank actively collaborates with

all relevant entities to fully satisfy their regulatory requirements. This includes the recent issuance of an annual sustainability report, available on the Bank's website, which reinforces its commitment to transparency by providing all necessary information and data related to its operations to the public.

Dr. Al Bloushi also highlighted ABK's ongoing training initiatives for its employees, ensuring they are well-versed in the latest changes in governance practices. This investment in human capital plays a crucial role in fostering trust among clients, partners, shareholders, and specialized entities in global evaluations, while further enhancing the Bank's leading position in the local banking sector.

The award serves as a testament to ABK's relentless efforts to uphold the highest standards of professional conduct in all its operations. Concluding his statement, Dr. Al Bloushi assured that the upcoming period will witness the sustained maintenance of proper governance frameworks and the adoption of core values such as integrity and transparency at the Bank. He reiterated the Bank's adherence to the Central Bank of Kuwait's guidelines regarding governance rules and systems for Kuwaiti banks, fostering an institutional culture that prioritizes the protection of shareholder and investor rights, and ensuring the highest levels of long-term sustainability to achieve excellence at various levels.

US coal exports surge

Trump promises boost for coal amid growing energy demand

CHEYENNE, Jan 25, (AP): President Donald Trump's promise to go all in on fossil fuels includes praise for coal, a reliable but polluting energy source that's long been in decline.

Trump this week suggested coal can help meet surging electricity demand from manufacturing and the massive data centers needed for artificial intelligence.

"Nothing can destroy coal. Not the weather, not a bomb - nothing," Trump told the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, by video link Thursday. "And we have more coal than anybody."

Yet energy experts say any bump for coal under Trump is likely to be temporary since natural gas is cheaper and there's a durable market for renewable energy no matter who holds the White House.

"It's kind of been shown over the last three administrations even the president of the United States can't change markets, the trend for coal," said University of Wyoming economics professor Rob Godby. "It might lead to a reprieve."

Here's a look at the outlook for coal during Trump's second term:

Efficiency gains have plateaued electricity demand in the U.S. for 15 years, but that's changing. More manufacturing, more electric vehicles, and energy-hungry computing centers necessary for artificial intelligence are poised to strain the system.

Electricity demand for data centers alone will increase 10-20% per year through 2030, while manufacturing of batteries, solar cells and semiconductors will require additional gigawatts of new power over the next four years, predicted Chris Seiple with analyst firm Wood Mackenzie.

While the tech industry is used to churning out new products to meet changing demand, electric utilities are not. Power plants and transmission lines often take decades of planning.

"The Trump administration is a four-year administration. It's really difficult for utilities to make investment decisions in four-year windows," Godby said.

Trump this week issued executive orders calling for prioritizing energy development, such as by lifting regulations that impede development of fossil fuels.

That could lead to repeals of President Joe Biden's power plant pollution regulations and an end to some policies that support renewables.

Cringe

Environmentalists cringe at the implications for climate change - electricity generation accounts for one-quarter of U.S. carbon emissions, according to the EPA - but miners welcome the shift.

Unlike solar and wind power, which are subject to vagaries of sunlight and weather unless they're paired with battery storage, coal-fired electricity can run around the clock with only periodic downtime for maintenance. Supporters say the nonstop power from coal meets the needs of technology facilities.

But while tech firms that want off-the-grid power might invest in a dirt cheap coal-fired power plant, Godby said, such plants need time to tie up. They aren't very good for the kind of on-the-spot backup power Trump was referring to in addressing the Davos conference.

Surging demand is expected to prompt delays in plans to retire coal-fired power plants. That's already been happening with plants in Maryland, Indiana and Illinois.

For utilities, Trump's comments were a blank check to do whatever you want in the short term despite prior attempts to address carbon

dioxide emissions and expand renewables, said S&P Global analyst Dan Thompson.

But Thompson noted three of the companies driving the data center boom - Google, Amazon and Microsoft - are the biggest corporate purchasers of renewable power and have made commitments to reach carbon neutrality.

That suggests a reprieve, not a comeback, for coal.

"It's natural gas that will benefit the most from rising electricity generation," Seiple said. "It's very unlikely we will see new coal plants due to how expensive they are."

The U.S. has some of the largest coal reserves in the world - enough to last more than 400 years at current mining rates, according to the Energy Information Administration.

The industry relies heavily on reserves on public lands in the West, particularly the Powder River Basin of Wyoming and Montana.

Sales of those reserves have long been politically contentious. Trump in his first term reversed a moratorium on government coal sales imposed under former President Barack Obama.

Ban

The Biden administration also sought to ban new coal sales in the closing days of his administration. The decision was projected to result in mines depleting their federal coal reserves as early as 2035 - decades earlier than if leasing continued.

When Sen. Jon Barrasso asked Trump Interior secretary nominee Doug Burgum about the ban during his confirmation hearing, Burgum replied he would "absolutely" work with the Wyoming Republican to reverse the ban.

Burgum also pledged to work with Montana Republican Sen. Steve Daines to advance pending coal mine expansion permits in the lawmaker's state.

"We have a shortage of electricity and especially we have a shortage of baseload. We know that we have the technology to deliver clean coal," Burgum said. He referenced efforts at a coal to gas plant in North Dakota - where he was governor - to capture and sequester carbon dioxide that would otherwise warm the planet.

Research has shown carbon capture is feasible and useful to boost aging oil field production. Scientists have questioned the practicality of commercial-scale, permanent sequestration of carbon dioxide from burning coal and other fossil fuels.

Global coal production was expected to an all-time high last year, approaching 10 billion tons (9 billion metric tons), according to the International Energy Agency.

The biggest demand is in Asia, where countries including China continue to build new coal-fired power plants as their economies expand.

U.S. coal companies have sought to capitalize on that growth by exporting more coal. They've been hindered by a lack of port access on the West Coast.

To get around opposition to new ports, Republicans during Trump's first term considered but never acted on a plan to use West Coast military bases or other federal properties as fossil fuel export sites.

U.S. exports last year were expected to top 100 million tons for the second year in a row. Top destinations included India, China, Brazil, Japan and the Netherlands.

"There is strong global appetite for coal and U.S. producers are ready to answer that need," said National Mining Association president Rich Nolan.

Overall U.S. coal production is forecast to continue declining.

Kuwait Petroleum International wins bid to operate major gas stations in Luxembourg

Q8's new stations set to boost Kuwaiti oil sector

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25, (KUNA): CEO of Kuwait Petroleum International (Q8) Shaikh Al-Ajmi said Saturday the company has won two bids to operate two major gas stations in Europe.

Speaking to KUNA, he explained that the first bid is related to the operation of a gas station located on a main highway in Luxembourg, while the second bid is meant to operate another station at the same area.

He boasted that this achievement is considered a significant step towards



One of the company's gas stations in Europe.

KUNA photo

attaining the company's strategic goals in the European continent, promoting its marketing status in the European market.

He added that this achievement would also lead to strengthening the Kuwaiti oil sector in world oil markets, particularly fuel retail stations, noting that the four-year operation of both stations would start on May 1.

Kuwait Petroleum International (Q8) was established in 1983 as the world refining and marketing arm of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), running a huge network of more than 4,700 retail gas and service stations, including over 2,800 ones in Italy.

Inflation, budget deficit, and tariffs to shape Trump's economic agenda

Trump faces economic challenges despite strong job market

WASHINGTON, Jan 25, (AP): Like most presidents, Donald Trump faces an economy that seldom bends to political ambitions.

The Republican has promised strong growth, high tariffs, income tax cuts and booming oil fields. But despite the solid job market and low 4.1% unemployment rate, he has to contend with headwinds like inflation, a budget deficit, increased tensions over trade, the fallout from his plans to curtail immigration and a persistent wealth gap.

Each of these issues could help to shape how voters feel about a president they returned to the White House with the specific goal of fixing the economy.

For his part, Trump wants to blame all the challenges before him on his predecessor, Joe Biden, who in turn blamed Trump in 2021 for the problems his own administration had to tackle.

"This begins with confronting the economic chaos caused by the failed policies of the last administration," Trump told the World Economic Forum on Thursday.

Here are five economic forces that could shape the first year of Trump's presidency:

Whipping inflation is easier said than done.

In AP VoteCast, an extensive survey of last year's electorate, 4 in 10 voters called inflation the single most important factor in their choice for president. About two-thirds of this group voted for Trump - a sign he owes his victory in large part to the high cost of groceries, gasoline, housing, autos and other goods.

Going forward, monthly reports on the consumer price index will be a clear measure of whether Trump can deliver. But inflation has actually increased in recent months. Consumer prices were increasing at a healthy 2.4% annual rate in September, compared with 2.9% in December. Economists say inflation could worsen if Trump imposes tariffs and uses deficit-funded income tax cuts.

Republicans often hit Biden hard on egg prices. But Democrats could use similar attacks on Trump. Over the past year, coffee costs have risen just 1% for U.S. consumers, but the International Monetary Fund has the price of the actual beans climbing 55% in a sign that lattes, espressos and plain old cups of joe could soon cost more.

Then there's housing. Voters are still frustrated by high mortgage



President Donald Trump is briefed on the effects of Hurricane Helene at Asheville Regional Airport in Fletcher, N.C., Friday, Jan. 24, 2025, as First lady Melania Trump looks on. (AP)

rates and prices staying elevated due to a shortage of properties. Shelter is 37% of the consumer price index. Price increases for housing have eased, but shelter costs are still rising at 4.6% a year, compared with annual increases averaging 3.3% before the pandemic.

Trump is betting that more energy production can cut into inflation rates, but domestic production is already near record levels, according to the government.

Tariffs

Trump says 25% tariffs are coming for Mexican and Canadian imports as soon as Feb. 1. He's also talked about additional tariffs of 10% on Chinese goods. His stated goal is to stop illegal border crossings and the flow of chemicals used to make drugs such as fentanyl.

For Trump, tariffs are a diplomatic tool for his policy goals. But they're also a threat possibly meant to jumpstart trade talks. They're also a revenue raiser that he claims could bring trillions of dollars into the treasury.

Trump did increase tariffs during his first term, with revenue collection more than doubling to an annual rate of \$85.4 billion, which might sound like a lot but was equal to just 0.4% of the gross domestic product. Multiple analyses by the Budget Lab at Yale and the Peterson Institute for International Economics, among others, say the threatened tariffs would increase costs for a typical family in a way that effectively raises taxes.

What really matters is whether Trump delivers on his threats. That is why Ben Harris, a former Biden adviser who is now director

of economic studies at the Brookings Institution, says voters should focus on average tariff rates.

"Trade is really tricky," Harris said. "But in broad terms, look at what he does and not what he says."

Trump likes to blame inflation on the national debt, saying Biden's policies boded the U.S. economy with more money than it could absorb. But about 22% of the \$36 trillion outstanding total debt originated from the policies of Trump's first term, according to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a fiscal watchdog.

Paul Winfree, a former Trump staffer who is now president and CEO of the Economic Policy Innovation Center, warned in a recent analysis that the U.S. is getting too close for comfort to its fiscal limits. His analysis suggests that if Trump can preserve 3% growth he could extend his expiring 2017 tax cuts while keeping the debt sufficiently stable by cutting spending \$100 billion to \$140 billion a year.

The risk is that higher borrowing costs and debt can limit what Trump does while keeping borrowing costs high for consumers. Lawmakers who once viewed the debt as problem years away increasingly see it as something to address now.

"One of the biggest vibe shifts I'm picking up on now among policymakers is they're beginning to realize the long-term is today," Winfree said.

Winfree said the key number to watch is the interest rates charged on U.S. debt - which will tell the public if investors think the amount of borrowing is problematic. Interest on the 10-year U.S.

Treasury note is at roughly 4.6%, up a full percentage point since September.

Trump's executive orders are a clear crackdown on immigration - and that could be a drag on economic growth and cause monthly job gains to slow. Trump often frames immigration as a criminal and national security issue by focusing on people crossing the border illegally.

But economies that can't add enough workers are at risk of stagnating - and the U.S. labor market at this stage needs immigrants as part of the jobs mix. About 84% of America's net population growth last year came from immigrants, according to the Census Bureau. That's 2.8 million immigrants.

Spend

"They not only work in the economy," said Satyam Panday, chief U.S. economist at S&P Global Ratings. "Their spending is somebody else's income in the economy."

If Trump were simply to put immigration back at his 2017 and 2019 averages of 750,000 immigrants annually, growth could slow from an estimated 2.7% last year to 2% going forward, Panday's analysis found. The construction, agriculture and leisure and hospitality industries would probably struggle to find employees.

In other words, it's worth monitoring the monthly jobs report and immigration flows.

Trump is going to have to figure out how to balance the interests of billionaires with those of his blue-collar voters. His inaugural events included several of the world's wealthiest men: Tesla's Elon Musk, Amazon's Jeff Bezos, Meta's Mark Zuckerberg and LVMH's Bernard Arnault. Each is worth roughly \$200 billion or more, according to the Bloomberg Billionaire Index.

Scott Ellis, a member of the group Patriotic Millionaires, said it's worth monitoring just how much their wealth increases under Trump. This year, as of Friday, Arnault's net worth has risen \$23 billion, Bezos is up by \$15 billion, Zuckerberg is up by \$18 billion and Musk's wealth has risen by \$6 billion. Those are all monthly increases.

By contrast, the most recent available Census Bureau data show that the median U.S. household wealth rose \$9,600 in 2021-2022, to \$176,500.



Indian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika opens the India Utsav 2025 at the Lulu Hypermarket in Al-Rai.



Photos from the event.

Festival celebrates India's Republic Day with Indian products, discounts

LuLu Hypermarket launches India Utsav 2025 in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: LuLu Hypermarket is celebrating the 76th Republic Day of India with the launch of India Utsav 2025, a festival that showcases Indian products and offers special discounts on a range of goods from India.

The grand festival was inaugurated on Thursday, 23 January at the Al-Rai outlet of the hypermarket by Ambassador of India, H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika, in the presence of top LuLu Hypermarket management in Kuwait and a large gathering of shoppers and well-wishers of the brand.

In his address to the gathering, Ambassador Swaika highlighted the enduring friendship and trade ties between India and Kuwait. He praised LuLu Hypermarket for its role in promoting Indian products, culture, and heritage through the India Utsav 2025 festival, and for fostering connections between the two nations. The highlight of India Utsav 2025, which is being held from 22-28 January at all outlets of the hypermarket in Kuwait, is an exciting lineup of exclusive

deals on a wide range of Indian products. Shoppers can enjoy special discounts on Indian fruits, vegetables, and groceries, as well as a 25 percent discount on sarees, men's kurta and churidars, allowing everyone to bring a touch of Indian tradition to their wardrobes.

Adding to the excitement of the week-long festival are a range of activities designed to engage and inspire young minds. School students are taking center stage in competitions such as The Great Indian Quiz, Patriotic Song Competition, Indian Ethnic Fashion Show, and an Art Gallery, showcasing their creativity, knowledge, and talent while celebrating India's diversity.

The Great Indian Quiz Competition saw ICSK Khaitan secured the 1st prize, with Carmel School Kuwait and United Indian School earning second and third prizes, respectively. In the Indian Patriotic Song Competition, the 1st prize was proudly clinched by ICSK Khaitan, followed by ICSK Amman in

second prize and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Indian Educational School in third. The Indian Ethnic Fashion Show showcased remarkable creativity, with Delhi Public School claiming the 1st prize. ICSK Junior and Smart Indian School followed in second and third places.

In the Art Gallery Competition (Junior Category), ICSK Khaitan won the top spot, while Carmel School Kuwait secured both the second and third prizes. In the Senior Category, ICSK Senior emerged as the winner, with ICSK Junior achieving both the second and third prizes.

The India Utsav 2025 celebration is not just an event, it is an experience of India's culture, flavors, and artistry. With tri-coloured displays, fun activities, and unbeatable offers on Indian products throughout the festival, LuLu Hypermarket is inviting families and communities across Kuwait to join in sharing and celebrating the spirit of India at the India Utsav 2025.



Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Zhang Jianwei speaks during an event to mark the Chinese Lunar New Year in Kuwait. (Xinhua)



People perform lion dance during the Chinese Lunar New Year celebration. (Xinhua)



People perform at an event celebrating the Chinese Lunar New Year. (Xinhua)

Traditional festivities

Chinese embassy in Kuwait celebrates Lunar New Year

KUWAIT CITY, Jan. 25, (Xinhua): The Chinese embassy in Kuwait hosted a celebration Thursday evening to mark the upcoming Chinese Lunar New Year, also known as the Spring Festival.

The celebration featured a variety of iconic Chinese performances. Chinese expatriates, representatives from Chinese companies, and embassy staff showcased traditional Chinese dances, while children performed dragon and

lion dances. The festivities also included a fireworks display.

In his address during the event, Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Zhang Jianwei highlighted China's significant achievements in scientific and technological innovation during the past year.

Zhang emphasized that China has maintained steady economic progress and high-quality development, remaining the largest contributor to global economic growth.

The corridors of FAIPS reverberated with excitement on the morning of 16th January, 2025 in the capacious auditorium, as the students of Grade 6 geared up to celebrate their Annual Day with vibrant enthusiasm. The event was graced by the esteemed Chief Guest, His Excellency Eduardo Patricio Pena Haller, Ambassador of the United Mexican States. Ms. Amna Al Moamen, Students Affairs Supervisor, MOE was the guest of honor.

The day's events commenced with an auspicious rendition of the Holy Quran followed by the lighting of the lamp. The Principal, Ravi Ayanoli graciously welcomed the esteemed dignitaries and the parents. In his address to the gathering, he highlighted the need for a holistic development of children and the crucial role of the parents' encouragement and support in achieving their goals by allowing them to participate in school activities along with academics.

The theme, 'Journey Through Time' embarked on an odyssey spanning various eras of civilizations through captivating stories, dances and songs. The event began with the spectacular Welcome Dance, an amalgamation of seven Indian classical dances in perfect harmony. An electrifying tribal dance, with the children swaying to the rhythmic beats of drums, unraveled the dawn of civilization. The audience was spellbound as the percussionists created magic with their hands, feet and music, replacing sound into a symphony of energy and creativity. The beauty of the peacocks, as they spread their blue and green feathers, was a sight to behold as the graceful dancers danced their way into the hearts of the audience.

The heartwarming English song 'A World of Joy, Laughter and Love uniting mankind thereby giving hope for a promising future. 'Ripples through Time' traced the

Students present 'Journey Through Time'

FAIPS DPS Class 6 celebrates Annual Day



Photos from the event

passage of time, echoing fleeting moments and fascinating stories through centuries. The ever popular Mime, depicted the evolution of the world, through body motions, without the use of speech. The auditorium came alive with the dazzling Arabian dance combining the charm of the past with modernity, yet holding on to their unique culture. Finally, the energetic Evolution Dance and the Mario Dance received thunderous applause from the audience as the exuberant

dancers transported the audience into a future where dreams take flight.

The Chief Guest, His Excellency Eduardo Patricio Pena Haller, in his address, congratulated the students for their remarkable performances on stage. He appreciated the hard work of the teachers and advocated the importance of teaching values to the younger generation.

The two shining stars of FAIPS, Bhavana Panchumarthi, and

Sruthi Vagvala, were honoured by the Chief Guest, for their achievements in the Kuwait International Chess Festival Tournament and in the CBSE National Badminton Championship, 2024 respectively.

The event culminated with a vote of thanks by the Headmistress of the Middle School, Ms. Deepa Elezabeth, who expressed her gratitude to the management, faculty, parents and students for their selfless efforts in making the day a truly memorable experience.

'2000 Meters' gets stronger praise than 'Mariupol'

For docus at Sundance, Oscar wins often follow

PARK CITY, Utah, Jan 25, (AP): The Sundance Film Festival welcomed back three Oscar-winning documentary filmmakers to help kick off the annual independent film showcase in Park City, Utah.

On Thursday night at The Ray Theater, '20 Days in Mariupol' filmmaker Mstyslav Chernov, who won the Oscar last year, debuted his latest dispatch from Ukraine, '2000 Meters to Andriivka,' a harrowing journey to the front lines of a 2023 counteroffensive. A few hours later, at the Eccles, Amir Qureshi's 'Thompson,' who won an Oscar for 'Summer of Soul' in 2022, unveiled his Sly Stone portrait, 'SLY LIVES!' (aka The Burden of Black Genius). Earlier, 'One Day in September' filmmaker Kevin MacDonal also showcased his film 'One to One: John & Yoko,' which debuted last year at the Venice Film Festival and will get an IMAX release on April 11 before hitting Max later this year.

Some critics reflected that '2000 Meters to Andriivka' a joint production between The Associated Press and PBS Frontline, was even more powerful than '20 Days in Mariupol.' 'SLY LIVES!' (on Hulu Feb. 13) was called 'sublime' and 'illuminating' in its examination of an underappreciated, shapeshifting genius.

'I've been coming here since 2000 and I thought the coolest thing you could do would be to DJ an after party,' Thompson said before the screening. 'I never dreamt this for my future, so this is really humbling.'

It was a full-circle end to a day that began with a slate of documentary Oscar nominations all connected to the Sundance Institute in some way. Some were supported by the Institute, some debuted at the festival as recently as last

year. 'Black Box Diaries,' in which a Japanese filmmaker investigates her own sexual assault, had its premiere in Park City last year and was supported by the Institute's doc fund program. 'No Other Land,' made by a Palestinian-Israeli collective, was also supported by the doc fund. 'Porcelain War,' about Ukrainian artists in wartime, debuted at the festival in 2024, where it won the grand jury prize. 'Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat,' about the assassination of Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba in 1961, also launched last year and won a special jury prize. And, 'Hally,' 'Sugar cane,' a 2024 festival premiere investing abuse and missing children at an Indian residential school, was supported by a Sundance grant.

Community

'It's really special,' said Basil Tsiokos, a Sundance senior programmer. 'It does speak to what Sundance brings to the artistic community and to the support that we show to artists out there.'

On Friday night, 'Sugar cane' filmmakers Julian Brave NoiseCat and Emily Kassie are also being given an award at the Institute's fundraising gala. Newly anointed Oscar nominees James Mangold and Cynthia Erivo are also being honored.

'It's not lost on those who program for the festival and run the artists programs how crucial that initial support can be for someone trying to make a documentary.'

'The funding landscape is challenging, particularly in the non-fiction space,' Tsiokos said. 'Getting early support

from the artists programs, from the documentary feature programs is sort of a stamp of approval, of encouragement that helps other funders come in later on to take a seed of an idea and bring it into fruition.'

The Oscars and Sundance have long been connected, especially in the documentary space. For the past 25 years, there has been at least one Sundance movie every year that goes on to get an Oscar nomination. Some that have won the statuette include 'An Inconvenient Truth,' 'Man on Wire,' 'Searching for Sugar Man,' '20 Feet From Stardom,' 'Carus,' 'American Factory' and 'Navalny.'

'We just provide a space for the films,' Tsiokos said. 'The films are from the artists. They're the ones with the vision to make these films possible. We provide them a platform to be able to meet their audiences. That's quite an important role that we take very seriously.'

This year, the festival has about 40 feature documentaries premiering across sections on everything from Marlee Matlin and Selena Quintanilla, to one about Nairobi women transforming a formerly whites-only library into a cultural hub, to another on Florida's stand-your-ground laws. While it's difficult to project what might be in the Oscar race next year, Tsiokos has observed one trend that might help audiences pick and choose.

'The influence of the international voters is growing. In the last couple of years especially, most of the nominees for the Oscar race tend to be international titles,' Tsiokos said. 'I would tell people to make sure to check out the World Cinema Documentary Competition. There are some real gems.'



Tessa Thompson attends the Celebrating Sundance Institute gala during the Sundance Film Festival on Friday, Jan. 24, 2025, at Grand Hyatt Deer Valley in Park City, Utah. (AP)

Books

'Onyx Storm' mania

Fans pack Town Hall for Rebecca Yarros

NEW YORK, Jan 25, (AP): To celebrate an upcoming milestone, Alyssa Math could think of nothing more fitting than front-row tickets to 'Onyx Storm' author Rebecca Yarros' appearance at The Town Hall in Manhattan.

'I'm getting married next weekend, so this is my bachelorette party,' said Math, an accountant who traveled with friends from her home near Annapolis, Maryland. She has been one of millions of admirers of Yarros' work and a year ago drove two hours to Reston, Virginia to see the author.

'It's a huge cult following,' said Math, wearing a white veil in homage to one of Yarros' characters. 'The drama (of her books) keeps you on the edge of your seat.'

Friday night at The Town Hall had the feel of a costume party, rock concert and family reunion as a capacity crowd of around 1,500 clapped, laughed and shouted. 'Yes, Queen!' Yarros' 'Empyrean' series has made her one of the country's most popular and obsessed-about leaders of romantasy, a newly branded genre that combines romance and fantasy.

'Onyx Storm' is the much-awaited third installment of a planned 'Ve' centered on the lovers Violet and Xaden, and the 'St since the million-selling 'Iron Flame' came out in 2023. In its 'St week of publication, 'Onyx Storm' has already topped the bestseller lists of Amazon and sold more than 300,000 copies just through Barnes & Noble, according to a spokesperson for the superstore chain.

Insights

Yarros, interviewed for some 75 minutes by Olympic gymnast and avowed fan Laurie Hernandez, shared a few insights about her writings (she already knows how the series will end), spoke lovingly of her husband ('He's 6'3" and hot as hell with a baby strapped to his chest'), swore casually and joked that hers was the 'only profession where you can have imaginary friends' and not be considered insane.

She expressed relief and pleasure over completing 'Onyx Storm,' while pointing out that she had to block out her own popularity to get the writing done.

'As much as I love you guys, I kind of pretend you don't exist,' she said. 'I kind of ignore you, but I love you at the same time.'

'Onyx Storm' isn't quite a Harry Potter-level phenomenon - the 'Hal Potter' book, 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows,' sold more than 8 million copies in the US in its 'St 24 hours - but it carries a similar feeling of obsession, identification and spontaneity.

Like the Potter books, the release of 'Onyx Storm' was welcomed with midnight store parties around the country, gatherings for which fans showed up in costume. Some fans at The Town Hall 'hished the 526-page 'Onyx Storm' within hours of receiving it, others are in no hurry.

'This is a book I personally want to take my time with,' said Scarlett Fuentes, who arrived with her friend Zy Bao-angan, both of them in black leather.

'I want to savor this moment,' Bao-angan said.

Like Potter, enthusiasm for the Yarros books extends well beyond any organized publicity campaigns. The Potter books helped inspire some of the 'St Internet fan sites for books. Yarros and such fellow romantasy authors as Sarah J. Maas have been favorites of the young readers on BookTok, a TikTok community that has emerged as publishing's most effective driver of sales. Countless fans on BookTok and other social media - some crying, some cursing in amazement - have been posting their responses to 'Onyx Storm.'



Author Rebecca Yarros discusses her new book 'Onyx Storm' at The Town Hall on Friday, Jan. 24, in New York. (AP)

Fashion



A model presents a creation for men's Fall/Winter 2025-2026 collections by Dior Homme. (Xinhua)



A model wears a creation for the men's Kenzo Fall-Winter 2025-2026 collection. (AP)



A model wears a creation for the men's Kenzo Fall-Winter 2025-2026 collection, that was presented in Paris, Friday, Jan. 24, 2025. (AP)



A model presents a creation by Yohji Yamamoto during the Paris Fashion Week in Paris, France. (Xinhua)



A model wears a creation as part of the men's Junya Watanabe Fall-Winter 2025-2026 collection. (AP)

Kim Jones shifts to sharper, masculine aesthetic

Dior's collection reflects precision, opulence

PARIS, Jan 25, (AP): Inside the historic Ecole Militaire, with the Eiffel Tower looming above, Kate Moss and Robert Pattinson joined a star-studded audience for Dior Men's show at Paris Fashion Week - a slight but noticeable departure for Kim Jones.

Renowned for his gender-fluid designs, Jones on Friday embraced a sharper, more traditionally masculine aesthetic this season.

The white sanitized, almost ethereal staircase descending onto the runway was minimalist and angular - much like the designs themselves. It set the stage for a Jones collection inspired by the house's mid-century heritage.

Taking cues from Christian Dior's iconic 'Ligne H,' or 'H Line,' a revolutionary post-war silhouette designed to simplify women's fashion, Jones reinterpreted it as clean, structured lines for men.

The front row was equally captivating. Kate Moss, ever the icon, caused a flurry of paparazzi snaps, resembling a goddess at the foot of the staircase.

Robert Pattinson, meanwhile, exuded his trademark brooding charm, drawing admiring glances. Louis Garrel,

Nam Joo-hyuk, and J Balvin added their international star power, while Gwendoline Christie, statuesque and commanding, turned heads.

Rising stars Apo Nattawin and Mile Phakphum caused an uproar outside, underscoring Dior's global cultural reach.

Jones delivered a collection that balanced precision with opulence. A black leather bomber, minimalist and stark, exemplified the pared-down refinement that underpinned the collection.

It typified Jones' focus on structured masculinity. Tailored opera capes, borrowed from Dior's women's couture archives, were reimagined sharply.

Polished leather boots adorned with satin bows - playfully nicknamed 'bow caps' - brought a couture twist to otherwise restrained looks.

The 'Chale' featured a striking pink robe inspired by Dior's 1948 (asterisk)Pondichery(asterisk) haute couture look, reinterpreted with intricate embroidery that shimmered. Hybrid sneakers, embroidered with motifs from Dior's 1961 archives, injected youthful energy into the lineup.

Jones built the collection around metamorphosis, explor-

ing menswear's evolution from the ornamental excesses of the 18th century to the functional refinement of the 19th century.

Angular tailoring softened by satin bows, glass-bead embroidery reminiscent of raindrops, and chiaroscuro-inspired drapery underscored the duality that has become a hallmark of Jones' work.

Front-row buzz centered on the shift in tone. 'It's sharper, more grounded,' one insider noted, comparing this collection to Jones' fluid designs of previous seasons.

Rumors circulated about whether this pivot was artistically motivated or influenced by Dior executives. Either way, Jones' pragmatic approach to fashion - balancing artistry with wearability - delivered a strong collection.

'Mr. Dior's Ligne H was in our heads even before going into the archive this season,' Jones said.

'It has elements that are graphic and angular, which felt eminently transferable into the men's world,' he said. 'While a lot refers to the history of fashion, this is not historical fashion. Ultimately, in this collection, we wanted to say something about now.'

Variety

LOS ANGELES: On the 'St day of ASAP Rocky's trial, jurors saw surveillance videos that a prosecutor argued make it clear the rapper 'ed a gun in 2021 at his former friend, who the defense cast as jealous, money-seeking rival who fabricated large parts of the story.

Deputy District Attorney Paul Przelomiec gave a sober, straightforward presentation during opening statements Friday in the trial of the hip-hop star, fashion maven and actor. It relied almost entirely on the video evidence and audio from a 911 call.

'What will become almost instantly clear is that this is not a complicated case,' Przelomiec said.

Rocky's attorney Joe Tacopina said in the defense opening statement that the video evidence is meaningless without the testimony of the accuser - Terrell Ephron, who goes



Rocky

protection. (AP)

by ASAP Relli. Tacopina argued Relli is driven by jealousy, lies and greed.

'This case rises or falls on his credibility,' Tacopina said, repeatedly calling Relli, 'perjurer and a criminal,' spurring prosecution objections. 'The videos you saw, without his testimony, prove absolutely nothing.'

The defense said that the gun was a starter pistol that shot only blanks - which they argued Relli knew - and Rocky carried only as a prop for

PARK CITY, Utah: Oscars host Conan O'Brien says he's still unable to live in his home due to the devastating wild-

fires in Los Angeles and that the show's organizers 'want to be sensitive to what happened' to residents.

'Everybody I know has been affected,' O'Brien told The Associated Press Friday. 'I'm out of my house. Fortunately, my house, ... the fire got very close but my house survived. But we won't be back in there for a long time. And I'm the lucky one. I mean, I know so many people who lost their homes and I'm just, was ridiculously lucky. So we want to make sure that that show reflects what's happening and that we put a light on the right people in the right way.'

Thousands of Angelenos had their homes destroyed in wildfires that tore through the Pacific Palisades and Altadena neighborhoods this month. Many of those whose homes survived cannot yet return due to smoke or other damage.

O'Brien was tapped last year to host the 97th Academy Awards, which will be held March 2 in Los Angeles. The 'Stes twice postponed the academy's nominations announcement, which was held Thursday; Emilia Pérez emerged as the leading nominee. (AP)



The Minister of Health opens the exhibition accompanying the First International Conference on Advanced Diabetes Care.



A group photo of conference participants.

KUNA photos

Diabetes is leading cause of heart diseases and amputations

Kuwait hosts int'l conference on advanced diabetes care

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi has highlighted the global and national significance of diabetes, describing it as one of the most common and critical chronic diseases affecting people worldwide.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the First International Conference on Advanced Diabetes Care, organized by the Dasman Diabetes Institute under the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, Dr. Al-Awadhi outlined the severe health complications associated with the disease.

"Diabetes," he said, "is a leading cause of heart and artery diseases, strokes, kidney failure and vision loss and it ranks second after road accidents as a cause of diabetic foot amputations," he stated.

The minister emphasized the importance of this conference in exploring comprehensive strategies for prevention, treatment and management of diabetes-related complications.

He expressed optimism that the conference's outcomes would enhance healthcare services in Kuwait and foster stronger scientific ties with renowned international institutions participating in the event.

The three-day conference serves as a global forum, bringing together over 400 researchers, healthcare professionals and specialists from Kuwait, the Gulf region and beyond. It aims to review the latest advancements in diabetes research and treatment while showcasing innovative strategies to prevent and manage the disease's complications.

Dr. Al-Awadhi praised the Dasman Diabetes Institute for its pivotal role in diabetes research and treatment across the Middle East, describing it as a trailblazer in the field.

He noted that the institute continues to uphold its mission by integrating advanced research, comprehensive prevention strategies and professional training to combat this chronic condition effectively.

"This conference is an exceptional opportunity for collaboration, knowledge exchange and the enhancement of

international partnerships among healthcare professionals and all stakeholders committed to combating diabetes," Dr. Al-Awadhi remarked.

During his interaction with reporters after the opening ceremony, Dr. Al-Awadhi underscored the ministry's commitment to combating diabetes through the provision of state-of-the-art medical devices, advanced medicines and comprehensive care.

He highlighted the growing challenges posed by the disease, including the need for dialysis, kidney transplants and addressing complications such as diabetic foot.

He also commended Kuwait's robust healthcare infrastructure, which includes advanced equipment, specialized oxygen rooms with a capacity of up to 12 patients per facility and a wide range of services dedicated to citizens and residents.

The minister further emphasized the importance of raising public awareness about obesity as a significant risk factor for diabetes.

Dr. Faisal Al-Rifai, Acting Director General of the Dasman Diabetes Institute, elaborated on the conference's agenda, which encompasses advanced research, prevention methods and innovative treatment recommendations.

He highlighted the institute's dedication to organizing a comprehensive and inclusive event to address all aspects of diabetes, ensuring that participants leave equipped with the latest scientific knowledge and practical insights.

"Diabetes remains one of the most pressing chronic diseases globally and this conference underscores our commitment to addressing it with a holistic approach," Dr. Al-Rifai stated.

The conference not only serves as a platform for scientific exchange but also aims to strengthen collaboration among global and regional experts, ensuring that Kuwait remains at the forefront of diabetes care and innovation.

This landmark event reflects Kuwait's dedication to combating diabetes and its related complications while fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation in healthcare.

Closure weighed

Bird flu leads to mass cull at a US duck farm

NEW YORK, Jan 25, (AP) — New York's Long Island was once synonymous with duck in the culinary world. Now it may lose its last commercial farm.

The avian outbreak that has led to the slaughter of millions of birds at US poultry farms and driven up the price of eggs struck the Crescent Duck Farm this week, leading federal officials to order the destruction of the operation's entire flock.

Doug Corwin, whose family has owned the roughly 140-acre farm since the 1640s, said Friday that a multiday culling of about 100,000 birds has been completed at the now-quarantined barns in Aquebogue.

His remaining staff will thoroughly sanitize the facility, a process that could take months.

"We're just stunned right now," Corwin, 66, said Friday by phone. "It's a very, very sad time. We're trying our best to work our way through this, one step at a time."

He said the family will have to reckon with the future of the fourth-generation business, which was established in 1908 and is tucked among the vineyards and agricultural lands of Long Island's North Fork, about 80 miles (129 km) east of Manhattan.

Corwin said he was forced to lay off 47 of the farm's 75-member staff, including many who had worked there for decades as the farm's revenue cratered.

"If duck farming isn't an option, I'm not sure what we do," he said. "We're not really set up for anything else." Long Island was once a center of

duck production in the U.S., thanks to its abundance of freshwater streams, friendly climate and proximity to major East Coast cities.

During its heyday in the early 1960s, the region boasted more than 100 farms, producing up to 7.5 million birds annually, or about two-thirds of the nation's duck output.

Crescent Duck Farm has been the island's lone remaining operation for the better part of a decade, as higher operating costs, tougher regulations and increasing suburban sprawl took their toll.

Today the farm supplies nearly 4% of all the ducks sold in the country, supplying restaurants across the Northeast and beyond, including a number of high-end establishments in New York City, Corwin said.

The key to its longevity has been the quality of its ducks, which he said have a thick, meaty breast and just enough skin fat to keep them tender and moist during cooking.

"The only way we've survived on Long Island is by making a duck that is different from our competition," Corwin said.

Following the outbreak, the farm was allowed to hold on to several thousand duck eggs, which he hopes will help rebuild its flock and preserve the distinctive genetics honed over generations.

The quarantined eggs will first be sanitized and hatched offsite, with regular testing for any signs of the virus.

But Corwin said he is reluctant to restart without federal approval for vaccinating poultry — something larger industrial farms oppose because of its impact on international sales.

Screen overuse leads to migraines, vision loss

Screen breaks and proper desk setup help alleviate eye strain

NEW YORK, Jan 25, (AP) — The trouble started every day at around 3 p.m., after Cathy Higgins had spent five or six hours staring at an array of computer screens at her desk. Her university job overseeing research projects involved peering closely at numbers and details on contracts, applications and budgets.

"My vision was so blurry, I couldn't even see what was on the screen, and I was squinting so much that I could not function," Higgins said.

When her eyesight got bad, Higgins walked around and spoke with members of her staff. She began planning in-person meetings for afternoons. But she would resume the computer work late at night after her children went to bed.

"If I had to continue working through the blurry vision, that's when the migraines would happen," Higgins said.

Digital screens are pervasive, not only at work but in our homes, schools and shops. An estimated 104 million Americans of working age spend more than seven hours a day in front of screens, according to the American Optometric Association. All that screen time can take a toll.

Too much exposure to screens can lead to dry or watery eyes, fuzzy vision and headaches. It can also lead to myopia, or nearsightedness, in some people, especially children. Some technology workers even describe short bouts of vertigo when they look at screens for too long.

One reason for the discomfort is that staring closely at screens for prolonged periods causes the muscle that helps eye focus to tighten up.

"That muscle's not supposed to stay tight all day long. And if it does, it's like picking up a light weight and trying to hold it over your head for hours," American Optometric Association President Steven Reed said. "It's not hard to pick it up. But after a while, even though it's not a heavy lift, your body just gets tired."

Fortunately, exposure to blue light from computer screens and devices has not been shown to cause permanent eye damage, according to the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

Nevertheless, symptoms can disrupt work, family time and rest. As an optometrist in Mississippi, Reed sees patients who complain of frequent eye pain, headaches and blurry vision associated with computer use. He advises getting an eye exam and taking frequent breaks.

For Higgins, trying to catch up on the work she couldn't do when her eyes were too fatigued on weekends. "They'd be playing together, and I couldn't be as engaged as I would have liked to have been in what they were doing," she said.

Here are some tips from eye health professionals to reduce eye strain caused by devices.

Take a break every 20 minutes from sitting at a computer. During the break, focus your eyes on something that's about 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Pausing close-up work and looking at something in the distance gives tired, tight muscles time to relax.

Luckily, eye strain is temporary, said Raj Maturi, an ophthalmologist at Midwest Eye Institute in Indianapolis who serves as spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology. "The best way to avoid these symptoms is by taking breaks from our screens or near work activities and using lubricating eye drops, if needed."

People usually blink about 18 to 22 times per minute. But when looking at a screen, the rate drops to three to seven times per minute, according to the Cleveland Clinic. That's where eye drops come in.

It's good to move around and go outside, but when you don't have time for an outdoor walk, frequent 20-second breaks can help.

Some people find that using a larger computer monitor helps reduce eye fatigue. You can also increase the font size on your laptop, monitor or smartphone screen.

Higgins did all of the above after she started a new job as senior vice president at Stand Up to Cancer. Since she works remotely from home in Midlothian, Virginia, she got a 29-inch monitor and sits about three feet away from it, about a foot farther than in most of her setups.

300 isolated

17 'mysterious' deaths in India

NEW DELHI, Jan. 25, (Xinhua) — Local government authorities in Indian-controlled Kashmir have quarantined around 300 residents of a village after reporting 17 unknown cause deaths and 11 others are undergoing treatment at different hospitals, officials said Friday.

The unknown cause of illness began on Dec. 7, 2024, in the Budhal village of Rajouri district, about 243 km south of Srinagar, the summer capital of Indian-controlled Kashmir.

The decision to relocate the affected families and their extended relatives to the government facilities was taken after the local administration declared the village a containment zone, following five new cases in two days.

The houses of families where the deaths occurred have been sealed and entry inside them is strictly prohibited without permission from officials on duty.

Health officials struggling to unravel the illness have identified a common factor among all those who lost their lives as involvement of the brain and damage to the nervous system.

Meanwhile, a federal government team that visited the village to probe the deaths is continuing its investigation into the cause. Reports said the team had sent over 230 samples for testing to various institutes.

A local newspaper Dainik Jagran quoted federal junior minister Jitendra Singh saying the illness was due to cadmium toxin.

Cadmium was detected in the bodies of the victims during the tests at the Indian Institute of Toxicology Research, Lucknow. How cadmium found its way inside the body is still a matter of investigation, Singh was quoted by the newspaper as saying.

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Alysa Liu falters late

Glenn defends title at the US Figure Skating Championships

WICHITA, Kan., Jan 25, (AP) — Amber Glenn was disappointed but not defeated after her short program at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships, the reigning champion defiantly vowing to go on the attack when she returned to the ice for the free skate.

She did exactly that, beginning with a powerful triple axel to start the program and ending with an elegant layback spin.

The 25-year-old from Plano, Texas, wound up with 216.79 points, enough to edge out Alysa Liu, who had led after the short program but made a couple of small mistakes in her free skate that proved to be just big enough. The two-time national champion, in the midst of a comeback from a two-year retirement, finished right behind Glenn with 215.33 points.

Two-time champion Bradie Tennell, who was second after the short program, struggled through a fall on her triple lutz in her free skate and was passed for third by Sarah Everhardt, an 18-year-old rising star from Haymarket, Virginia.

Glenn rolled into nationals unbeaten for the season, becoming the first American woman to win the Grand Prix Final in nearly 15 years along the way. But after her uneven short program, Glenn was left in third place and trailing Liu by nearly six points.

Her opening triple axel may have been the best of her career, and it set the tone for the rest of her night. Glenn

landed six more triple jumps, including three in combination, before her only real mistake — a fall on her triple loop late in the program.

Liu, the youngest U.S. champion ever when she triumphed at the age of 13, was trying to add a third title five years after winning her last. But a couple of errors, including a mistake on her layback spin at the end, may have cost her the gold.

Earlier in the night, two-time defending ice dance world champions Madison Chock and Evan Bates pranced their way through three decades of popular American music and into a big lead after the rhythm dance portion of their competition.

Chock and Bates scored 92.16 points, nearly 10 more than second-place Christina Carreira and Anthony Ponomarenko. To put that into context, second through fourth places were separated by less than a point, with the pair of Emilea Zingas and Vadym Kolesnik scoring the exact same — 82.13 points — as Caroline Green and Michael Parsons.

Chock and Bates were not available after their performance because she was dealing with a food-related stomach bug.

They are going for their fourth straight national title and sixth overall, which would tie the U.S. record held by Meryl Davis and Charlie White. And this one would come 11 years after Chock and Bates first stepped atop the podium.



From left: Alysa Lie, Amber Glenn, Sarah Everhardt and Bradie Tennell pose with their medals at the U.S. Figure skating championships in Wichita, Kan. (AP)

Short-handed 76ers edge Cavs to end losing streak



Cleveland Cavaliers' Jerome Robinson, left, drives to the basket against Philadelphia 76ers' Adem Bona, second from left, during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Philadelphia. (AP)

Trail Blazers beat Hornets for 4th straight victory

PHILADELPHIA, Jan 25, (AP) — Paul George scored 30 points, Tyrese Maxey had 29 and the short-handed Philadelphia 76ers beat the Cleveland Cavaliers 132-129 on Friday night to end a seven-game losing streak.

Cleveland lost its second straight to drop into a tie for the NBA lead with Oklahoma City at 36-8. Philadelphia is 16-27.

Donovan Mitchell scored 37 points for Cleveland, and Ty Jerome had a career-high 33, making all eight of his 3-point tries.

Philadelphia star center Joel Embiid missed his 10th straight game because of a left knee injury. He also was ruled out by coach Nick Nurse at Chicago on Saturday night.

Jerome's second straight 3-pointer put Cleveland up 116-110 with 6:17 remaining, but the 76ers ran off 13 consecutive points to go up seven. The Cavaliers had the ball with a chance to tie it, but Jerome turned it over on an inbound play.

Kelly Oubre Jr. added 22 points for the 76ers. Darius Garland had 26

for Cleveland.

Trail Blazers 102, Hornets 97

In Charlotte, Anfernee Simons scored 17 of his 27 points in the second half, Jerami Grant added 22 points and the Portland Trail Blazers defeated the Charlotte Hornets for their fourth straight win.

Deni Avdija had 18 points and Donovan Clingan added 13 rebounds as the Blazers outscored the



Portland Trail Blazers forward Deni Avdija (8) goes up for a layup past Charlotte Hornets guard Josh Green (10) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Charlotte, N.C. (AP)

Hornets 29-22 in the fourth quarter.

Nick Smith Jr. had 17 points and Josh Okogie added 16 points and 10 rebounds to lead the Hornets, who lacked scoring power without Lamelo Ball, Miles Bridges and Brandon Miller.

The Hornets led 75-73 entering the fourth quarter, but the Blazers quickly took control. After Portland corralled two offensive rebounds on

the same possession, Simons buried a 3 to give the Blazers the lead for good with 7 1/2 minutes to play, sparking a 7-0 run. The Blazers never trailed again.

The Hornets shot 7 of 22 in the fourth quarter.

Grizzlies 139, Pelicans 126

In Memphis, Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 15 of his 29 points in the third quarter, Desmond Bane had 20 points and 14 assists and the Memphis Grizzlies beat the New Orleans Pelicans.

Luke Kennard added 27 points, making 7 of 9 3-pointers and 10 of 14 overall shots from the field, to help Memphis win its 11th straight.

Dejounte Murray led the Pelicans with 26 points. Trey Murphy III and CJ McCollum each had 22, and Jordan Hawkins added 20.

The Pelicans relied heavily on their backcourt for a 71-62 halftime lead, with Murray scoring 17 points and McCollum adding 15.

The game had the potential of highlighting the top two picks in the 2019 NBA draft — Zion Williamson, the No. 1 pick for the Pelicans, and Ja Morant, picked second by the Grizzlies. However, neither was available with Williamson still ramping up conditioning, and Morant recovering from an illness.

Osasuna the lead.

But Januzaj, the Belgian winger on loan from Sevilla, delighted the home fans when his late free kick took a deflection and rolled into the empty net.

The comeback was all the more surprising given that Las Palmas played the last quarter of the game with 10 men after midfielder Dario Essugo was sent off. Essugo was given a harsh yellow card for an innocuous challenge in the 72nd and shown another seconds later for protesting.

He was restrained by his teammates and escorted off the field by club officials.

Iowa holds off late Penn State rally

UCLA hands Washington sixth consecutive defeat

SEATTLE, Jan 25, (AP) — Skyy Clark scored 12 points and grabbed six rebounds and Aday Mara added another dozen points and seven rebounds off the bench as UCLA edged Washington 65-60 on Friday night.

UCLA (14-6, 5-4), fresh off an 85-83 victory over No. 18 Wisconsin, won its third straight. Washington (10-10, 1-8) lost its sixth straight game to a Big 10 Conference opponent. The streak is the longest by a Huskies team since dropping eight straight in 2020-21.

Washington led by as many as seven points in the first half, but Kobe Johnson hit a 3-pointer with 7:31 left to pull UCLA even at 22-22 and Lazar Stefanovic stoke the ball from DJ Davis and dunked seconds later to give the Bruins the lead for good.

Mehki Mason hit his second 3-pointer of the second half to get Washington to within four, 54-50 with 6:41 left and DJ Davis knocked down a 3-pointer with 1:39 left to get within three, 58-55. Dylan Andrews hit from deep and Clark hit a pair of free throws for UCLA in the final 17 seconds to seal the victory.

Owen Freeman and Drew Thelwell each scored 16 points and Iowa held off a late Penn State comeback to earn a 76-75 win.

The Hawkeyes (13-7, 4-5 Big Ten) took the lead for good on Payton Sandfort's 3-pointer with 13:36 left in the first half gave them a 16-14 lead and they led by double digits, 68-58 with just over seven minutes to play. But Iowa did not score after Payton Sandfort's jumper with 3:28 left gave the Hawkeyes an eight-point lead, 76-68.

Yanic Konan Niederhauer dunked and, after Nick Kern Jr. hit the first of two free throws, hit from the outside and knocked down two free throws with :53 left to get the Nittany Lions within one. Penn State had possession and missed two three-point attempts in the final seconds, and after Thelwell missed the front end of a one-and-one with three seconds left, could not get off a shot at the buzzer.

Purdue point guard Braden Smith took a loss Tuesday night personally.

So Friday night, he took charge right from the start.

Nate Santos' 24 points helped Dayton defeat Saint Joseph's (PA) 77-72.

Santos added eight rebounds for the Flyers (14-6, 4-3 Atlantic 10 Conference). Amael Leang added 14 points



Purdue guard Braden Smith shoots in front of Michigan guard Tre Donaldson during an NCAA basketball game. (AP)

while shooting 5 for 12 (3 for 9 from 3-point range) and 1 of 3 from the free-throw line while they also had six rebounds. Malachi Smith had 12 points and shot 3 of 8 from the field and 6 for 6 from the line.

The Hawks (12-8, 4-4) were led in scoring by Erik Reynolds II, who finished with 21 points. Xzayvier Brown added 18 points and five assists for Saint Joseph's (PA). Rasheer Fleming also recorded 13 points, seven rebounds and two blocks.

Jackson Paveletzke had 15 points and his two free throws with a minute left proved to be the game-winning points in Ohio's 61-59 victory over Kent State.

Paveletzke shot 5 of 7 from the field and 4 of 4 from the free-throw line for the Bobcats (11-8, 5-2 Mid-American Conference). AJ Brown scored 15 points while shooting 4 for 12 (2 for 6 from 3-point range) and 5 of 6 from the free-throw line and added four steals. Shereef Mitchell shot 2 of 9 from the field, including 2 for 4 from 3-point range, and went 5 for 6 from the line to finish with 11 points.

The Golden Flashes (12-7, 3-4) were led in scoring by Cheron Hornbeak, who finished with 13 points, 11 rebounds and three blocks. VonCameron Davis added 13 points and two steals for Kent State. Marquis Barnett also recorded 10 points, seven rebounds and two steals.

Garcia hired as Belgium coach

BRUSSELS, Jan 25, (AP) — Rudi Garcia has been hired as Belgium's new coach, the country's soccer federation said.

The 60-year-old Garcia, who coached several big clubs including Napoli, Marseille and Roma in his much traveled career, has never managed a national side. He has signed a deal until the end of the 2026 World Cup.

He was appointed as a replacement for Domenico Tedesco, who was fired last week after he failed to revive the team during a relatively short tenure.

Garcia's arrival could pave the way for Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois' return, who was at odds with Tedesco and left the team just before the 2024 European Championships after not being named team captain.

Tedesco was hired in February 2023 with the goal of rebooting the Red Devils after a disappointing end of the Roberto Martinez era at the World Cup. He failed and was fired after further disappointing performances at both Euro 2024, when it lost to France in the round of 16, and the Nations League.

Garcia's first match in charge will be in March against Ukraine in the Nations League playoffs, with the mission to keep the Red Devils in League A. Belgium will then start its qualifying for the World Cup in June.

Garcia won the French league and Cup double in 2011 with Lille, where he managed former Belgian great Eden Hazard.

Best of the Rest

Walker joins AC Milan on loan: England's right-back Kyle Walker has completed his loan move from Premier League side Manchester City to AC Milan, the Italian Serie A giant announced.

AC Milan is pleased to announce the loan signing of Kyle Andrew Walker from Manchester City FC, with an option to buy, the club said in a statement.

The 34-year-old started his career at Sheffield United and then joined Tottenham Hotspur in 2009, making his Premier League debut in March 2010. In 2017, he moved to Manchester City, where he has played 319 matches and won 17 trophies, including six Premier League titles and one UEFA Champions League trophy in 2023. (Xinhua)

Yunnan Yukun signs Martinez: Spanish defender Jose Martinez has joined Chinese Super League (CSL) club Yunnan Yukun as a free agent.

Effective as of today, Spanish player Jose Antonio Martinez officially joins our club, the Yunnan side said in a statement.

We believe that his arrival will bring remarkable improvement to the overall strength of the team, it added.

Prior to his move to China, the 31-year-old defender has played one year at the Spanish second-division club Cordoba CF.

Yunnan Yukun secured promotion to CSL after clinching the title in the Chinese second-tier league last season. (Xinhua)

Auxerre shares points with Etienne in entertaining draw

AUXERRE, France, Jan 25, (AP) — On-loan Bournemouth striker Hamed Traore's eighth goal of the season for Auxerre was not enough as lowly Saint-Etienne grabbed a first-half equalizer and shared the spoils in Ligue 1.

Traore broke the deadlock in the 26th minute when he took a superb long ball from Elisha Owusu before cutting in from the right and curling a low shot past the despairing Saint-Etienne goalkeeper.

Lucas Stassin leveled in the first half stoppage time for Saint-Etienne when he was on hand to nod home on the goal-line after a rebound fell kindly to him following two point-blank saves

by Donovan Leon.

Auxerre has not won a league match since Nov. 24 but its early season form means it stays in mid-table at 11th.

Former Manchester United winger Adnan Januzaj scored a sensational injury-time free kick as 10-man Las Palmas came from behind to draw with Osasuna 1-1 in La Liga.

Januzaj's goal in the eighth minute of added time robbed visiting Osasuna of its first league win since early November.

Aimar Oroz fired home in a crowded penalty box eight minutes into the second half to give

Women's throw ball champs, cricket stars shine

IDAK teams make Kuwait proud at Gulf Friendship Cup 2025



The Women's Throwball champions IDAK Blazers



Second runner-up in men's cricket.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Indian Dentists' Alliance in Kuwait (IDAK) has made Kuwait proud by clinching major victories in the Gulf Friendship Cup 2025 Throwball and Cricket tournaments held in Abu Dhabi. Competing against teams of doctors and their families from across the Gulf, IDAK emerged as champions in Women's Throwball and secured the 2nd Runner-Up position in Men's Cricket.

The Women's Throwball team IDAK Blazers, led by the determined Captain Dr. Anjana Nair and Coach Mr. Jomy

Abraham Varghese, showcased extraordinary grit and teamwork. They defeated formidable teams from Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and the combined UAE squad to claim the maiden GFC Throwball championship title. Dr. Jane John Thomas was awarded the Best Player of the Tournament for outstanding performance.

In Men's Cricket, IDAK, captained by Dr. Thomas Thomas, delivered a valiant performance to defend their title, which they won in 2023. In a thrilling third-place decider,

they triumphed over the host team AKMG, UAE, securing the second-runner-up position. Dr. Mohammed Hussain made history by winning the Best Batsman award for the second consecutive year, cementing his place as a tournament star.

The victorious teams received a grand welcome at Kuwait International Airport, where the IDAK Council and members gathered to celebrate their achievements. President Dr. George P. Alex praised the teams for their stellar performances, calling their victories a testament

to IDAK's unity, talent, and sportsmanship.

The IDAK President also announced a grand celebratory event to honor the teams, scheduled for February 7th at the Boulevard Cricket Ground along with the IDAK KDD Cricket Tournament. He further encouraged all members to continue striving for excellence and fostering camaraderie.

With this memorable triumph, IDAK has not only brought home trophies but also strengthened the spirit of collaboration and pride within the community.



Women's Throwball team receives a grand welcome at Kuwait International Airport.



Best batsman Dr. Mohammed Hussain.



An outstanding player receives award.

International teams set for Salwa Al-Sabah women's volleyball Championship in Kuwait

Kuwait Club and Burgan conclude participation in Arab Clubs Championship

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Sheikha Naima Al-Ahmad, Chairwoman of the Board of Directors of Salwa Al-Sabah Club, announced the launch of the second Salwa Al-Sabah Club Women's International Friendly Volleyball Championship, set to begin next Thursday under the patronage of the Governor of Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Sheikh Sabah Badr Al-Sabah.

The tournament will feature eight teams from both Arab and foreign clubs, divided into two groups.



A photo of Salwa Al Sabah volleyball celebrating on the podium.

Group One consists of Salwa Al-Sabah Club, Geneva (Switzerland), Akkad Ankaw (Iraq), and Fatima Bint Mubarak Academy (UAE), while Group Two includes the Tunisian national team, the Qatari national team, Lebanon's Al-Shabiba Al-Bouchrieh Club, and Saudi Arabia's Al-Ula Club.

The matches will be held at Salwa Al-Sabah Club's venue in Al-Qurain and will continue until February 5.

Sheikha Naima Al-Ahmad expressed her warm welcome to the foreign and Arab delegations participating in the tournament, emphasizing that Kuwait remains their second home. She highlighted the success of the inaugural edition, which was a technical and organizational success, attracting Gulf and Arab teams. This year, the addition of a European club from Switzer-

land further reinforces the tournament's success and the participating teams' enthusiasm.

Sheikha Naima added, "The Board of Directors of Salwa Al-Sabah Club has given great attention to this event, with working committees dedicated to ensuring its success. The committee overcame numerous challenges to deliver a remarkable tournament that showcases the importance of women's volleyball."

She also extended her gratitude to the Public Authority for Sports and the Kuwait Volleyball Federation for their significant cooperation in organizing the event, reflecting Kuwait's commitment to supporting sports under the leadership of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, and His Highness the Prime Minister, who place great importance on sports that benefit the people of Kuwait.

In other news, the Kuwait Club and Burgan concluded their participation in the 43rd Arab Clubs Championship, which ended in Doha. Kuwait Club finished in 10th place, while Burgan placed 12th. The results were considered disappointing given the experience and capabilities of both teams, particularly Kuwait Club, which now focuses on the upcoming West Asian Clubs Championship in Bahrain from February 5-18, with Al-Qadsia also participating.

Kuwait Club's last match in the Arab Championship was a 1-3 loss to Dar Kulaib of Bahrain for the 9th-10th place decider.

Meanwhile, Burgan lost 0-3 to Bani Yas of the UAE in the 11th-12th place match.

In the general volleyball league, Al-Nasr secured its first win, defeating Al-Tadamon 3-0, while Al-Yarmouk triumphed over Al-Sahel with a 3-2 victory.

Crawford wins WC downhill

Canadian team impresses

KITZBUEHEL, Austria, Jan 25, (AP): James Crawford became the first Canadian skier in 42 years to win the prestigious World Cup downhill on the Streif course, sharing the podium with his third-placed teammate Cameron Alexander on Saturday.

Wearing bib No. 20 and coming down after all pre-race favorites had completed their runs, Crawford bumped Alexis Monney into second position.

The Swiss skier took an early lead as the fourth starter and looked set for his second career victory, weeks after triumphing in Bormio on the downhill course to be used for next year's Milan-Cortina Olympics. Alexander also finished third in that race.

But Crawford, the super-G world champion, upset the field and beat Monney by just 0.08 seconds for the Canadian's first career World Cup win. Alexander trailed by 0.22 in third.

He shown speed in downhill before and feel like I've been trying to get back to top speed for a while, Crawford told Austrian TV. "I don't have words that can describe the emotions. It's just incredible and to do it in Kitzbuehel is even better."

The last Canadian winner of the iconic downhill in Kitzbuehel was Todd Brooker in 1983, and the last time two Canadian downhillers shared a World Cup podium was in February 2012, when Jan Hudec won and Erik Guay finished third in Chamoinix, France.

The impressive result for the Canadian team came 10 days before the start of the world championships at another Austrian resort, Saalbach-Hinterglemm. Crawford in super-G and Alexander, who took bronze in downhill, won medals at the worlds in France two years ago.

Downhill world champion and three-time overall World Cup winner Marco Odermatt finished sixth, a day after the Swiss star triumphed in the super-G.

It was a solid race, not the best, and with not the best race you can not win Kitzbuehel, the downhill, Odermatt said. "A big goal and dream remains."

The 85th edition of the Hahnenkamm races end with a slalom on Sunday.

Best of the Rest

Argentina routs Brazil 6-0: Manchester City signing Claudio Echeverri scored two goals and led Argentina's under-20 team to a 6-0 win over archrival Brazil on Friday in the teams' first match in the South American championship's Group B.

Argentina scored its first three goals in the first minutes of play, with Ian Subiabre (sixth minute), Echeverri (eight), and an own goal by Igor Serrote (11th).

"We did an amazing job, we were ready for this," Echeverri said. "We are always motivated to play against Brazil. We will not relax, we need to keep improving."

South America's U-20 championship will give the top four teams a place in the age category's World Cup in September in Chile. Brazil has a record 12 titles in the South American U-20 championship.

Earlier, Ecuador beat Bolivia 2-1 in their first Group B match.

The first three teams in each of the two groups will advance to a six-team round-robin tournament. The top four will secure their berths in Chile. (AP)

□ □ □

Torino back to winning ways: Scotland striker Che Adams scored a decisive double for Torino to beat Cagliari 2-0 to record only its second Serie A win since October.

Adams scored the only goal in December when Torino won its last match, 1-0 over Empoli, and he turned in a match-winning performance on a chilly night in northern Italy.

The former Southampton and Birmingham marksman got a lovely opener after six minutes when he spun on the penalty spot and fired a cutback high into the net. (AP)

□ □ □

Frankfurt signs Wahi: Bundesliga club Eintracht Frankfurt has signed French striker Elye Wahi on a long-term deal until 2030.

Frankfurt posted a photo on X of the 22-year-old Wahi putting pen to paper on Friday evening.

"I'm very happy to have signed for Eintracht Frankfurt," Wahi said in French. "I hope the supporters of the club have faith in me and that I will repay them."

No transfer fee was given but French website L'Equipe reported that Frankfurt paid 26 million euros (\$27.3 million) for Wahi with an additional 3 million euros in bonuses and a 12% share of any future sell-on profit.

It is the third significant career move in two years for Wahi, who joined Lens from Montpellier in 2023 for a fee of 35 million euros (\$38 million), turning down Premier League side Chelsea. (AP)

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Cagliari's Roberto Piccoli and Torino's Guillermo Maripan, right, in action during the Serie A soccer match between Torino and Cagliari at the Stadio Olimpico Grande Torino in Turin, Italy. Torino won 2-0. (AP)

Sports



Basel Al-Sabah Club racing team.

KUNA photo

Basel Al-Sabah Club dominates third round of Arabian Drag Racing League in Qatar

DOHA, Jan 25, (KUNA): Saif Al-Mutairi, Director of Basel Al-Sabah Club for Car and Motorcycle Racing, announced that the club's racers secured top positions in the third round of the Arabian Drag Racing League held in Qatar.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Mutairi highlighted that this achievement follows the team's first-place wins in the first and second rounds of the championship, organized by Qatar Club for Car and Motorcycle Racing.

Category Highlights:

Index 9.0: Fahad Al-Khawari clinched first place, while Ahmad Al-Yaqoub secured second.

Index 8.5: Ahmad Mal Allah earned second place.

8.5 (Bicycle Race): Mohammed Ismail took first place, followed by Nasser Burbaa in second and Hussein Ashkanani in third.

Street Bike (Bicycles): Musa Al-Balushi won first place, with Ahmad bin Bilal in third.

Index 4.8: Abdullah Al-Kandari claimed second place.

Index 4.5: Abdullah Al-Yassin achieved first place, and Fawaz Karam secured third.

Index 4.0: Bader Khorshid came in first, with Ammar Hameed in second.

Super Street Bike (Bicycles): Ahmad bin Bilal secured first place.

Pro Bike: Meshal Al-Sabr claimed the top spot.

Super Street Pro: Jaber Al-Maghribi took second place, with Turki Al-Dhahiri in third.

Super Street Outlaw: Jaber Mehawish secured third place.

Pro NE: Sayed Hussein Al-Haddad achieved first place, and Ali Abbas came in third.

The Arabian Drag Racing League commenced on January 10 in Doha and is set to conclude in February.

Al-Shatti takes responsibility for Al-Arabi loss

Al-Qadsiya sets up Super Cup final clash with Kuwait Club

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Al-Qadsiya defeated Al-Arabi 1-0, earning a spot in the Kuwaiti Super Cup final.

The decisive goal came from Ismail Khaq, who scored in the 59th minute to secure victory for Al-Qadsiya.

The final will take place on Tuesday at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium in Sulibkhat, where Al-Qadsiya will face Al-Kuwait.

Kuwait Club holds the record with seven Super Cup titles, followed by Al-Qadsiya with six and Al-Arabi with three.

Montenegrin coach of Al-Qadsiya, Zeljko Petrovic, expressed his

satisfaction with the team's 1-0 victory over Al-Arabi.

The highly anticipated final will take place next Tuesday at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium.

Petrovic acknowledged that his team performed better in its recent Zain Premier League clash against Al-Arabi, but pointed out that mistakes from certain players led to its loss in that encounter. He noted, however, that the opportunity given to some younger players in the Super Cup semi-final paid off. They achieved the goals of their participation and showed clear improvement. I hope they continue to develop and contribute positively to the team.

The return of key players and the signing of Algerian defender Hus-

sein Dahiri have strengthened the squad, but Petrovic emphasized that not all players adhered to instructions, allowing Al-Arabi to successfully close down spaces. Despite the challenges, he stated, We deserved to win. Both teams played well, but in the end, the best team won.

Looking ahead to the final against Kuwait Club, Petrovic acknowledged the difficulty of the upcoming match and hoped all players would recover in time for the showdown.

Al-Arabi's coach, Nasser Al-Shatti, took responsibility for his team's loss to Al-Qadsiya, emphasizing that Al-Akhdar has been focusing more on other competitions this season.

Al-Shatti admitted that he was not happy with the defeat but explained that he had made strategic decisions to prioritize certain matches. We aimed to win every match, but we had to make some calculations regarding our priorities, he said. Some key players were rested for the Super Cup semi-final in order to keep them fresh for the Zain Premier League, where Al-Arabi is fighting for the title alongside Kuwait.

We are concentrating on winning the Zain Premier League, the Amir Cup, and the Crown Prince Cup, and we also want to compete for the Asian Challenge Cup, Al-Shatti continued. Despite the loss, he praised his players for their effort, acknowledging Al-Qadsiya's strong performance and congratulating them on reaching the final.

Kuwait Club's Adel Aqla expressed confidence in his team's readiness to defend its Super Cup title following its 4-1 victory over Al-Salmiya. Aqla stated, We are ready to face any team in the final. We respect all our opponents.

Aqla also shared his preference for a foreign refereeing crew for the final, although he expressed gratitude and respect for local referees.



Players vie for the ball during the Super Cup match between Al-Qadsiya and Al-Arabi.

KUNA photo

Keys stuns Sabalenka for maiden Grand Slam title



Madison Keys of the U.S. holds the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup after defeating Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus in the women's singles final at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

Belarusian denied three-peat at Australian Open

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 25, (AP): Madison Keys of the United States upset two-time defending champion Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus 6-3, 2-6, 7-5 in the Australian Open final on Saturday night to collect her first Grand Slam title at age 29.

By adding this win over the No. 1-ranked Sabalenka to an elimination of No. 2 Iga Swiatek in the semi-finals on Thursday - saving a match point along the way - Keys is the first woman since Serena Williams in 2005 to defeat both of the WTA's top two players at Melbourne Park.

Keys, ranked 14th and seeded 19th, was playing in her second major final after being the runner-up at the 2017 U.S. Open.

She prevented Sabalenka from earning what would have been her third women's trophy in a row at the Australian Open - something last accomplished by Martina Hingis from

1997-99 - and her fourth major title overall.

When it ended, Keys covered her face with her hands, then raised her arms. Soon, she was hugging her husband, Bjorn Fratangelo - who has been her coach since 2023 - and other members of her team, before sitting on her sideline bench and laughing.

Sabalenka chucked her racket afterward, then covered her head with a white towel.

The men's final is Sunday, with defending champion Janik Sinner against Alexander Zverev. Sinner is seeded No. 1, Zverev No. 2.

Sinner eliminated American Ben Shelton in the semi-finals, while Zverev advanced when 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic stopped playing because of an injury.

Keys is the oldest woman to become a first-time major champion since Flavia Pennetta was 33 at the 2015 U.S. Open. This was the 46th Slam appearance for Keys, which ranks as the third-most major tournaments before winning a trophy in the Open era, behind only Pennetta's 49 and Marion Bartoli's 47 when she won Wimbledon in 2013.

20 wickets fall on opening day as Windies takes 9-run lead against Pakistan

MULTAN, Pakistan, Jan 25, (AP): Gudakesh Motie and Jomel Warrican's brilliant all-round performances earned West Indies a nine-run, first-innings lead against Pakistan as 20 wickets fell on the opening day of the second cricket test on Saturday.

Motie scored 55 and his first test half century lifted the tourists from a precarious 54-8 to 163 all out. The left-arm spinner then picked up 3-49 to skittle out the home team for 154 on another tricky turner at Multan Cricket Stadium.

Motie's all-round show overshadowed Noman Ali's hat trick for Paki-

stan and 6-41 as Pakistan's batters fell in their own spin-pitch trap with Warrican, who earlier made an unbeaten 36 at No. 11, picking up 4-43.

Mohammad Rizwan (49) and Saud Shakeel (32) revived Pakistan with a 68-run fifth-wicket stand. Both fell to Warrican in the final session while going for ambitious shots and Pakistan's tail folded quickly just before stumps.

Motie had claimed the prize wicket of Babar Azam (1), who was bowled while going for a cut shot on the back foot, and Kanran Ghulam (16) to leave Pakistan reeling at 51-4. Kemar Roach struck with

the new ball and had Muhammad Hurraina leg before wicket and then uprooted the off stump of captain Shan Masood.

Earlier, No. 9 Motie added 109 runs with the last two batters before West Indies got bowled out in an extended three-hour first session after Ali had rattled the top-order with his left-arm spin.

Ali, who masterminded Pakistan's 127-run win in the first test with Sajid Khan, had the wickets of Justin Greaves, Tevin Imlach and Kevin Sinclair in the 12th over to become the first Pakistan spinner to achieve a hat trick in test matches.

Just like in the first test when West Indies got bowled out for 137 and 123 to lose inside three days against spin, its top-order batters had little clue how to combat the three spinners on another raked wicket.

But Motie frustrated Pakistan in his 11th test match as he combined in a gritty 41-run stand with Roach (25) and then compiled another 68 runs with Warrican.

Debutant fast bowler Kashif Ali found the outside edge of Mikyle Louisa bat after captain Kraigg Brathwaite had won the toss and elected to bat.

Off-spinner Sajid Khan had debutant

Amir Jangoo trapped leg before wicket for a four-ball duck and Ali made an immediate impact by pinning Brathwaite lbw.

Noman Ali then bowled a dream triple wicket maiden over when Greaves was caught close to the wicket by Babar; Imlach didn't go for a lbw television review when he missed Ali's full pitched delivery; and Babar grabbed another stunning low catch off Sinclair's bat in the gully to the delight of the left-arm spinner.

Four Pakistan fast bowlers - Wasim Akram, Abdul Razzaq, Mohammad Sami and Naseem Shah - had previously achieved hat tricks in test match-

es with Akram doing it twice against Sri Lanka in 1999.

Naseem was the previous Pakistani bowler to do so against Bangladesh at Rawalpindi in 2020.

West Indies made two changes and brought in fast bowler Roach in place of injured paceman Jayden Seals. No. 3 batter Jangoo made his test debut and replaced struggling Keacy Carty.

It is the last series for both teams in the World Test Championship with Pakistan at No. 8 and West Indies at No. 9. Australia and South Africa have already qualified for the WTC final at Lord's in June.



Equitable development has been the corner stone of socio-economic policies of India

Message of Ambassador of India to Kuwait

On the joyous occasion of the 76th Republic Day of India, I extend my warm greetings to all Indian nationals and persons of Indian origin in the friendly State of Kuwait.

I take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah for their patronage and support for a strong India-Kuwait partnership.

Today, as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of our Republic Day, we feel proud of India's many achievements. Equitable development has been the corner stone of socio-economic policies of India. Democracy, pluralism and unity in diversity are the traditional ethos of Indian society. India believes in its ancient philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family). This belief guides our foreign policy as well.

India today is a land of billion opportunities. Our collective resolve has ensured that the Indian economy is today the 5th largest economy in the world. And it is going to be the 3rd largest global economy in the next couple of years. India is moving ahead with the spirit of 'Make in India, Make for the World'. The massive business friendly reforms and policies have contributed in unleashing the true potential of the country. The new India has made tremendous strides in science and technology; is one of the leading centers of innovation and Information Technology globally; is the 'Pharmacy of the World'; has world class production and manufacturing capabilities; and is a leading global partner to address new age challenges facing the humanity. Today, we are on the right track to build an Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) with the goal of becoming a developed country by 2047.

In the international arena, India has been playing a significant role in contributing to world peace, stability and prosperity. India has championed many global initiatives with like-minded countries in recent years, including the International Solar Alliance, Coalition for



H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika
Ambassador of India

Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, Global Bio-Fuels Alliance etc to foster pro-planet action. India has a multi-vector foreign policy that is designed to continuously strengthen its independence, freedom of choice and pursuit of national interest. India believes that dialogue and diplomacy is the only way to resolve disputes and conflicts. In the region, India's relations with GCC countries have been growing rapidly with major economic, energy, diaspora, security and political stakes. We are confident that India-GCC relations will be further strengthened under Kuwait's GCC Presidency.

The historic and successful visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi to Kuwait in December 2024 has opened a new chapter in our bilateral relations with Kuwait. The conferment of the highest national award of Kuwait 'The Order of Mubarak Al-Kabeer' on Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is a matter of pride for every Indian. The leadership of both countries attach utmost importance to relations with each other's country. This was evident from the exceptional gestures and hospitality accorded by the leadership of Kuwait to Hon'ble Prime Minister during his recent visit. Our bilateral relations have been elevated to that of a 'Strategic Partnership'. This is expected to be reflected in various domains of cooperation. We look forward to greater engagement with Kuwait, both at Government and people-to-people level, in the coming times. The large Indian community in Kuwait remains a living and vital bridge of our bilateral relations.

The Embassy places highest priority to the welfare and well-being of the Indian Community in Kuwait. I thank all the community associations, professional bodies, cultural groups and members of the Indian community for joining hands with the Embassy, where required, for the welfare of the community in Kuwait and contribute to the strengthening of our relations with Kuwait.

Once again, on this special and proud occasion of the 76th Republic Day of India, I convey my best wishes to every Indian in Kuwait and all friends of India in Kuwait for their continued success, happiness and good-health.

Relationship between India-Kuwait, a model of enduring bilateral cooperation

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

The relationship between India and Kuwait is a model of enduring bilateral cooperation, deeply rooted in shared history, cultural exchanges and mutual economic interests.

Central to this relationship is the significant Indian workforce in Kuwait, which has played a vital role in the Gulf nation's growth and development.

The Indian workforce in Kuwait symbolizes the strength of the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

Their contributions not only drive economic growth but also foster cultural and social ties that bridge geographical and cultural divides. As Kuwait and India continue to collaborate on multiple fronts, this partnership is poised to grow stronger, benefiting both nations and their people.

The recent visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Kuwait marked a new chapter in these ties, emphasizing shared aspirations and expanding collaboration across multiple sectors.

The Indian community in Kuwait is one of the largest expatriate populations in the country, numbering over a million. Representing a wide range of professions, from construction workers

and healthcare professionals to corporate executives and educators, this workforce is instrumental in supporting Kuwait's economic ambitions, particularly its Vision 2035.

PM Modi's visit reaffirmed India's commitment to ensuring the welfare of its diaspora in Kuwait while recognizing their invaluable contributions to the host country.

During his interactions, Modi has expressed his gratitude to the Kuwaiti leadership for creating an environment that allows the Indian community to thrive.

PM Modi's visit to Kuwait which came almost after more than three decades by an Indian Premier was a significant diplomatic milestone, aimed at enhancing cooperation in energy, trade, healthcare and technology. His agenda included meetings with Kuwait's leadership, business community and the Indian diaspora, focusing on the following areas:

Energy Partnership -- Kuwait remains a key supplier of crude oil to India, ensuring energy security for the world's fifth-largest economy. Discussions during the visit emphasized strengthening this vital partnership, including potential collaborations in renewable energy and sustainability initiatives.

Labor Welfare -- Modi highlighted the impor-

tance of safeguarding the rights and well-being of Indian workers in Kuwait. Agreements were signed to streamline recruitment processes, ensure ethical practices and enhance labor protections.

Trade and Investment -- India is one of Kuwait's largest trading partners, with bilateral trade exceeding \$10 billion annually. Discussions centered on diversifying trade, encouraging Kuwaiti investments in India and expanding cooperation in non-oil sectors such as information technology, healthcare and education.

Healthcare and COVID-19 Cooperation -- Recognizing India's role as the "pharmacy of the world," both nations explored opportunities to collaborate in healthcare. Kuwait had earlier supported India during the COVID-19 pandemic with oxygen supplies, showcasing the strength of this partnership in times of need.

The ties between India and Kuwait date back centuries, anchored in trade and cultural exchanges. Indian traders were key participants in the pearl and textile trade with Kuwait. Today, this historical relationship continues through vibrant cultural interactions.

PM Modi's visit underscored these connections, with cultural programs celebrating the shared heritage of both nations. The Indian com-

munity in Kuwait remains a bridge between the two countries, fostering understanding and goodwill.

During his visit, PM Modi also expressed his vision for expanding India-Kuwait cooperation in the context of global challenges such as climate change, food security and digital transformation.

He lauded Kuwait's efforts to align with sustainability goals and pledged India's support in advancing these initiatives.

The two nations agreed on the need for greater private sector participation to drive innovation and create job opportunities.

Specific emphasis was placed on advancing youth engagement and empowering Indian entrepreneurs in Kuwait to contribute to the digital economy.

PM Narendra Modi's visit to Kuwait reinforced the enduring partnership between the two nations, rooted in mutual respect and shared goals.

The Indian workforce, as a cornerstone of this relationship, continues to be celebrated for its role in Kuwait's development.

As the two countries deepen their collaboration across energy, trade and cultural exchanges, this partnership promises to set a benchmark for international cooperation, bringing benefits to both nations and their people.



The Maha Kumbh Mela

A global village of the timeless and the emergent

Dr Kavita Gupta
Founder, Dus Dishaa

This 'Global Village' draws attention from a wide spectrum of humanity. It is a living testament to Hinduism's timeless beliefs and practices while also being a sandbox for newer and emergent facets. It enables the three eternal concurrent processes of Evolution, Equilibrium, and Involution.

This year brings millions of people to the Maha Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj. The Mela (fair) offers a comprehensive view of Hindu beliefs and practices, providing visual and experiential insights. There is a pervasive feeling of equanimity, where distinctions of all types dissolve, fostering a sense of interconnectedness. The Mela connects to nature worshipping, honouring the Panch Tatvas – (the five elements of life: Earth, Water, Air, Fire and Space). It recalls a time of ritual observance and intellectual inquiry into natural forces and their astrological significance, emphasising the harmonious balance of these elements.

The Triveni Sangam delta at Prayagraj, the confluence of River Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati, draws a wide spectrum of humanity, from the Yogis from the Himalayas to devout pilgrims to curious travellers and tourists, diverse people from different walks of life, each with their own objective. This 45-day festival is

hosted by an ecosystem of administrators, ground support, volunteers, business people and entrepreneurs. Such a scale also amasses attention from educators, researchers and innovators with a multi-disciplinary lens.

All triune things converge in this land where the three rivers meet, including the compelling combination of three cycles embedded in the sacred trilogy of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. Brahma represents Evolution (Anabolism), and Vishnu represents Equilibrium (Metabolism), and Shiva represents Involution (Catabolism). The Kumbh Mela is a rich example of all three processes: the celebration of the past, the reflection on the present, and the preparation for the future.

The Mela finds its roots in the famous legend of Hindu mythology - Samudra Manthan or the Churning of the Ocean by Devas (Gods) and Asuras (Demons). From the churning emerged various gifts, Kumbh of Amrit (a pot of nectar) for immortality, being one of them. The Kumbh Mela is a commemoration held every four years in each of the four cities, Haridwar, Nasik, Ujjain and Prayag, on a rotational basis.

Beyond its immense religious significance, the Kumbh Mela is also culturally and spiritually significant. The sheer number of devotees and pilgrims in an ephemeral city creates a rare and unique experience, attracting hordes of visitors to gain insights into the mystique of the Mela. Historically, many foreign

travellers have written detailed accounts of their visits, getting the Kumbh Mela widespread global recognition. Hieun Tsang's Chronicles and Journals of Fanny Parkes (Wanderings of a Pilgrim) have enamoured the global audience across ages.

The scale of the Mela has always been immense and is only growing with each decade. The estimated number of visitors this year is likely to cross 400 million through the Mela duration. Ten thousand hectares of Mela area have been declared a temporary district with 10 zones and 25 sectors. Setting up a temporary city of this scale is a massive

administrative challenge, mainly when the location for the same is on the floodplains of the Ganges that receded very reluctantly this year, leaving a very small time frame for making all arrangements.

Despite the limited time, various government departments and agencies have worked round the clock to provide infrastructure and ready amenities before the first snan (holy dip) date. Massive budget allocations and various department personnel have been deployed to manage security, traffic, health, sanitation and other arrangements. The Uttar Pradesh Government has also made a substantial technological push with

its Digi Kumbh initiative. AI-powered CCTV systems, using facial and vehicle number plate recognition, have been designed to provide surveillance and monitor crowd movement, traffic flow and parking managements. Further, underwater drones with advanced imaging capabilities have also been deployed to provide round-the-clock aquatic surveillance. An AI-powered chatbot has also been launched to support over 11 languages and enable easy navigation.

In independent India, the Kumbh Mela is being hosted since 1954. Each government has put in its best efforts to make it a smooth and memorable experience for the pilgrims. Such efforts in successful set-up and operations have gained attention from across the world and attracted various forms of research efforts beyond just an anthropological perspective.

Leading global and Indian academic establishments such as Harvard University, London School of Economics (LSE), IIM Bangalore and MIT have conducted various comprehensive studies to learn from the scale of operations and draw insights from such a mega event. Through a multi-disciplinary lens, these studies focus on ephemerality and infrastructure, public management, socio-cultural and logistical complexities, AI and technology. The mammoth scale of the pilgrimage, particularly on the main bathing days, when millions take a dip in the holy waters garnering wide-scale astonishment.

Such a concentrated flow of massive

footfall has also meant immense potential for brand visibility and marketing opportunities for businesses. Alongside large brands, thriving local enterprises are tapping into every opportunity to serve all segments of the massive crowds. The guests visiting for a few days can choose from a variety of options available - luxury tents, budget tents, hotels, guest houses, homestays. Logistics providers, from taxi drivers to boatmen, are all geared up to provide services to the visitors while small vendors are ready to lend themselves to cater to the essential needs of puja (prayers) items and rituals, for the devotees coming for a day.

Hindu astronomy, astrology, built heritage, ecology, and local food, each layer has a rich presence in the Kumbh Mela. From pilgrims, devotees, and travellers to market gurus, academicians and research enthusiasts, there's something meaningful and compelling for everyone to witness and partake in the Maha Kumbh Mela!

□ □ □

Kavita is an avid traveller who collects stories from everyone and everywhere, completely enamored by the rich tapestry of Indian history and culture. She explores for her wanderlust and brings in unique perspectives! Through Dus Dishaa she brings alive local charms in this global village through immersive, specially curated experiences. In her regular days, she is a management professional with over 20 years of experience.



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India's Act East Policy: Trends, Impact and Prospects

By **Rajiv Bhatia**

India's Act East Policy (AEP) enjoys high priority in the nation's foreign policy architecture. This is evident from the efforts and resources devoted to building relations with the region and addressing diverse issues of humanitarian assistance, maritime security, economic cooperation, and power balancing faced by the region's states. India's leaders and diplomats participate – actively and constructively – in all deliberations at bilateral, sub-regional, and regional levels. India has emerged as a key political player in the East.

Backdrop, trends

But AEP is dynamic, not static. Its evolution needs to be appreciated in the historical context. Prior to the colonial period, priests, monks, traders, and ordinary people traveled eastwards from India's shores for centuries. This phenomenon is remembered even today through the annual celebrations of 'Bali Jatra' in Odisha. The deep imprint of Indian arts and culture is visible in Hindu and Buddhist temples in Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Post-Independence, interactions continued and expanded, but they were more political in nature, resulting, for example, in a collaboration that created the Non-Aligned Movement. The end of the Cold War caused a new impetus for India to seek trade and investment opportunities as it embarked on major economic liberalization. That is how the Look East Policy was launched in the early 1990s.

Against this backdrop, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the podium at the 9th East Asia Summit in Myanmar on 13 November 2014 to announce, "Since entering office six months ago, my government has moved with a great sense of priority and agreed to turn our Look East Policy into Act East policy."

The shift from the old to the new policy was not just re-labeling. It was a substantive re-orientation representing the nation's enhanced determination to pursue its wide-ranging interests in a fast-changing environment. The policy's focus now was not only on Southeast Asia but the whole of East Asia, though without compromising ASEAN 'centrality'. Moreover, defense cooperation, maritime security, and strategic calculations were added to the previous package of essentially political, economic, and cultural cooperation. A new policy goal was to ensure optimal attention to developing India's Northeast and expanding its linkages with ASEAN countries. Finally, greater emphasis on the implementation of India's commitments, at a time when China's assertiveness was on the rise, formed an essential feature of the new policy.

Later in the decade, India's Indo-Pacific vision built on the AEP, with the former's stress on the deep inter-linkage between the Indian and Pacific oceans. This stood reinforced by

the doctrine of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region). Consistently, India promotes a free, open, inclusive, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region built on a rules-based international order, as External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar stressed while speaking at a university in Thailand in August 2022.

Impact

The impact of AEP in the past decade (2014-2024) may be assessed from several angles.

First, India's relations with ASEAN have grown from strength to strength. The annual summit provides a valuable opportunity to review progress and push for more in diverse domains of political and security cooperation, trade and investment, and cultural, educational, and people-to-people ties. Bilateral trade has increased from \$74 billion in 2014-15 to \$121 billion in 2023-24. India's annual FDI flows to ASEAN rose from \$1.5 billion in 2019 to \$5.6 billion in 2023, whereas ASEAN's cumulative investments in India were valued at \$117 billion during 2000-24.

Second, adopting an inclusive approach, India launched its Indo-Pacific Oceans initiative (IPOI) at the 14th East Asian Summit in November 2019. Focused on its seven pillars, such as maritime security, maritime ecology, and maritime resources, it is a natural fit for the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP). Collaborative projects involving the two initiatives have been under discussion and gradual implementation.

Third, transcending ASEAN and adopting a broader strategic approach, India has become a leader in forming and developing a four-power grouping named Quad. Its other members are the US, Japan, and Australia. Recently, this grouping celebrated its 20th anniversary. In the joint statement of 30 December 2024, the four foreign ministers observed, "What began as an emergency response to a catastrophe has grown into a full-fledged partnership, delivering positive outcomes for the people of our region."

Fourth, the AEP impelled India to

strengthen other regional institutions such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral, Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). The continued strengthening of these bodies and the growing role of India in their multifarious activities is a testimony to the policy's success. But more needs to be done in this direction.

Prospects

The AEP's success is widely appreciated. PM Modi noted that the policy has revitalized ties with ASEAN, "infusing them with energy, direction, and momentum." However, the coming years will sharpen the challenges facing the region. The US-China rivalry could intensify with a new US president in the White House. China's aggressive and coercive measures in the South and East China Sea continue unabated. Despite years of negotiations, uncertainty prevails about when an enforceable Code of Conduct (COC) on the South China Sea may emerge.

While India could not join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), causing disappointment to its ASEAN friends, the current review of the India-ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (AITGA) should be completed on time, thereby creating better conditions for a substantive enhancement of bilateral trade.

The deepening crisis in Myanmar has hampered progress in India's mega connectivity projects, such as the Trilateral Highway and the Kaldan Multi-modal Transit Transport. ASEAN and Myanmar's neighbors need to accelerate their endeavours to persuade various stakeholders in Myanmar to revert from violent conflict to peaceful negotiations.

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Rajiv Bhatia is Distinguished Fellow, Gateway House. A former Indian ambassador with extensive diplomatic experience in Southeast Asia, he is the author of India-Myanmar Relations: Changing Contours.



Rajiv Bhatia (third from left), Distinguished Fellow, Foreign Policy Studies, Gateway House, gave a lecture on 'India's Act East Policy Gains and Prospects' at a lecture series organised by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs at the Visva-Bharati University, Shantiniketan, New Delhi.



Immunity The Natural Way

Dr Raghavendra Rao

In contemporary times, with an increasingly fast-paced lifestyle and a modern approach to healing tactics, we unknowingly keep accumulating micro assaults on our immune system without allowing our body to address them. Here's how the ancient albeit simple practices of yoga can be utilised to boost our immunity and lead a healthier life.

The human body to a great extent is a self-regulating, preserving, repairing and maintaining entity. Nature has designed this wonderful machinery with an inherent capability to heal; provided the natural laws of healing are allowed to operate, our health is in its entirety, a natural outcome of all the encounters we have in life. This healing capacity that we are endowed with is called vitality or immunity. Our body has a self-reliant system of protecting its tissues against assaults by bacteria, viruses, harmful proteins and oxidative stress through an interplay of nervous, endocrine and immune systems.

In today's world, these systems are constantly challenged due to our fast-paced lifestyle, stress, unhealthy eating habits and a lot of exposure to pathogens. Yoga asanas and pranayama can reduce stress and improve the body's immune response to fight infections and allergies. Yogic practices have been known to improve human body's immunity.

Yoga and immunity

Yoga can help to modulate this immune response in an appropriate way. Yoga as a mind-body intervention has been used globally to combat these lifestyle-related diseases where stress is believed to play a role. Yoga helps calm down the mind, bring stability and balance the vital energies. Studies have shown yoga to improve immunity in the population during influenza epidemics. Yoga is a system of holistic living, having its roots in Indian traditions and culture. It is a discipline to develop one's inherent power in a balanced manner. Now it is being practiced as a part of healthy lifestyle. Yoga is popular globally because of its spiritual values, therapeutic credentials, its role in the prevention of diseases, promotion of health and management of lifestyle-related disorders.

One of the most useful and popular mode of yogic exercises which provides the benefits of Asanas, Pranayama and Mudras altogether is the Surya Namaskar. It consists of a series of twelve postures which are performed early in the morning facing the rising Sun. Each step of Surya Namaskar is accompanied by regulation of breath. Its regular practice energises all systems of the body and ensures perfect harmony between them. It makes the body flexible and improves immunity. Our body has its own set of immuno-responses, amongst them, inflammation is the most common.

A natural counter which is often helpful when it comes to healing injuries and infections, inflammation often becomes chronic under constant psychological and physical stress, thereby weakening our immune system. Most asanas involve systematic stretching that alleviates inflammation and increases flexibility. The immunity-boosting capabilities of even basic yogic practices also find mention in a new research published in the Journal of Behavioural Medicine. Today, even Western researchers vouch for yoga's benefits. The Harvard Medical School Guide to Yoga: 8 Weeks to Strength, Awareness, and Flexibility, says that regular practice of yoga can lead to greater muscle and bone strength, improved sleep, better stress management and resilience, strengthened immune system and enriched brain health.

Nadi Shodhana Pranayama (Alternate Nostril Breathing):

The main characteristic feature of Nadi Shodhana Pranayama is alternate breathing through the left and right nostrils without or with retention of breath (kumbhaka). Sit in a comfortable posture. Keep the spine and head straight with eyes closed. Relax the body with a few deep breaths. Keep the left palm on the left knee in Jnana mudra and the right palm should be in Nasagra mudra. Place the ring and small fingers on the left nostril and fold the middle and index finger. Place the right thumb on the right nostril. Open the left nostril, breathe in from the left nostril, close the left nostril with the small and ring fingers and release the thumb from the right nostril; exhale through the right nostril.

Next, inhale through the right nostril. At the end of inhalation, close the right nostril, open the left nostril and exhale through it. This completes one round of the Nadi Shodhana Pranayama (Alternate Nostril Breathing). Repeat for another 4 rounds. The duration of inhalation and exhalation should be equal for beginners. Breathing should be slow, steady and controlled and not be forced



or restricted.

Benefits of Pranayama

The main goal of Pranayama is to nourish the body as a whole by cleansing the main channels that distribute energy throughout it. In addition to boosting vitality and lowering stress and anxiety levels, this technique promotes calmness and improves focus. Pranayama can also help with coughing, mental calmness, and concentration. Its advantages go beyond boosting immunity, making it a comprehensive strategy for general health.

Cleansing with kriyas

Cleansing techniques called kriyas also help in removing excess mucous and restore mucosal immunity. Shatkriyas are yogic cleansing techniques used to purge the internal organs and systems of the body. These are a part of the process of detoxification. These techniques are classified into six divisions as under: Neti (nasal washing); Dhauti (stomach washing); Basti (colon washing); Kapalbhathi (purificatory yogic breathing); Nauli (isolation of abdominal recti muscles) and Trataka (yogic visual gaze).

These kriyas cleanse, activate and revitalise organs and develop deep internal awareness. The practice of Surya Namaskara, deep breathing exercises, pranayama, meditation and deep relaxation is also highly beneficial. Pranayama is the fourth constituent of Ashtanga yoga, which deals with the regulation of Prana and energy, grossly translated as breath. It is a practice which helps to regulate vital energies through the regulation of breathing. The main purpose of Pranayama is to gain control over the autonomous nervous system and through it to influence the mental functions. Regular practice of Pranayama makes the mind calm.

Understanding immunity

Though exposure to pathogens help build adaptive immunity, surviving such

an exposure may sometimes become fatal. Research has shown that there is a heterogeneity in susceptibility to infections during a flu epidemic. Psychologic stress, fitness and physical activity, nutrition, sleep, comorbid conditions and lifestyle play a vital role in shaping this immune response.

A growing body of evidence identifies stress as a co-factor in infectious disease susceptibility and outcomes. It has been suggested that the effects of stress on the immune system may mediate the relationship between stress and infectious disease. Stress increases stress hormones that dampen immune response and also reduce the ability of the cells to repair the damage caused due to infections.

Meditate on wellness

The process of keeping one's attention focussed with sustained concentration on an object is commonly known as meditation. It is an integral part of all yogic practices and is beneficial for psychological and spiritual growth. Over the years, the stress relieving benefits of regular meditation have been known to achieve a sense of calm which has a positive impact on an individual's health and promotes a healthy lifestyle.

It has been known to be beneficial when it comes to overcoming addictions of tranquilizers, reducing hypertension, insomnia, migraines, depression, anxiety, and other psychosomatic illnesses. It stabilises the mind, increases awareness, concentration and will power while simultaneously improving memory and alertness. It is an effective tool for rejuvenation of the mind, body and soul, and even helps in coping with the stressful situations of everyday life.

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Leveraging Technology for Development: Democratization of Technology

By Debnath Shaw

Technology is an important factor for global development. Development is a core issue for the Global South, many of whose members are being left behind in achieving their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The key factors behind this unequal state of affairs are technology, finance and information. Thomas Friedman has argued, that the era of globalisation has been characterized by democratization of technology, finance and information (The World is Flat, 2004). However, with the pace of globalization slowing down, particularly since the Covid pandemic, democratization of technology too has taken a hit.

Democratization of technology refers to the process by which access to technology progressively become more easily available to more people at reasonable cost. Historically, the printing press is the earliest recorded instance of technology opening new frontiers of knowledge dissemination, leading to empowerment of a greater number of people. Since the mid-1990s, the internet has been the prime vehicle of universal democratization of knowledge and information.

The effects of democratization of technology have been dramatic, more so with digitization. New technologies and improved user experiences have empowered those outside of the technology industry to access and use technological products and services. In India, think - UPI, mobile banking WhatsApp, X, etc. - tools being used regularly by the country's 900 million mobile phones users, mostly connected to the internet, including a vast user base in rural areas. The 'open source' model allows users to participate directly in development of software. Upgrades in communication technology have made the globe more interconnected than ever.

Democratization of technology has helped 'the last person in the

queue' to access public services with ease and reduced corruption, get timely access to relief when hit by natural disasters, and useful and reliable information allowing meaningful participation in the democratic process. It has made markets more broad-based and diversified and consumers are able to use complex technological products without the guidance of qualified professionals. Such job categories have taken a hit, a situation whose downward spiral is being perpetrated by developments in artificial intelligence and machine learning technology.

However, we should not lose sight of the challenges faced by democratization of technology, which is hampered by the slow pace of digitization and infrastructure gaps, particularly in developing countries. Gender and social inequities restricting access to and use of technology, and the data divide, too needs to be addressed. Cyber security and data privacy concerns are felt at all levels. What is comforting is that both governments and technology-driven companies are addressing these concerns, while moving ahead with their programmes to harness technology for the benefit of the masses.

In India, the democratization of technology is manifested in some remarkable programmes which have changed the lives of millions. The prime example is the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), part of the 'India Stack', which operates digital identification, payments and data management. The Common Service Centres (CSC) are the access points for delivery of government to citizen (G2C) e-services, within reach of citizens by creating nation-wide physical service delivery ICT infrastructure. The Nammo Drone Didi initiative has many goals, including addressing gender inequality issues, empowerment and pride among women, modernization of agricultural practices, and substantial income to the rural women folk. The two hundred thou-

sand Aayushman Aarogya Mandirs in India's villages directly connect health centres with the best hospitals and modern technology, bringing professional medical expertise and services, largely concentrated in urban areas, to rural India. The India AI Mission or 'AI for All' is aimed at the democratization of the benefits of AI across all strata of society.

A key issue, particularly for the Global South, which has been pursued vigorously by India, is the growing gap between developed and developing countries in the access and endogenous production and development of climate technologies. This has been a key constraint on collective progress in global efforts to achieve sustainable development and effective climate action under UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. Developing countries view technology transfer and capacity building as the key to reducing the technology and wealth gap.

Both climate mitigation and adaptation require huge funding transfers from developed countries as per past commitments. Unfortunately, even at COP29 in Baku last year, the level of funding pledged was nowhere near the level required to achieve set goals. There have been repeated calls for enhanced international cooperation arrangements, through reform of existing WTO mandated trade rules, to permit developing countries to protect emerging green industries through tariffs, subsidies and public procurement.

The ray of hope in the horizon is that industries driven by frontier technologies like blockchain, drones, gene editing, nano technology, electric vehicles, solar and wind energy and green hydrogen could create a market of over \$ 9.5 billion by 2030 (UNCTAD estimate). Some developing and emerging economies like India have made important policy changes to seize some of the opportunities in these sectors. It is hoped that with increasing democratization of technology and effective partnership between developed and developing countries, mankind's development goals will be reached sooner than later.

Debnath Shaw, (IFS 1984, Retd.), former High Commissioner to Tanzania and Ambassador to Azerbaijan. Served in Indian Missions in Hong Kong, Beijing (twice), Bonn and Dhaka and at Headquarters in various positions. Seconded to Ministry of Defence as JS (PIC) 2005-07. Visiting Fellow at CSIS, Washington DC 2004-05.



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Discover the Magic of India

A journey through culture, heritage, and natural beauty

India, a land of diverse cultures, rich history, and breathtaking landscapes, offers an extraordinary travel experience for all kinds of travelers. From the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas to the sun-kissed beaches of the Arabian Sea, India's vast geographical diversity makes it an unmatched destination for tourism. The country is not only known for its ancient heritage, temples, and forts but also for its modern developments and cosmopolitan cities. Whether you are an adventurer, history enthusiast, or cultural seeker, India has something for everyone.

Top 10 Spots to Visit in India:

Taj Mahal, Agra

Famous For: One of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Taj Mahal is a symbol of eternal love. This white marble mausoleum was built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal.

What to Try: A visit at sunrise offers the best view of the Taj as the marble structure glows in the soft morning light. Also, try the famous Agra petha (sweet made from pumpkin) and explore the bustling markets nearby.

Jaipur, Rajasthan

Famous For: Known as the "Pink City," Jaipur is a stunning blend of history and modernity, with majestic palaces, forts, and vibrant bazaars.

What to Try: Visit the Amber Fort, City Palace, and Hawa Mahal. Don't miss trying the local delicacies like dal baati churma and gatte ki sabzi.

Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

Famous For: Varanasi, the spiritual capital of India, is one of the world's oldest living cities. It is known for its sacred ghats on the Ganges River and temples, especially the Kashi Vishwanath Temple.

What to Try: Take a boat ride on the Ganges during sunrise, witness the evening Aarti (prayer ritual) at Dashashwamedh Ghat, and explore the narrow alleys for local street food like chaat and lassi.

Leh-Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir

Famous For: This high-altitude desert region in northern India is known for its breathtaking landscapes, monasteries, and adventure activities like trekking, biking, and rafting.

What to Try: Explore Pangong Lake, Nubra Valley,



Tipu Sultan Palace Mysore Karnataka

and visit the Thiksey Monastery. For the adventurous, try biking on the Khardung La Pass, one of the highest motorable roads in the world.

Goa

Famous For: Known for its beautiful beaches, vibrant nightlife, Portuguese-influenced architecture, and rich cultural heritage, Goa is India's top beach destination.

What to Try: Relax on the golden beaches of Anjuna and Baga, enjoy the water sports, and sample local seafood dishes like Goan fish curry and bebinca (a traditional dessert).

Kerala (Alleppey and Munnar)

Famous For: Kerala, also known as "God's Own Country," is famous for its tranquil backwaters, lush hill stations, and pristine beaches. The state also offers rich Ayurvedic experiences.

What to Try: Take a houseboat cruise on the backwa-

ters of Alleppey, explore the tea gardens in Munnar, and enjoy Kerala's famous cuisine like appam and stew, and the traditional Kerala Sadya (feast).

Rajasthan (Udaipur and Jodhpur)

Famous For: Rajasthan is home to beautiful lakes, palaces, and forts. Udaipur, the "City of Lakes," and Jodhpur, the "Blue City," are two must-visit places in the state.

What to Try: Visit the City Palace and Lake Pichola in Udaipur. In Jodhpur, explore the Mehrangarh Fort and try the local delicacy, Makhaniya Lassi, and pyaaz ki kachori.

Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

Famous For: Shimla, the capital of Himachal Pradesh, is known for its cool climate, colonial-era architecture, and lush green landscapes. It was once the summer capital of British India.

What to Try: Take a stroll on the Mall Road, visit

the Jakhoo Temple, and enjoy some hot chocolate or traditional Himachali dishes like Chana Madra and Siddu.

Mysore, Karnataka

Famous For: Mysore, often called the "City of Palaces," is famous for its grand Maharaja's Palace, yoga centers, and the annual Dussehra Festival.

What to Try: Visit the Mysore Palace, the Chamundeshwari Temple, and don't forget to taste the famous Mysore Pak (a sweet dish) and the local masala dosas.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Famous For: A paradise for beach lovers and nature enthusiasts, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands offer crystal-clear waters, coral reefs, and diverse marine life. The islands also have historical significance with the Cellular Jail in Port Blair.

What to Try: Visit Havelock Island for its beaches and snorkeling opportunities. Try scuba diving in Neil Island, explore the mangroves, and savor seafood delicacies like fish curry and prawns.

Why Visit India?

India is not just about historical landmarks and natural beauty; it offers a complete sensory experience. The country is home to a variety of festivals like Diwali, Holi, and Durga Puja, which showcase the richness of Indian culture. From the traditional dance forms like Bharatanatyam and Kathak to its diverse and flavorful cuisines, India invites tourists to experience a kaleidoscope of traditions.

For adventure seekers, India offers a range of outdoor activities including trekking in the Himalayas, river rafting in Rishikesh, and camel rides in Rajasthan. For those looking for spiritual solace, India has countless temples, ashrams, and places of worship that draw millions of visitors seeking peace.

Tips for Traveling in India

Weather: India has diverse weather patterns. Pack accordingly, whether you're heading to the cool hills or the hot desert.

Local Customs: Respect local traditions and dress modestly, especially in religious places.

Street Food: India's street food is a must-try, but ensure to eat from hygienic places to avoid health issues.

Transportation: India's rail network is vast and affordable, and domestic flights are well-connected, making it easy to travel across the country.



One of the beaches in Goa



Taj Mahal



Pink city, Jaipur



Houseboat cruise in Kerala backwaters

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