



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Do not settle usufruct deals by blessing with one hand and then harming with the other

NO economy can thrive in the presence of outdated bureaucratic complexities and a lack of proper planning. Therefore, one of the first steps the Cabinet must take, particularly the ministers responsible for planning, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, and the State Minister for Municipality Affairs, is to recognize the current opportunity to start working on revitalizing several sectors that can contribute to the development of the national economy.

We direct our message today to these ministers, with the hope that they will read carefully and respond, especially now that ministerial positions have become stable. Unlike in past years, when initiatives were wasted and plans ignored due to ministers' fears of losing their positions, the situation has changed. In the past, ministers could be described as "anxious, as if the wind were beneath them," with pressure surrounding them from all sides.

Today, we hope the ministerial vision is clear. We urge everyone

in the Council of Ministers to disregard the rumors circulating on social media about withdrawing industrial or agricultural plots. These rumors, aimed at testing the pulse or increasing anxiety among industrialists, traders, and farmers, are the work of short-sighted individuals and negatively impact performance, leading to reduced production and damaging the economy.

It is inconceivable that any wise person would allow the influence of envious social media activists to control government decisions.

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Amir to lead flag-hoisting ceremony at Bayan Palace

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1, (KUNA): A flag-hoisting ceremony will take place at Bayan Palace at 10:00 am on Sunday under the patronage and in the presence of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Kuwait will officially begin its National Day celebrations on Sunday with the flag-hoisting ceremony under the patronage and in the presence of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The flag-hoisting event marks the start of festivities commemorating Kuwait's 64th National Day and 34th Liberation Day, reflecting on the country's history, milestones, and achievements under its leadership.

This year's celebrations coincide with Kuwait's designation as the Arab Capital of Culture and Media 2025, providing an opportunity to showcase the country's accomplishments in culture, media, and the arts, and to highlight its role in fostering cultural dialogue among nations.

The Kuwaiti flag, which has undergone several transformations, was adopted in its current form on September 7, 1961, through an Amiri Decree issued by the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

The new flag was officially raised for the first time on November 24, 1961, during a nationwide ceremony, symbolizing national pride.

Before the current flag, Kuwait's flags included various designs, such as a crescent and star or a red flag with the word Kuwait in white, before evolving into its current form with black, white, red, and green colors.

Flag-hoisting ceremonies will be held across Kuwait's six governorates, officially kicking off national celebrations, and streets and government buildings will be adorned with images of the Amir, the Crown Prince, and the Kuwaiti flag, reflecting the festive atmosphere.

Kuwait also commemorates the 34th Liberation Day, reflecting on the country's freedom from the Iraqi invasion and honoring the contributions and sacrifices of the martyrs who worked to secure its independence. These occasions serve to reinforce national unity and inspire Kuwaitis to uphold the values of solidarity and dedication to the nation's continued growth and prosperity.

Hawk black box recovered

Amir, Crown Prince, Premier condole US leader over crash

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1, (Agencies): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Friday sent a cable to U.S. President Donald Trump, expressing heartfelt condolences over the tragic plane crash near Reagan National Airport in Washington, D.C., which claimed all lives on board.

Similarly, 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 sent cables to President Trump, conveying their deepest sympathies to the victims' families.

Meanwhile, police boats combed the banks of the Potomac River on Friday, slowly scanning the shoreline in the rain as investigators sought clues into the midair collision that killed 67 people and raised questions about air traffic safety around the nation's capital.

The black box from the Army Black Hawk helicopter that collided with a commercial jetliner and crashed into the Potomac River has been recovered, investigators announced. They are reviewing that flight data recorder along with two recovered earlier from the jet.

No one survived the Wednesday night collision. The remains of 41 people had been pulled from the river as of Friday afternoon, including 28 that had been positively identified, Washington, D.C., Fire Chief John Donnelly Sr. said at a news conference. He said next of kin notifications had been made to 18 families, and he expects all the remains to be recovered.

The wreckage of the plane's fuselage will probably have to be pulled from the water to get all the bodies, he said.

"This is heartbreaking work," Donnelly said, noting that more than 300 responders were taking part in the effort at any one time, including teams of divers and two U.S. Coast Guard cutters, at least one of which carries a crane. "It's been a tough response for a lot of our people."

It was unclear how long the recovery operation would take. "We're working as fast as we can," Donnelly said. "We need your patience."

The American Airlines jet was carrying 60 passengers and four crew members. The helicopter had three soldiers on board.

Although Ronald Reagan National Airport reopened, two of its three runways remained closed to keep aircraft from flying over the crash scene, said Terry Liercke, the airport's vice president and manager. Roughly 100 flights were canceled Friday.

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PAFN confirms Coca-Cola products in Kuwait 'safe'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition has reassured consumers in Kuwait that Coca-Cola products available in the country are safe, following reports of product withdrawals in some European nations due to elevated levels of chlorate, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The authority clarified that the affected Coca-Cola products were manufactured in Europe and have

not entered the Kuwaiti market.

It further emphasized that all Coca-Cola products in Kuwait are produced locally, adhering to stringent food safety regulations.

Additionally, the authority reaffirmed its ongoing monitoring efforts to ensure consumer safety and pledged to keep the public informed of any further developments related to the issue.

Kuwait steady reforms not enough to lift credit rating

Private sector growth crucial for boost

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: Kuwait's economic and financial reforms are progressing steadily, albeit without the fanfare that typically accompanies major transformations.

This quiet progression is happening amidst a storm of political debate centered around national identity and citizenship issues, which often overshadow the importance of these reforms.

In recent years, calls for economic and financial reforms, whether from international organizations or local institutions, were largely ignored, overshadowed by populist rhetoric in the National Assembly and threats against reformist ministers.

However, since September, when Noura Al-Fassam was appointed as the Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, a series of reform laws have been swiftly passed, addressing key financial and economic areas.

These include the introduction of a tax on multinational companies, repricing of government services and the appointment of leaders to vacant economic positions.

Despite this progress, the question remains: when will these reforms reflect positively on Kuwait's sovereign credit rating?

Economic experts assert that while raising public service fees, imposing taxes and issuing a public debt law are important steps, these alone will not suffice to improve Kuwait's credit rating.

The country's rating depends on broader efforts, including continued economic reform, business environment improvements, foreign investment attraction and diversification of income sources.

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KUNA photo

A temple from the Dilmun civilization, dating back to the second millennium BC (2000-4000 BC), has recently been discovered on Failaka Island. - See Page 2

Calls grow for regulating withdrawals for \$1T Fund

Kuwait poised to re-enter debt market

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: About ten days after Finance Minister Noura Al-Fassam confirmed at the World Economic Forum in Davos that "Kuwait expects to activate the public debt law soon to enable

the state to borrow from the markets," Bloomberg reported that "Kuwait may soon be able to issue debt securities for the first time in eight years."

The agency stated that Kuwait might soon sell bonds for the first time in eight years, as the Cabinet is expected to approve a new debt law that could allow

borrowing of 20 billion dinars (approximately 65 billion dollars) over 50 years to finance public debt.

While the agency indicated that the draft law for issuing debt securities would allow Kuwait to issue traditional bonds

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Al-Sharaa vows unity, justice post-Assad era

Kuwait congratulates Syria's new leader amid transition

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1, (Agencies): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to President Ahmad Al-Sharaa, on the occasion of his assumption of the power of the Syrian Arab Republic in the transitional phase.

In his cable, His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere congratulations to President Al-Sharaa, wishing him all success in his mission for achieving interests and restoring stability of the sisterly Arab country and directing all his power to meet the aspirations of the Syrian people's for growth, progress and prosperity.

His Highness Sheikh Meshal added that the State of Kuwait is looking forward to strengthening relations with the Syrian Arab Republic and expanding cooperation in various domains.

His Highness the Amir also wished the sisterly Syrian Arab Republic and its people all progress and prosperity and good health and wellness for President Al-Sharaa.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to President Ahmad Al-Sharaa on the occasion of his assumption of the power of the Syrian Arab Republic in the transitional phase.

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A man distributes rice to people gathering outside the Umayyad Mosque during Friday prayers in Damascus, Syria, Friday Jan. 10, 2025. (AP)

Unemployment among Kuwaitis hits 33,307

Kuwaiti workforce in private sector drops

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: The latest statistics from the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) reveal a decline in the number of Kuwaiti citizens working in the private sector from 72,231 at the end of December 2023 to 70,756 by December

2024, which is a decrease of 1,475 employees.

As of the end of December 2024, there were 39,418 Kuwaiti men and 31,338 Kuwaiti women in the private sector.

In contrast, the government sector witnessed a rise in national employment, reaching 400,815 as of the end of December 2024.

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NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Interior Minister **Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah**, accompanied by an official delegation, on Saturday left for **Egypt** as part of a tour that will also take him to **Jordan and Oman**. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait's Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy said it began maintenance of power transformers across the six gover-

norates, which will lead to partial outage.

The outage will continue in some areas, according to a set schedule, from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 midday, local time, between Feb 1 and 8. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: The Ministry of Interior announced temporary closure of both exits of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan Expressway (the 5th ring road) from **Al-Jahran to Al-Surrah** and **Al-Salam** neighborhoods.

The exits of the same road will be closed for motorists coming from **Al-Salmiya to Qurtoba** and **Al-Seddiq** neighborhoods from the early hours of Saturday, the Ministry's General Department of Traffic said in a statement. (KUNA)



National Bank of Kuwait welcomes the second cohort of 'NBK Tech Academy'

9 ABK Capital wins 'Most Innovative Multi-Asset Fund Management Co' award

10 Gulf Bank to host AIDanah Millionaire Grand Draw on Feb 13, 2025

Prayer Timings

Fajr 05:16 Asr 15:05
 Sunrise .. 06:38 Maghrib .. 17:26
 Zohr 12:02 Isha 18:45

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Mild with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h.
By Night: Cold with light vari-

Weather

able wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-32 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	22	11
Kuwait Airport	22	05
Abdaly	23	05

Bubyan	23	07
Jahra	23	09
Failaka Island	23	10
Salmiyah	22	15
Ahmadi	22	08
Jal Aliyah	21	07
Nuwaisib	22	10

Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr condoles demise of Saudi Arabian Prince



Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah is in Saudi Arabia to offer condolences over the demise of His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad bin Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.



KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, President of the Kuwait and Asian Aquatics Federations, visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to offer his condolences following the passing of His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad bin Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

Al-Badr explained that the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has bid farewell to one of its most virtuous sons, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad bin Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, a distinguished man and prominent Arab and Islamic figure whose stances and contributions will always be remembered.

History has recorded in golden letters the courageous stances of the late prince during the time when Kuwait was exposed to the brutal Iraqi invasion. He strongly condemned the invasion, supported Kuwait's legitimacy, and stood by the leadership and citizens of Kuwait to help overcome the ordeal and advocate the right to return Ku-

wait to its people.

The deceased (May God have mercy on him) played a pivotal role in implementing the directives of the wise leadership of the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the time. He worked tirelessly to ensure all obstacles were removed to receive the people of Kuwait who went to Saudi Arabia, and all forms of support were provided to them. The late prince's honorable stances will never be forgotten.

Al-Badr stressed that words sometimes fall short in conveying the depth of sadness over the loss of such a dear person, one who was loyal and devoted to his country, as well as to the Arab and Islamic world, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad bin Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

He concluded by saying, "All we can do is pray and implore God Almighty to have mercy on him, grant him a place in Paradise, and bestow patience and solace upon his family and loved ones."

France top Schengen destination for Kuwaitis

Rejection rate very low; 36,000 visas processed: Ambassador Gauvin

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: The Ambassador of France to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin says France is the top Schengen destination for Kuwaitis, which reflects the long-standing friendship between the two countries. He highlighted that the large number of Kuwaitis who choose France for their holidays demonstrates the vitality of economic and cultural exchanges.

Speaking at a press conference marking the reopening of the newly renovated Capago Center at Al-Rayah Center in the presence of a number of ambassadors and representatives of European diplomatic missions, Ambassador Gauvin affirmed that France retained its position as the world's most popular travel destination in 2024, after receiving more than 100 million visitors.

He revealed that the consular section processed 36,000 visa applications in 2024, with the embassy's consular team handling approximately 150 applications daily, a number that could increase to 300 during the summer.

Ambassador Gauvin said "We are committed to providing a high-quality experience for Kuwaiti citizens who wish to visit France". Highlighting the services offered by Capago to visa applicants, he said, "The contract for the Capago branch in Kuwait, which was established in 2012, has been renewed for another five years. This reflects the continued confidence of the French administration. The Kuwait City visa center has undergone a complete renovation to enhance the user experience and improve the comfort and well-being of visa applicants."

Ambassador Gauvin explained that the new design has modern elements, including more spacious waiting areas and upgraded facilities. The number of counters has increased from nine to ten in the standard area and from three to four in the VIP area, thereby boosting the center's processing capacity.

New tailored services will soon be introduced to offer personalized solutions for each applicant. Among these services, pre-checking of documents before appointments will ensure complete applications, and reduce processing time to under five minutes at the center.

On September 8, 2023, the European Commission took a decision to implement the "Cascade Visa", marking an important step in facilitating travel for Kuwaiti citizens to Europe. The "Cascade Visa" is only available to Kuwaiti citizens for short-term tourist purposes. Applicants of other nationalities must apply for a separate visa for each stay in France.

Ambassador Gauvin said, "For the first application for a short-term tourist visa, Kuwaiti citizens will receive a multiple-entry visa valid for five years. Applicants must complete the visa procedures at the embassy of the Schengen country where they plan to spend the majority of their first stay.

After the initial trip, subsequent stays can be made in any Schengen country, as long as each stay does not exceed 90 days within a 180-day period. For each trip, the visa holder must provide proof of residence, an insurance certificate covering the duration of the stay, proof of means of subsistence, and a copy of the round-trip flight ticket.

A visa cannot be issued with a validity longer than the remaining period of the passport. To obtain a five-year visa, the passport must have at least five years of validity left.

If the passport's validity is shorter, the visa will be issued for a duration matching the passport's validity, ranging from six months to four years. The visa's expiration date will be set to ensure it expires three months before the passport's expiration".



Photo by Mohammad Morsi
 Ambassador of France to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin talking to the press.

Kuwaiti archaeological finds offer gateway to bygone era civilizations



Pottery shards from the Subiya region dating back to the Ubaid culture period 7,000 years ago.



A temple from the Dilmun civilization period was recently discovered on Failaka Island, dating back to the second millennium BC (2000 BC - 4,000 years).



KUNA photos
 Assistant Secretary General Mohammad bin Redha and Dr. Hassan Ashkanani with the Danish mission and a discussion about the latest discoveries of the Dilmun Temple.

By Shahad Kamal

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1, (KUNA): Though diminutive in its geographical size, buried underneath Kuwait's scorching soil are riveting tales of civilizations dating back thousands of years, a testament to the country's rich cultural heritage which is tantamount to a lesson on the history of the region that links the present to the past.

Upon closer inspection of the archaeological discoveries of the existence of ancient civilizations that have inhabited its land over the course of history, it becomes abundantly clear that its strategic location had provided a pivotal route of communication between vast civilizations and cultures that had co-existed here.

Archaeological missions that have passed through Kuwait go back to the year 1958 when a team of Danish explorers landed in Kuwait by way of an invitation extended by the Kuwaiti government a year earlier, an event which set in motion a string of similar endeavors to have followed suit.

Kuwait's Failaka Island, at one point linked to the Dilmuns, an ancient East Semitic-speaking civilization in Eastern Arabia, is among the most illustrious archaeological locations in the country given its strategic location on the global maritime trade route, bringing together the civilizations of Mesopotamia and the southern Arabian Peninsula.

Running over 12 kilometers in length and six kilometers in width, Failaka island tells a tale of ancient settlements dating

back to the second millennium BC, where its landscape is dotted with residential buildings, temples and palaces, in addition to other settlements overlooking a harbor believed to have been the island's ancient port.

As time continued to elapse, the history of civilization on the island had transformed after the fall of Dilmun civilization paved the way to archeological discoveries that reveal Hellenistic influence, one of the epochs of ancient Greek history, as evidenced by the castles, watchtowers, temples and residential buildings that were seen in the Gulf Arab region.

As for the inaugural archeological discovery made on the island, one has to go back to the year 1937, after a boulder with Greek inscription emblazoned on it was found, that if translated into English reads, "Sotilus, the Athenian citizen and the soldiers presented this to Zeus the Savior, Poseidon and to Artemis the Savior," a reference to Greek mythology.

Another prominent archaeological side is Kuwait's northern region of Sabiya, which at one point was the subject of intense scrutiny by international archaeological missions that unearthed the existence of ancient civilizations, chief among them the prehistoric Mesopotamian Ubaid civilization, which lived during the period running from 4500 to 5500 BC.

Other important discoveries were found after excavation work in "Tal Al-Bahitha" in Kuwait City, which also point



A human head made of clay from the site of Bahra in the Subiya area north of Kuwait Bay, dating back to the sixth millennium BC (5500 BC - 7,500 years ago).

to the existence of ancient settlements seen in villages where rare antiquities were uncovered, including coins, house remains and pottery tools, in addition to the relics of the second wall of Kuwait, which reveal the early signs of the formation of modern-day Kuwait City.

Archaeological reports show the omnipresence of cultural centers dating back to pre-Islamic history in various areas in the Gulf Arab region, including Wadi Al-Batin, Umm Al-Aish and Kazma, while the remains of



Assistant Secretary-General Mohammad bin Redha and Dr. Hassan Ashkanani conduct a chemical analysis of a Neolithic building dating back more than 7,000 years.

buildings and walls were seen in central Jahra area in a telling sign of ancient life and commercial activities back then.

While more than six decades have passed since archaeological excavations began in Kuwait, the country's National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) continues to report riveting discoveries that offer broader insight into its civilizational and cultural history over the years.

On more recent discoveries, NCCAL acting assistant chief for the

antiquities and museums department Mohammad bin Redha cited the discoveries of a joint Kuwaiti-Danish mission, most notably a Bronze Age temple dating back to the Dilmun civilization, a fact that sheds more light on ancient human settlement in Failaka Island, subsequently highlighting its cultural, commercial and social role in the region.

Discussing ongoing endeavors, the official told KUNA that a joint Kuwaiti-Polish excavation team is currently carrying out operations in Subiya area, where the oldest and largest settlement in the Arabian Peninsula during the slavery period dating back to 5700 BC has been found, he said.

The team had previously promulgated the discovery of a courtyard in Subiya used for jewelry construction and the making of other shell-like adornments, while a rare, finely crafted clay head with an elongated skull was touted as the first of its kind in the Arab Gulf region.

On the significant history of Failka island, the chief of the Danish archaeological mission to Kuwait Stephen Laursen said that it formed a "pivotal trade route" linking ancient Babylon and the Indian Ocean, where the Dilmuns during the third millennium BC had built a port and temples, alongside other places of worship across the island.

He went on to hail the discovery of a Bronze Age temple measuring 11 x 11 meters as an "extraordinary" milestone that reveals interesting information on the religious practices of the Dilmun civilization, underlining

that ongoing excavations promise to offer never before known facts about Kuwait's history in the prehistoric period.

On endeavors in the works, Dr. Hassan Ashkanani, professor of archeology and anthropology at Kuwait University and advisor to the NCCAL, said that a French team will arrive in Kuwait soon to carry out restoration work on the remains of a Hellenistic citadel, an initiative he described as an effort to "protect the archaeological discoveries" made in previous years.

Kuwait is also cooperating with a mission from Sapienza University of Rome to conduct an archaeological survey in the country's northern areas, while a delegation from the International Atomic Energy Agency in has also visited as part of plans to employ cutting-edge laboratory techniques to examine Kuwaiti antiquities, he said.

Dishing out statistics, he said that in 1957, the Kuwait National Museum was inaugurated in Dasman area, while the exhibits on display were moved in 1976 to the traditional Al-Bader House, ahead of the opening of an Islamic antiquities center in 1983 that sought to promote and boost awareness about Islamic findings and teachings, added the professor.

Kuwaiti legislation firmly supports the protection of rare antiquities and archaeological sites, where rigid laws actually criminalize any form of tampering or destruction, while the smuggling of antiquities faces stiff penalties in a bid to ensure the protection of cultural heritage, he said.



Need to overcome loopholes seen in judicial reforms draft

"THE recent circulation of a draft decree-law proposing amendments to the Judicial Organization Law has sparked significant discussion. While the Ministry of Justice and the Judicial Council are considering these amendments to improve the judiciary's role and performance, it is crucial to evaluate their impact critically," columnist Dr. **Mohammad Hussein Al-Dallal** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Drawing from our previous experience as a member of the National Assembly, we have long advocated for judicial reforms and now find it necessary to express observations on the proposed changes.

"One of the most commendable amendments is the enhancement of electronic systems in court operations, as outlined in Article 13. The integration of modern technology is a necessary step forward for improving efficiency and accessibility in the judicial system.

"Another vital improvement is the implementation of term limits for supervisory and administrative positions within the judiciary. This governance measure ensures fresh perspectives and accountability, as reflected in several articles of the draft law.

"Furthermore, Article 25's introduction of a judicial code of conduct is a welcome initiative. Establishing clear ethical guidelines will strengthen the credibility and integrity of judicial proceedings.

"The draft also proposes the establishment of a social security fund for judges and prosecutors under Article 71. While the fund itself is a positive step, it falls short in addressing the critical issue of judicial accountability and the right to litigate against judicial misconduct.

"Additionally, the proposed amendment aims to reinforce Kuwaitization within the judiciary, a long-standing demand that aligns with national workforce policies. However, the draft lacks a clear timeline and actionable steps to implement this goal effectively.

"Another promising amendment is Article 28, which mandates the inclusion of both majority and minority opinions in judicial rulings. This approach enhances legal reasoning and transparency in verdicts.

"Further, expanding judicial inspections to include Court of Appeal advisors, rather than limiting them to General Court judges, is a meaningful step toward improving oversight and accountability.

"Finally, allowing judiciary members and prosecutors to pursue post-graduate studies, as per the new proposals, fosters continuous professional development and specialization in legal fields.

"Despite these positive changes, several aspects of the proposed amendments require serious reconsideration. The draft maintains numerous provisions that undermine judicial independence, contradicting Article 163 of the Kuwaiti Constitution, which explicitly states that judges must operate free from external influence.

"For instance, Article 36 grants the Minister of Justice supervisory authority over the judiciary, while Article 62 subordinates the Public Prosecutor to the Minister.

"Additionally, Articles 12, 17 and 75 reinforce ministerial control over judicial appointments, budget allocations and administrative affairs. These provisions compromise the judiciary's independence and should be revised to align with constitutional guarantees.

"Another problematic amendment is Article 19, which adds the requirement that judges be 'Kuwaiti by origin.' This clause raises constitutional concerns, particularly regarding Article 29, which upholds equality among citizens. By restricting judicial appointments to only those with original Kuwaiti lineage, the amendment risks excluding highly qualified candidates and fostering unnecessary social and professional divisions.

"Furthermore, the proposed amendments fail to introduce clear mechanisms for litigating against judicial misconduct. While judges and prosecutors receive expanded protections, there is no corresponding framework to hold them accountable for legal errors or misconduct. Islamic jurisprudence and international legal standards advocate for mechanisms that ensure judicial accountability while respecting the independence of the judiciary.

"Article 20 introduces a perplexing restriction by requiring a waiting period before a judge can assume a higher supervisory position.

This provision unnecessarily limits the pool of qualified candidates for leadership roles within the judiciary.

"Moreover, Article 38 assigns the Public Prosecution the authority to investigate judicial misconduct. Given the inherent conflict of interest, it would be more appropriate for an independent judicial committee to handle such cases.

"Article 69, which authorizes the Minister of Justice to appoint administrative and financial staff for the judiciary, also raises concerns. Instead of being managed by the Ministry of Justice, administrative affairs should be overseen by an independent secretariat within the Judicial Council to reinforce judicial autonomy.

"Finally, Article 76, which mandates the preparation of an annual judicial report, lacks enforcement mechanisms. The experience of past years suggests that these reports often remain uncirculated or ignored. To ensure transparency, these reports should be made available to the public and submitted to the National Assembly for review.

"While the proposed amendments include commendable initiatives, they also contain provisions that could hinder judicial independence and accountability.

"It is imperative that lawmakers address these concerns to ensure that the judiciary remains a truly independent and effective constitutional authority. By refining the draft amendments with these considerations in mind, we can advance the rule of law and strengthen public confidence in the judicial system."

Also:

"While the new traffic law is undeniably strict in its penalties, its primary aim is to curb reckless driving, disregard for road etiquette and non-compliance with traffic rules -- factors that have resulted in countless fatalities and significant damage to property," columnist Dr. **Abdulhadi Al-Saleh** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"It is commendable that the Ministry of Interior has taken steps to raise awareness about the law before its enforcement, educating the public on its provisions and warning of the new penalties.

"However, the ministry has yet to address several underlying issues that compel motorists to violate traffic laws out of necessity rather than negligence. This oversight needs urgent attention. Consider the following examples:

"Unmarked Speed Bumps -- Many speed bumps lack proper signage or reflective markings, catching drivers off guard and leading to physical injuries, collisions and vehicle wear and tear.

"Inadequate Parking Facilities -- Many institutions, including hospitals, clinics and banks, do not have sufficient parking spaces to accommodate visitors. Worse yet, most available spaces are reserved for employees. Nearby side-walks and open areas could be repurposed for public parking, with minimal fees, as seen in many European cities.

"Distracting Digital Billboards -- The proliferation of bright, animated advertisements along roadsides diverts drivers' attention as much as the use of mobile phones -- ironically, a behavior that the law strictly prohibits.

"Lack of Enforcement on Public Transport Violations -- When I asked a traffic officer why public transport buses frequently violate traffic rules -- stopping indiscriminately, disregarding speed limits and creating chaos -- he responded that they are exempt from penalties. This raises concerns about selective enforcement.

"Neglect in Road Maintenance -- Overgrown tree branches obstruct visibility, especially at intersections, creating hazardous conditions. Similarly, traffic signs are often placed too close to turns, leaving drivers with insufficient time to react.

"Inefficiencies in Traffic Check-points -- When residential areas are sealed off for inspections, congestion builds up, leading to frustration. A designated lane should be allocated for individuals with urgent needs, including the elderly, those with disabilities and emergency cases, to prevent unnecessary hardship.

"If the objective of the new traffic law is truly to enhance road safety, then addressing these structural issues is just as critical as imposing fines. Laws alone will not improve road conditions unless the root causes of violations are acknowledged and resolved."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Dr. Al-Dallal



KFF photo

Chief of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Major General Talal Mohammad Al-Roumi signing the joint cooperation protocol.

KFF, National Guard ink cooperation protocol

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: Chief of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Major General Talal Mohammed Al-Roumi signed the schedule for activating the joint cooperation protocol between KFF and the National Guard for the year 2025.

According to a press release issued by KFF, the signing ceremony was attended by the acting Deputy Chief of the Firefighting Sector Brigadier General Ahmad Haif Hamoud, Head of the Firefighting Department of the National

Guard Colonel Eng. Butti Jassim Mohammad, Head of the Technical and Administrative Support Department Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Qassim Mohammad, and First Staff of Protocols Lieutenant Colonel Saud Ali Hithal.

Mol blames Municipality for worsening traffic rush

Sabah Al-Salem land 'misused'

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: The Ministry of Interior has held Kuwait Municipality responsible for the worsening traffic congestion in Sabah Al-Salem, stating that the municipality changed the land uses and issued investment and commercial licenses without consulting the General Traffic Department or obtaining its approvals.

This lack of coordination has negatively impacted the capacity of the streets in the area and contributed to severe traffic congestion in the area and on the roads leading to it.

In response, the municipality submitted a statement to the Municipal Council regarding a proposal submitted by the council member Dr. Hassan Kamal to evaluate and update the traffic study for

Blocks 1, 2, and 3 of Sabah Al-Salem.

The statement, which was approved by the acting Director General of Kuwait Municipality Manal Al-Asfour, explained that the municipality's Structural Plan Department emphasized the need for a consultative traffic study for Sabah Al-Salem, similar to those conducted in Hawally and Salmiya. This study aims to address the ongoing traffic congestion in the area.

In October 2024, the municipality officially reached out to the Ministry of Interior's General Traffic Department to review the proposal from a traffic perspective and provide a technical opinion.

In turn, the Ministry of Interior informed Kuwait Municipality that Sabah Al-Salem is characterized by high population density, which has been further exacerbated by its appeal due to the large number of schools, hospitals, public facilities, and commercial activities. This has led to a significant increase in traffic at the area's entrances and exits.

The ministry highlighted that the

municipality's changes to the land use and the issuance of investment and commercial licenses, without consulting the General Traffic Department or obtaining its approval, have negatively impacted the capacity of the area's streets, resulting in severe traffic congestion both in the blocks and on the surrounding roads.

In its statement, the Ministry of Interior referred to the municipality's letter dated November 21, 2023, in which the municipality requested the cancellation of the General Traffic Department's role. This request was made in violation of Cabinet's Resolutions No. 965 and No. 1450, which mandate coordination between the municipality and the Ministry of Interior's General Traffic Department on matters that affect traffic movement in the country.

The Ministry of Interior concluded its statement by urging the municipality to instruct the relevant authorities to update the structural plan in line with future developments, including the necessary road expansions and amendments.

'Issue ownership docus to divorcee'

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: The Court of First Instance has ordered the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) and the Real Estate Registration Department at the Ministry of Justice to issue a home ownership document to a divorced Kuwaiti woman even though they had initially refused to do so. The court confirmed the citizen's right to receive the

ownership document without the need for approval from her ex-husband.

The plaintiff filed the lawsuit through her legal counsel Lawyer Ali Al-Wawan to challenge the Director General of PAHW and the assistant undersecretary for Real Estate Registration and Documentation at the Ministry of Justice, and request a ruling that would allow her to proceed with the necessary steps for the issuance of the ownership document for the plot shared equally between her and her ex-husband

without requiring his signature.

In this context, Lawyer Al-Wawan clarified that his client was married to the first defendant under a valid legal contract and has children with him. They had applied for housing care from the second defendant (the Justice Agent), and the plot was received in 2004. However, due to the defendant's negligence in issuing the ownership document, and his arbitrary refusal to do so, the plaintiff filed the lawsuit.



KFF photo

KFF fire engine at the site of the blaze .

4 hurt in house fire

No casualties reported in Wafra chalets blaze

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: Firefighters from Wafra and Nuwaiseeb fire stations successfully controlled a fire that broke out early Saturday morning in chalets that were used as labor accommodation on a farm in Wafra.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), the teams managed to extinguish the blaze, and no deaths or casualties were reported.

4 hurt in house fire: Firefighters from Al-Sour and Tahrir fire stations controlled a blaze that engulfed a house in Jaber Al-Ahmad Residential early Saturday morning, which resulted in injuries and burns to four individuals.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force, firefighters evacuated the house and successfully extinguished the fire. The four casualties were handed over to paramedics, and no deaths were reported.

Asian expatriate run over, dies in Ishbiliya accident

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: An Asian man in his forties died after being run over on the Sixth Ring Road opposite Ishbiliya. His body was referred to the Forensic Medicine Department, and a case was registered.

According to a security source, when the Ministry of Interior's Operations Room received a report of a run-over accident on the Sixth Ring Road near Ishbiliya, securitymen and paramedics rushed to the location, and they confirmed the death of the man due to his injuries.

Kuwaiti groups in airport 'fisticuffs'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: The Ministry of Interior has launched an investigation to determine the circumstances surrounding a violent altercation involving eight Kuwaiti nationals near the arrivals gate at Terminal 4 of Kuwait International Airport, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

An official source confirmed that one of the individuals involved in the fight was taken by ambulance to the Farwaniya Hospital, while the other seven were taken to the Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh police station for questioning to know the cause of the dispute.

The authorities are investigating whether the altercation started onboard a Kuwaiti flight coming from an Arab country or if it occurred after the flight landed at the Kuwait International Airport.

According to the source, the Operations Department of the Ministry of Interior received a report of the fight and immediately the public security patrols were dispatched to the scene. Upon arrival, it was revealed that five of individuals involved in the fight are from the same family (siblings and cousins), while the other three were from a different family.

Preliminary investigations suggest that all parties involved were passengers on the same flight and the altercation occurred in front of the arrivals hall.

Bid to check fire safety measures

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: The Public Relations Department of Kuwait Municipality revealed that the supervisory team of the Capital Municipality's Safety Department recently conducted an intensive field tour to ensure all safety measures were in place for investment, commercial, and industrial properties, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The department explained that the supervisory team's tours in Shuwaikh Industrial resulted in the issuance of two citations for non-compliance with safety regulations and the threat of structural deformation, as well as the absence of a safety license at the site. Also, 15 warnings were issued for safety regulation violations and deformation issues.

The department urged property owners to take immediate action in complying with safety measures and municipal regulations, including promptly removing construction debris by the contractor and property owner to avoid legal penalties.

The supervisory team of the Safety Department will not hesitate to take legal action against any violations.

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Kuwait pushes for stronger ties with Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Ambassador underscores commitment to regional peace and security



KUNA photo
Kuwait's Ambassador to China, Jassim Al-Najem, with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's newly appointed Secretary-General, Nurlan Yermekbayev, while delivering a congratulatory message from Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya on his appointment.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to China, Jassim Al-Najem, affirmed on Saturday Kuwait's keenness to enhance cooperation with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in various political and security fields.

This came during a meeting between Ambassador Al-Najem and the organization's new Secretary-General, Nurlan Yermekbayev, at the organization's headquarters in the Chinese capital, Beijing.

In a statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Ambassador Al-Najem said he delivered a congratulatory message from Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya to Yermekbayev on his appointment as Secretary-General of the organization for the next three years, wishing him success in his duties.

He noted that the meeting discussed joint relations between Kuwait and the organization, as well as Kuwait's accession to it as a "dialogue partner" in 2023.

In this context, Al-Najem praised the participation of the organization's former Secretary-General, Zhang Ming, in the fourth high-level conference on "Enhancing International Cooperation in Combating Terrorism and Building

Flexible Border Security Mechanisms," held in Kuwait last November.

He emphasized Kuwait's commitment to achieving peace, security, and combating terrorism, which are among the main pillars of the organization's work.

For his part, Yermekbayev expressed his appreciation for Kuwait and its active role at the regional and international levels, praising its continuous participation in the organization's programs and activities inside and outside China.

He stressed that the organization always welcomes Kuwait's effective contributions and expressed hope that the next stage will witness more fruitful cooperation between the two sides to serve their common interests and goals.

It is noteworthy that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) aims to promote peace, security, and stability in the region, combat terrorism and extremism, and enhance cooperation among member states.

The organization was established in 2001 and includes 10 member states: China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan, Iran, and Belarus.

Afghanistan and Mongolia hold "observer" status in the organization, while 14 countries have "dialogue partner" status: Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Egypt, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Myanmar.

Kuwait stands by martyrs' families

'We will not rest until every fallen hero returned home'

By **Mohammad Ghanem**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: The Director General of the Martyr's Office Salah Al-Awfan highlighted the keenness of the political leadership to provide all forms of support and assistance to ensure a decent life for the families of martyrs in recognition of the heroism and sacrifices of the martyrs for the sake of Kuwait and its sovereignty.

In an interview with the daily, he said, "We will not rest until the remains of all prisoners from the brutal Iraqi invasion are returned. Out of 557 prisoners, Kuwait has received the remains of 293.

Coordination is ongoing between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Red Crescent Society, and the Red Cross Society in Iraq.

In the event that mass graves are discovered, the remains will be examined through forensic analysis in Kuwait, and DNA samples will be matched with those taken from the families of the martyrs. If the samples match, the Martyr's Office will coordinate with the families to inform them of the identification of remains.

Despite the complexity of the process after 34 years, Kuwait is prioritizing this issue because these martyrs loved Kuwait, and Kuwait honors them. Therefore, it is only fitting for them to rest under its soil."

Al-Awfan stressed the keenness of the Martyr's Office to provide the necessary care for the families of 1,342 martyrs, comprising 3,583 individuals (wives, children, mothers, and fathers), in line with Decrees 38/1991 and 325/2011. Such forms of care are varied, including social, health, educational, and legal.

He explained that the office also provides healthcare for the wives and mothers of martyrs, especially since they are at an age group now that requires more medical attention. To address this, the Ministry of Health has been contacted to prioritize their admission to health institutions and ensure they receive the necessary treatment, particularly those suffering from chronic illnesses.

Educational support is also provided to the children of martyrs, which extends from kindergarten to scholarships both within Kuwait and abroad. After 34 years, the children of the liberation martyrs are no longer in their childhood years.

The children here refers to the children of martyrs who lost their lives in the line of duty in the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Army, National Guard, and Kuwait Fire Force. These are 154 martyrs who made the ultimate sacrifice to defend the security and stability of the homeland.

As a result, the political leadership made it a priority to include their families under the office's support, and ensure they receive comprehensive care.

In addition to providing a retirement salary, the office also offers several other forms of assistance to the families of these martyrs, such as priority in housing allocation and the cancellation of all government loans related to housing, electricity, water, and more. The office also coordinates with the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to give priority in employment for these families.

Al-Awfan revealed the office's preparations for the upcoming National Day celebrations marking the 34th anniversary of Liberation Day and the 64th anniversary of Independence Day. As part of the festivities, the office will organize the "The Most Precious Homeland" exhibition at The Avenues on February 17-18 from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm.

He explained that the exhibition will be interactive, and will incorporate augmented reality technology that allows visitors to explore the stories behind the paintings using their mobile phones. Each painting will be accompanied by a video that narrates Kuwait's journey from February 1991, highlights the hardships during and after the brutal Iraqi invasion, and shows how the country has become even more magnificent and beautiful by 2025.

The exhibition will also honor the heroism of 1,342 martyrs who are sons and daughters of Kuwait who sacrificed their lives for the country.

The exhibition will be open to both citizens and residents of Kuwait, with a particular focus on engaging the youth, who make up approximately 65 percent of the Kuwaiti population.

It aims to educate them about the sacrifices made by the martyrs for the homeland.

Al-Awfan revealed that the office's sponsorships extend to 14 nationalities besides Kuwaiti citizens, marking an unprecedented inclusion of martyrs from other nationalities, adding that this reinforces the idea that Kuwait is a center for humanitarian work, and anyone who sacrifices their life for Kuwait is treated as a Kuwaiti, regardless of their nationality.

He went on to explain that the activities organized by the office for the National Day celebrations include a collaboration with the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NC-CAL) to hold a four-month exhibition from February to May at the National Museum.

The office will also participate in various activities in cooperation with both government and non-government organizations that requested the office's participation in their National Day celebrations, including the Ministry of Education, which will organize activities in its schools.

The office is preparing to release a new documentary film titled "Symbol and Pride," which will showcase the history of the office since its establishment in 1991 by Decree No. 38 from the era of the late Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad (May Allah bless his soul), until the current era of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad (May God protect him). The film will highlight the office's history and the exceptional care it has provided to the families of martyrs.

Also, the grand reopening of the Martyr's Museum will take place inside the office building in February on the occasion of the National Days, and the media will be invited to cover the event. This permanent museum and its exhibits tell the story of the heroism of the martyrs and the Kuwaiti resistance during the seven months of the brutal Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1991.

Among the museum's displays is a section featuring scenes of the burning oil wells after the liberation. Also, a character will be presented to visitors using hologram technology to guide them through the events during and after the invasion, and highlight the role played by the 34 countries that supported Kuwait. The flags of these countries will be proudly displayed in the museum as a gesture of appreciation for their historical role. The museum will also feature a cinema showing documentaries about the acts of heroism.

The office organizes a major ceremony every year to honor the outstanding children of martyrs. A dedicated team is formed to receive the certificates of the honorees, which are certified by the Ministry of Higher Education, particularly for foreign qualifications. The ceremony will take place from April 1 to June 1, with the announcement of academic results. Between 100 and 120 exceptional students will be honored, ranging from kindergarten pupils to PhD graduates, all of whom have earned excellent or very good grades. Every year, efforts are made to improve the ceremony, both in its format and its content.

Regarding the operations within the Martyr's Office, Al-Awfan explained that the office is overseen by a Board of Trustees, chaired by the Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs, and consists of 12 members including the Chairman, Vice Chairman, the Secretary (who is the Director General of the Martyr's Office), and representatives of relevant state agencies such as the Kuwait Army, Ministry of Interior, National Guard, Kuwait Fire Force, Public Authority for Minors Affairs, and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The board also has three members who are children of martyrs, now of mature age, which enable them to effectively represent their families, express their needs, and contribute to the development and modernization of the office's work mechanisms.

The Board of Trustees holds two meetings a year, one every six months, to review the office's achievements and the proposals from members. These proposals are directed to the executive management for implementation, in accordance with the Amiri Decree that grants the Board the authority to set policies for commemoration and distinguished sponsorships it deems appropriate.

The developments and the needs of the families of martyrs are also discussed and approved during these meetings, and then the executive body of the Board is responsible for implementing the decisions issued accordingly.

The Secretariat of the Board includes committees that specialize in the adoption of martyrs, as there is no other entity in Kuwait tasked with this responsibility except the Martyr's Office, as stipulated in the Amiri Decree.

PAFN cracks down on violators in Farwaniya

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition conducted an inspection tour in the Farwaniya Governorate, led by Acting Deputy Director

General for Inspection and Control Affairs, Dr. Saud Al-Humaidi Al-Jalal.

The inspection targeted food establishments, restaurants, central markets and food transport and delivery vehicles.

The authorities found that some vehicle owners lacked the necessary licenses and

some workers did not possess the health certificates.

Dr. Al-Jalal emphasized the importance of compliance with food safety regulations and affirmed that legal action will be taken against violators without leniency.



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Water network sterilization completed

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: According to informed sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, the ministry has finished washing and sterilizing the water network for South Abdullah Al-Mubarak Residential, Block 5, reports Al-Rai daily.

They said water is expected to be supplied to this block on Thursday, making it the first to receive water in the area.

The sources indicated that there is ongoing coordination between the ministry and the Public Authority for

Housing Welfare (PAHW) regarding the schedule for delivering water to the remaining blocks, based on the occupancy rates in each area.

Meanwhile, in continuation of the series of meetings held by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy Dr. Adel Al-Zamel with the ministry's sectors, he held a meeting recently with the sectors responsible for water and the Committee for Preparing Strategies for Rationalizing Electricity and Water Consumption.

Country enters fifth year of crisis

Myanmar's military government extends mandate to rule another six months

BANGKOK, Feb 1, (AP): Myanmar's military government on Friday announced another six-month extension of its mandate to rule in preparation for elections it has said will be held this year, as the country enters its fifth year of crisis.

However, it did not announce an exact date for the polls.

The military declared a state of emergency on Feb 1, 2021, when it arrested the country's leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, and top officials from her government in an army takeover which reversed years of progress toward democracy after five decades of earlier military rule.

The takeover sparked an armed resistance movement, with powerful ethnic minority militias and people's defense forces that support Myanmar's main opposition now controlling large parts of the country.

The military government is currently facing its greatest challenge since taking power and is on the defensive in much of the country. However, it is still able to hold onto much of central Myanmar and big cities including the capital, Naypyidaw.

State-run MRTV television reported on Friday that the National Defense and Security Council decided unanimously to grant an extension of emergency rule after Senior Gen. Ming Aung Hlaing, the head of the military government, argued that more time was needed to restore stability to the country to hold national elections.

The council is nominally a constitutional administrative government body, but in practice is controlled by the military.

Under the army-drafted 2008 constitution, the military was able to rule the country under a state of emergency for one year, followed by two possible six-month extensions before holding elections. However, the extension on Friday was the seventh.

Tom Andrews, a special rapporteur with the UN Human Rights Office, said in a statement on Thursday that four years of military oppression, violence and incompetence have cast Myanmar into an abyss. The United Nations has estimated that more than 3.5 million people have been displaced by the conflict.



In this image provided by The Myanmar Military True News Information Team, Myanmar's military leader Senior Gen Min Aung Hlaing, (center), speaks during meeting with members of the National Defense and Security Council on Jan 31, in Naypyidaw, Myanmar. (AP)

"Junta forces have slaughtered thousands of civilians, bombed and burned villages, and displaced mil-

lions of people. More than 20,000 political prisoners remain behind bars. The economy and public ser-

VICES have collapsed. Famine and starvation loom over large parts of the population," he said.

The United States, United Kingdom, European Union and others jointly condemned the military government's violence against civilians and the deprivation of their rights.

They said more than one-third of the population, 19.9 million people, need humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs, including food aid, and that up to 3.5 million people are displaced internally, an increase of nearly 1 million in the last year.

The joint statement marking the anniversary of the 2021 army takeover also expressed concern over increased cross-border crime in Myanmar such as drug and human trafficking and online scam operations, which affect neighboring countries and risk broader instability.

"The current trajectory is not sustainable for Myanmar or the region," said the countries, which also included Australia, Canada, South Korea, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland.

Myanmar's extended state of

emergency consolidates all legislative, judicial and executive powers of government under Min Aung Hlaing.

Under the constitution, the military must transfer government functions to the president at least six months before elections are held.

The military originally said elections would be held in August 2023, but has regularly pushed back the date and has recently said they would take place sometime in 2025.

Critics say the elections will neither be free nor fair because there is no free media and most of the leaders of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party have been arrested. The plan is widely seen as an attempt to legitimize the military's rule by delivering a result that ensures the generals retain in control.

Moe Zaw Oo, a member of the opposition's shadow National Unity Government, said Wednesday that opposition groups are preparing to prevent the military-held election through nonviolent means. The NUG, which calls itself the country's legitimate government, serves as an opposition umbrella group.

Indonesia and France agree to deepen cooperation to maintain regional stability

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Feb 1, (AP): The defense ministers of France and Indonesia agreed Friday to work more closely to maintain regional stability, Indonesian officials said.

Visiting French Defense Minister Sébastien Lecornu and his Indonesian counterpart, Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin, agreed in a meeting that the two countries can collaborate through technology exchange and other forms of cooperation, Indonesian Defense Ministry spokesperson Brig. Gen. Frega Wenas said.

The French Embassy in Jakarta said earlier this week that France had deployed a carrier strike group to Indonesia for the first time. The Charles De Gaulle, France's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, made stops in Bali and Lombok, where it carried out a number of logistical activities as part of a six-month mission in the Pacific that started in November 2024.

The Charles De Gaulle also participated in a joint exercise with warships from eight countries in the Straits of Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok, the embassy said.

Last July, French air force planes made a stopover in Indonesia's capital as part of a visit to Southeast Asia that was meant to display France's commitment to security in the Indo-Pacific

region amid growing Chinese maritime activity there.

Military cooperation between Indonesia and France has grown in recent years, since President Prabowo Subianto was still serving as Indonesia's defense minister.

Last year, Indonesia purchased 42 Rafale and Dassault Aviation fighter jets and is expected to receive the first Rafale jets under the contract in 2026. It also announced the purchase of two French Scorpene Evolved submarines and 13 Thales Ground Control Interception radars. Five of the radar systems are expected to be installed in the country's new capital, Nusantara.

The purchases come as tensions are rising in the region, particularly in the disputed South China Sea, where China is asserting its expansive territorial claims. While Indonesia is not a claimant state, it has clashed with China over fishing rights near the Natuna Islands, which lie within its exclusive economic zone but are also claimed by China.

The South China Sea contains crucial shipping lanes, abundant fish stocks and undersea mineral resources. Efforts between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to establish a code of conduct to prevent conflicts have seen little progress.



France's Defense Minister Sebastien Lecornu, (right), and Indonesian Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin salute the national flags as they inspect honor guards during the welcoming ceremony prior to their meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia on Jan 31. (AP)



This photo released by Venezuela's presidential press office shows Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, center, with Richard Grenell, US President Donald Trump's special envoy, (left), at Miraflores presidential palace in Caracas, Venezuela on Jan 31. Behind, (right), is Jorge Rodriguez, president of the National Assembly. (AP)

Venezuela frees 6 Americans after meeting between President Maduro, Trump's envoy

CARACAS, Venezuela, Feb 1, (AP): Six Americans who had been detained in Venezuela in recent months were freed by the government of President Nicolás Maduro after he met Friday with a Trump administration official tasked with urging the authoritarian leader to take back deported migrants who have committed crimes in the United States.

US President Donald Trump and his envoy for special missions, Richard Grenell, announced the release of the six men on social media. The visit by Grenell came as a shock to many Venezuelans who hoped that Trump would continue the "maximum pressure" campaign he pursued against Maduro during his first term.

Grenell's hours long trip to Venezuela, according to the White House, was

focused on Trump's efforts to deport Venezuelans back to their home country, which currently does not accept them, and on the release of the detained Americans.

"We are wheels up and headed home with these 6 American citizens," Grenell posted on X along with a photo showing him and the men aboard an aircraft. "They just spoke to @realDonaldTrump and they couldn't stop thanking him."

The meeting in Venezuela's capital took place less than a month after Maduro was sworn in for a third six-year term despite credible evidence that he lost last year's election. The US government, along with several other Western nations, does not recognize Maduro's claim to victory and instead points to tally sheets collected by the

opposition coalition showing that its candidate, Edmundo González, won by a more than a two-to-one margin.

Venezuelan state television aired footage of Grenell and Maduro speaking in the Miraflores Palace and said the meeting had been requested by the U.S. government.

Signing an executive order in the Oval Office on Friday, Trump was asked if Grenell being filmed meeting with Maduro lent legitimacy to a government that the Trump White House does not officially recognize.

"No. We want to do something with Venezuela. I've been a very big opponent of Venezuela and Maduro," Trump responded. "They've treated us not so good, but they've treated, more importantly, the Venezuelan people, very badly."

Rubio off to Central America with Panama Canal and immigration top of mind

WASHINGTON, Feb 1, (AP): US Secretary of State Marco Rubio embarks this weekend on his first foreign trip in office, heading to Central America to press President Donald Trump's top priority - curbing illegal immigration - and bring the message that the US wants to reclaim control over the Panama Canal despite intense resistance from regional leaders.

It's an unusual destination for the maiden voyage of America's top diplomat, whose predecessors have generally favored Europe or Asia for their initial outings. It reflects not only the personal interest that Rubio - the first Hispanic to hold the nation's most senior Cabinet post - has in the region but also the Trump administration's intent to focus much of its foreign policy energy close to home.

"It's no accident that my first trip abroad as secretary of state will keep me in the hemisphere," Rubio wrote in The Wall Street Journal on Friday.

Limiting immigration and fighting narcotics smuggling are major elements of that effort, but another key priority will be curbing China's growing influence in the Western Hemisphere, topped by reasserting U.S. control over the Panama Canal. The American-built canal was turned over to the Panamanians in 1999 and they object strongly to Trump's demand to hand it back.

Mass migration, drugs and hostile policies pursued by Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela have wreaked havoc, Rubio said in the Journal opinion piece. "All the while, the Chinese Communist Party uses diplomatic and economic leverage - such as at the Panama Canal - to oppose the US and turn sovereign nations into vassal states."

Indeed, Rubio's first stop on the five-nation tour Saturday will be Panama, whose president, José Raúl Mulino, says there will be no negotiation with the United States over ownership of the canal. He said he hoped Rubio's visit would instead focus on shared in-



Secretary of State Marco Rubio greets State Department staff during a welcome event at the State Department on Jan 21 in Washington. (AP)

terests like migration and combating drug trafficking.

"It's impossible, I can't negotiate," Mulino said Thursday. "The canal belongs to Panama."

Yet Rubio said he will make clear Trump's intent. In an interview Thursday with SiriusXM host Megyn Kelly, he said Trump's desire to retake control of the Panama Canal is driven by legitimate national security interests stemming from growing concerns about Chinese activity and influence in Latin America.

"We're going to address that topic," he said. "The president's been pretty clear he wants to administer the canal again. Obviously, the Panamanians are not big fans of that idea. That message has been brought very clear."

Chinese investments in ports and other infrastructure and facilities at both the Pacific and Caribbean ends of the canal are a cause for major concern, leaving Panama and the critical shipping route vulnerable to China, he said.

Rubio added that "if China wanted

to obstruct traffic in the Panama Canal, they could," and that would be a violation of the 1977 treaty signed by former President Jimmy Carter under which the U.S. later ceded control.

Despite Mulino's rejection of any negotiation over ownership, some believe Panama may be open to a compromise under which canal operations on both sides are taken away from the Hong Kong-based Hutchison Ports company that was given a 25-year no-bid extension to run them. An audit into the suitability of that extension is already under way and could lead to a rebidding process.

What is unclear is whether Trump would accept the transfer of the concession to an American or European firm as meeting his demands, which appear to cover more than just operations.

"In some ways, Trump is pushing on an open door," said Ryan Berg, director of the Americas program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. "But it will depend on how his red lines are defined."

RSF kills 54 people in Sudan open market

CAIRO, Feb 1, (AP): Sudan's health authorities say a notorious paramilitary group fighting against the country's military has attacked an open market in the city of Omdurman, killing 54 people.

Saturday's attack by the Rapid Support Forces on the Sabrein Market also wounded at least 158 others, the Health Ministry said in a statement. There was no immediate comment from the RSF.

Khalid al-Aleisir, minister of culture and government spokesperson, condemned the attack, saying that the casualties included many women and children. He also said the attack caused "widespread destruction to private and public properties."

"This criminal act adds to the bloody record of this militia," he said in a statement.



A man walks by a house hit in recent fighting in Khartoum, Sudan, an area torn by fighting between the military and the notorious paramilitary Rapid Support Forces on April 25, 2023. (AP)

Africa

2 associates of Talon get 20 yrs: Two associates of Benin's president have been sentenced to 20 years in prison, following their arrest last year on suspicion of plotting a coup in the small West African country.

Oliver Boko, a businessman and longtime friend of President Patrice Talon, and Oswald Homeky, a former sports minister, were found guilty of "conspiracy against state security" and "corruption of a public official" by the court for financial crimes and terrorism in the capital, Cotonou, on Thursday night. Both men were arrested in September after being accused of bribing the commander in charge of the president's security to carry out a coup.



Talon

Homeky was caught while allegedly handing over six bags of money to the head of the presidential guard, according to Elonm Mario Metonou, the special prosecutor at Benin's court for

financial crimes and terrorism. (AP)

Landslide kills miners in Mali:

A landslide engulfed a group of mainly women gold miners in Mali, killing several of them, the governor's office of the Koulikoro region in the West African country said Thursday.

In a statement broadcast on Mali's national television, Koulikoro's governor, Col. Lamine Kapory Sanogo, said "the women (gold miners) were numerous at an excavation in search of gold, and the excavation was surrounded by a dike that gave way and water entered with mud and engulfed the women." (AP)

Kuwaiti crude drops to \$79.79 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti crude oil price shed during Friday's trading to reach USD 79.79 per barrel (pb), compared with USD 80.84 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corpora-

tion (KPC) said Saturday.

Brent futures rose by 54 cents to hit USD 76.54 pb and West Texas Intermediate (WTA) went up by 73 cents to USD 73.48 pb.

Business

Other Voices

Energy policy faces challenges

US tariffs on oil imports may increase gas prices

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

THE new U.S. administration has implemented a policy of imposing tariffs on countries that have trade relations with the U.S. for the import of goods and services. The best example is Canada and Mexico, from which the U.S. imports around 4.5 million barrels of heavy oil daily - four million barrels from Canada and the rest from Mexico. However, these tariffs could inadvertently lead to higher oil prices for U.S. consumers at the petrol stations. As a result, the U.S. may end up importing this heavy oil from Venezuela.



Al-Harami

Imposing tariffs on oil imports to the U.S. is not an effective way to reduce inflation or restore consumer confidence, especially when the country remains a major oil importer. The new U.S. administration may need to reconsider its energy policy, as tariffs are unlikely to achieve the intended economic benefits.

It is also worth noting that oil prices are currently decreasing and may continue to fall, partly due to the U.S. administration's push for OPEC to reduce prices by releasing more oil into the market. However, OPEC+ is holding back about

six million barrels of oil to prevent a price collapse. The question remains: how can OPEC+ release more of this "prisoned" oil when global demand, particularly from China, is struggling, and the market can't absorb additional supply?

According to oil experts, oil prices are expected to remain in the \$74-\$75 range for this year, with little chance of surpassing \$80 unless an extraordinary event occurs. Even if prices do reach \$80, it is unlikely they will stay at that level for long.

For U.S. oil producers, particularly shale oil producers, prices below the mid-\$70s are not sustainable. In order to maintain the position of the U.S. as the world's largest oil producer at 13.5 million barrels per day currently, oil prices must remain relatively high. This is required for continuing to grow production toward the ultimate goal of 20 million barrels per day.

The new U.S. administration may not be fully aware about the cost of producing a barrel of oil in the U.S., which ranges between \$70 and \$80, including dividends. Given these costs, it is unlikely oil prices will drop below \$70.

Imposing tariffs on imported oil will not benefit the U.S. and certainly will not contribute to reducing inflation or the cost of living. Instead, reducing taxes and tariffs may offer a better path forward than the current approach.

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Mohammad Al-Kharafi, Emad Al-Ablani, and Sudhakar Nibhanupudi with the second batch of trainees from the NBK Tech Academy.

Committed to investing in human capital and supporting national talent

National Bank of Kuwait welcomes the second cohort of 'NBK Tech Academy'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: In line with its unwavering commitment to investing in human capital and fostering national talents, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) proudly welcomed the second cohort of participants to NBK Tech Academy.

The NBK Tech Academy stands as the first of its kind in Kuwait, dedicated to advancing digital technologies and data systems. It features a professional training program designed to equip young national talents with the skills and qualifications needed to excel in the banking sector.

The Academy's comprehensive 6-month training program offers trainees an intensive curriculum covering a wide range of technical and professional skills essential for advancement in the banking sector. The participants receive intensive training covering a diverse range of critical skills, including FinTech, Data Analytics, Ethics in Technology, Cyber Security, Fundamentals of Digital Payments, Digital Innovation, Artificial Intelligence, Scripting and Programming, Fundamentals of Codifications, and Finance for Non-Finance Professionals.

Alongside technical expertise, the program also focuses on developing soft skills including, but not limited to: Teamwork and Team Building, Business Planning and Business Analysis, Writing Skills, Delivering Results, Meeting Customer Expectation and Customer Centricity, Presentation Skills, Productivity in the Workplace, Business Ethics, Principles and Values, Learning and Researching, Project and Change Management, and Customer Experience.

Candidates for the Academy were selected based on rigorous criteria, requiring them to be Kuwaiti university graduates with outstanding cumulative GPAs. Eligible applicants must hold degrees in

Najla Al-Sager:

- NBK Tech Academy embodies NBK's vision to align with the accelerated digital era
- The comprehensive 6-month program offers intensive training designed to meet international best practices
- NBK continues to strengthen its leadership in technological innovation within the banking sector

MIS, Information Security, Data Science, Computer Science, or Engineering, with up to four years of professional experience in these fields.

The new trainees will gain hands-on experience across various departments within the Bank, offering them valuable insights into the dynamic nature of the banking sector. Their training will encompass key areas such as the Digital Office, Robotic Process Automation, Information Technology, Weway Bank, Digital Transformation, and the Data Office.

On this occasion, Najla Al-Sager, Head of Talent Management, Group Human Resources at National Bank of Kuwait, said: "We recognize the importance of fostering a digital society within the bank, as it plays a crucial role in enhancing our digital capabilities and facilitating interaction

with content and events to drive continuous innovation. NBK Tech Academy truly embodies the bank's vision to keep pace with the evolving demands of the digital age and reflects our commitment to nurturing and developing top-tier digital talent."

"We are not only preparing our workforce to tackle the challenges of the digital age, but also positioning the bank as a leader in technological innovation within the banking industry. The NBK Tech Academy aligns with NBK's strategy to attract national talent, supporting the bank's rapid digital growth, particularly in response to the increasing demand for digital expertise," she added.

She also emphasized that the Academy represents NBK's unwavering commitment to fostering innovation and nurturing national talent. It provides both fresh graduates and experienced professionals in technical fields with advanced training and development opportunities. This initiative will play a key role in shaping the future of banking and digital services, driving Kuwait to new heights in banking innovation.

NBK continues to reinforce its dominant position as a leader among private sector institutions, consistently attracting, developing, and honing the skills of national talent for key banking roles. The bank not only boasts the highest employee retention rates but also stands as the most coveted destination for Kuwaiti talent, offering unmatched opportunities for growth and development. In addition, NBK proudly holds the distinction of being the largest employer of national workers within Kuwait's private sector, further underscoring its commitment to fostering local talent and driving economic progress.

UAE leads Japan's oil imports

Kuwait's exports to Japan slump 15.7% in December

TOKYO, Feb 1, (KUNA): Kuwait's crude oil exports to Japan in December 2024 declined 15.7 percent from a year earlier to 4.99 million barrels, or 16,000 barrels per day (bpd), down for the 15th straight month, government data showed Friday.

As Japan's third-biggest oil provider, Kuwait supplied 6.3 percent of its total crude imports, compared with 7.2 percent in the same month of last year, the Japanese Natural Resources and Energy Agency said in a preliminary report.

For the whole of 2024, Kuwait's crude oil exports to Japan stood at 154,000 bpd, down 30.8 percent from the previous year, and took up 6.6 percent of total Japanese crude imports.

Japan's overall imports of crude oil

in December fell 4.4 percent year-on-year to 2.54 million bpd, down for the 13th month in a row. Shipments from the Middle East accounted for 96.3 percent of the total, up 5.3 percentage points from the year before.

By country, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) returned to the top spot in December, with imports from the country jumping 28.6 percent from the year before to 1.16 million bpd, followed by Saudi Arabia with 1.00 million bpd, down 14.4 percent. Qatar ranked fourth with 110,000 bpd and Ecuador fifth with 45,000 bpd, respectively.

For the full year 2024, Japan's crude oil imports shrank 8.5 percent on the year to 2.32 million bpd. Japan is the world's-third biggest oil consumer after China and the US.

Shell mulls moving stock listing from London to NY

LONDON, Feb 1, (AP): Oil company Shell said Thursday that it was still mulling moving its stock market listing from London to New York, but that it wasn't a "live discussion" at the moment.

After announcing a 16% decline in full-year earnings of \$23.7 billion from \$28.3 billion, CEO Wael Sawan was asked if he was still considering moving Shell's listing, to close the valuation gap on its U.S. peers, notably ExxonMobil.

Speaking to CNBC, Sawan said the firm was "always reviewing headquarter listings and the like," but that "there is no live discussion at the moment on this in Shell because our No. 1 priority is to make sure that we unlock the full potential of this company."

Last year, Sawan said that Shell's listing was "under review" because of a persistent gap between the company's valuation on the stock market and its U.S. peers, which makes it relatively more expensive for it to tap capital markets for money.

It's not the first time that Shell's listing is a topic of discussion. In 2022, it ended its dual share struc-

ture that had dated back to the early 20th century, by ditching its listing in Amsterdam for a variety of reasons, that included tax considerations.

The return of U.S. President Donald Trump may be a factor in any future decision in light of his advocacy of fossil fuels, and his executive order that the U.S. will be leaving the 2015 Paris Climate Accord.

Shell, like others, has seen profits surge in recent years as oil prices spiked higher, notably after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine nearly three years ago. In 2024, oil prices drifted lower, hence the decline in profits.

Despite the profits decline, Shell increased its dividend by 4%, as it continues to attract investors to hold its stock. After its latest update, Shell's share price was up 0.5%.

Despite Trump's pro-oil agenda, the transition to net zero is moving forward in most parts of the world, though slower than many campaigners want. As a result, oil companies, including Shell, have sought to diversify their businesses.

Boursa Kuwait liquidity surges 31.8%

Market's major indices show solid gains

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: A recent economic report revealed that the liquidity of the Boursa Kuwait surged to approximately 1.729 billion dinars in January 2025, marking a notable increase of about 31.8 percent compared to December 2024, when liquidity stood at around 1.312 billion dinars, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The Al-Shall Consulting report highlights that the performance of the Stock Exchange in January was notably more active than in December, with a rise in all major price indicators.

Specifically the Premier Market Index increased by 5.9 percent, the Main Market Index saw a 5.1 percent rise, the General Market Index, reflecting the combined performance of both markets, rose by 5.7 percent and the Main Market 50 Index recorded a growth of 6.8 percent.

The report also noted that the average daily trad-

ing value for January 2025 reached approximately 91 million dinars, a rise of 52.6 percent compared to December's average of 59.6 million dinars.

This was also a 35.5 percent increase compared to the average daily trading value of 67.2 million dinars in January 2024.

However, despite the liquidity growth, the report also pointed out that half of the listed companies received only 2.8 percent of this liquidity, with 50 companies receiving just 0.8 percent, and three companies experiencing no trading at all.

Geopolitical shifts pose challenges for air cargo industry in 2025

Air cargo industry sets record with 11.3% growth in 2024

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: The air cargo industry achieved a record-breaking performance in 2024, driven by a surge in e-commerce and growing demand for air shipping services, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), air cargo volumes rose by 11.3 percent, surpassing the previous record set in 2021, before the pandemic disrupted global economies.

Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General, highlighted that 'air cargo was the standout performer in

2024,' with airlines transporting more goods by air than ever before.

E-commerce played a particularly crucial role in driving this growth, as increased online shopping fueled the demand for fast and reliable shipping solutions.

Walsh also noted that various shipping restrictions were being reinforced, further boosting the need for air cargo services.

However, Walsh cautioned that the air cargo sector is facing uncertainty as geopolitical shifts could intro-

duce new challenges. "The air cargo sector will face a challenge in adapting to the unfolding geopolitical shifts," he warned, referring to the potential impacts of a trade war and other global tensions.

The outlook for the industry in 2025 remains clouded, with the possibility of trade disruptions impacting air cargo volumes.

Despite this, the record performance of 2024 serves as a testament to the resilience and adaptability of the sector in navigating complex global dynamics.

Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman follow UAE in Saudi trade

Saudi Arabia's non-oil exports to GCC jump 43% in November 2024

RIYADH, Feb 1, (KUNA): The total value of non-oil commodity exports and re-exports between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the other member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) went up by 43 percent, or SAR 2.844 billion (USD 760 million), on an annual basis in November, 2024.

The total value rose from SAR 6.624 billion (USD 1.77 billion) in November 2023 to SAR 9.469 billion (USD 2.52 billion) in last November, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported on Friday, citing the latest figures of the General Authority for Statistics.

The total commodity imports amounted to approximately SAR 5.663 billion (USD 1.51 billion).

In November 2024, the Saudi non-oil trade balance recorded a surplus with the GCC states amounting to SAR 3.718 billion (USD 990 million), bringing the total to SAR 3.805 billion (USD 1.01 billion).

This marks an annual growth estimated at 4,277.7 percent compared to the same period in 2023, when the surplus was SAR86.9 million, according to the report.

The figures for non-oil commodity exports, including re-exports with GCC

countries, show that the United Arab Emirates ranked first with a value of SAR 7.176 billion, accounting for approximately 75.8 percent of the total.

Bahrain followed in second place with SAR 929.7 million, representing 9.8 percent of the total. Kuwait came third with SAR 610.4 million (USD 162.75 million) or 6.4 percent of the total.

Qatar came in fourth place with a value of SAR 395.8 million, making up 4.2 percent of the total, while Oman recorded SAR 356.4 million, representing 3.8 percent of the total.

Bank expands AIDanah prizes

Gulf Bank to host AIDanah Millionaire Grand Draw on Feb 13, 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: Gulf Bank is set to host its highly anticipated annual AIDanah Millionaire Grand Draw on Thursday, February 13, 2025, at Al-Khiraan Mall. The event will announce the lucky winner of the world's largest cash prize linked to a bank account, valued at KD 2 million.

The draw will be broadcast live on 360 FM, under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young. The celebration will begin at 4 PM and run until 8 PM, with the highly anticipated draw taking place between 7 PM and 8 PM.

Although the deadline to deposit and qualify for this grand draw was November 30, 2024, Gulf Bank continues to offer exciting draws and cash prizes, giving customers multiple opportunities to win all year round.

Gulf Bank's 2025 prize schedule for the AIDanah Millionaire account offers an array of exciting rewards. Leading the lineup is the grand prize of KD 2 million, followed by a semi-annual draw with a KD 1 million prize. Additionally, two quarterly draws, each worth KD 100,000, will reward 100 winners with KD 1,000 each. The monthly draw also grants KD 1,000 to 10 winners each month, contributing



AIDanah Millionaire Grand Draw.

Prize Amount	Prize Amount	Prize Amount	Prize Amount	Prize Amount
KD2,000,000	KD1,000,000	KD1,000	KD1,000	KD1,000
No. of Winner: 1	No. of Winner: 1	No. of Winner: 100	No. of Winner: 100	No. of Winner: 10
Last Date to Deposit & Qualify: November 30, 2024	Last Date to Deposit & Qualify: March 31, 2025	Last Date to Deposit & Qualify: June 30, 2025	Last Date to Deposit & Qualify: January 31, 2025	Last Date to Deposit & Qualify: 7 days before the draw
Draw Date: February 13, 2025	Draw Date: July 17, 2025	Draw Date: October 16, 2025	Draw Date: April 17, 2025	Draw Date: Monthly*

- CA total of 322 winners will be announced in Gulf Bank's AIDanah Millionaire draws in 2025.
- 100 winners will be chosen in the semi-annual draw, which takes place twice a year, and 120 winners will be selected in the monthly draws.
- Each year, two new millionaires will join the list, with two prizes totaling KD 3 million.

to a total of 322 AIDanah winners in 2025.

The AIDanah Millionaire account is one of Kuwait's leading savings accounts, known for its regular draws,

generous prizes, and exclusive benefits for account holders. Gulf Bank has raised the grand prize from KD 1.5 million to KD 2 million, earning a second Guinness World Record

for the largest cash prize linked to a bank account. Additionally, the quarterly prize format has been updated to distribute KD 100,000 among 100 winners, replacing the previous format

where a single winner took home the full amount.

One of the many benefits enjoyed by AIDanah account holders is that it is the only account in Kuwait that carries

over their chances of winning from the previous year to the next, as part of a customer loyalty and reward program by Gulf Bank.

To increase their chances of winning, customers should maintain a minimum balance of KD 200 in their account, or increase their deposit to gain more opportunities to win and continue participating in the monthly, quarterly, and annual draws.

Gulf Bank aims to be Kuwait's leading bank, fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace to deliver exceptional customer service while contributing sustainably to the community. Through its extensive branch network and innovative digital services, the bank empowers customers to conduct banking transactions conveniently and efficiently, ensuring a seamless experience.

In alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, "New Kuwait," and its commitment to fostering collaborative partnerships, Gulf Bank is dedicated to driving robust sustainability initiatives across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions. The bank is committed to implementing strategically selected and diverse sustainability programs both internally and externally.

Lulu hosts retail shop visit for CESK students

CESK acknowledges Lulu Hypermarket's contribution to special needs education

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: The Conductive Education School Kuwait (CESK) proudly presented a token of appreciation to the top management of Lulu Hypermarket. This gesture, led by Cisal Geo, Principal of CESK, acknowledges the invaluable opportunity provided to CESK students through the Retail Shop Visit Training and Development session.

CESK is a premier educational institution dedicated to supporting students with diverse abilities, ages 6 to 21. The school caters to students with conditions such as autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, global developmental delay, and more. CESK employs a multidisciplinary approach to education, enhancing both academic and functional skills through various programs, including ASDAN.

ASDAN is an internationally recognized awarding organization that offers accredited programs and regulated certifications. These programs are designed to develop life



CESK thanks Lulu Hypermarket for retail shop visit training opportunity.

and vocational skills for students, particularly those with special needs, enabling them to achieve both academic and professional success. The focus is on practical and educational training activities that help students

acquire essential skills for daily life and work, such as communication, teamwork, time management, and problem-solving. The goal is to boost students' self-confidence and their ability to tackle everyday chal-

lenges. The community's role in providing opportunities for students to gain practical experience is crucial. Many CESK students are engaged in ASDAN programs that develop vocational skills such as independent living, everyday living, money management, meal preparation, and cooking. Training in shopping and handling money has become an essential part of the program.

The Retail Shop Visit Training and Development session at Lulu Hypermarket offered students an excellent start to their training. The staff at Lulu, being well-oriented to the needs of the students, created a conducive environment for their training.

The management and parents at CESK are delighted with the opportunity provided and look forward to continued cooperation with Lulu Hypermarket for the benefit of the students.

'Quranic teachings are key to true progress & success'

IMA Kuwait hosts Quran campaign with leading scholars

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: "True progress and real success are only possible when we incorporate the teachings of the Quran and that of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) into our lives. Without this, material achievements remain hollow and insignificant" were the opening remarks of Dr. TahaMateen, the visiting renowned Scholar from India while speaking on the transformative power of the Quran, highlighting how it turned nomadic Arabs into great leaders who redefined civilizations and shaped the history.

Dr. TahaMateen was addressing to Dignitaries Program organized by Indian Muslim Association (IMA) Kuwait at Rajdhani Palace, Khaitan, as part of its one month-long Quran Campaign on January 20, 2025 where IMA invited the Indian Dignitaries & Heads of prominent Muslim Associations in Kuwait together to promote the central message of the Quran—connecting Muslims with its teachings and encouraging practical implementation in daily life.

Dr. Mateen pointed out that many of the

world's greatest legal frameworks and constitutions are rooted in Quranic teachings, demonstrating the timeless relevance and wisdom of the Quran. He further emphasized that real change begins with a personal understanding of Allah's supremacy, complete obedience to Him, and the recognition of our dependence on Him.

Addressing the pursuit of worldly gains, Dr. TahaMateen warned against chasing temporary desires while forgetting the eternal nature of the Hereafter. He reminded attendees that the Quran is the ultimate guide to success in both this life and the next.

Presidents & Office Bearers of 16 esteemed Muslim Associations in Kuwait & several Dignitaries of Kuwait attended & graced the Event with their presence.

Mr. Mohammed Umar Falahi, IMA President, in his keynote, stressed that the purposes and objectives of this Quran Campaign is to reconnect Muslims with the Quran through its recita-

tion, comprehension, and practical application. He highlighted that the Quran offers timeless solutions to humanity's challenges, serving as a comprehensive roadmap for spiritual and moral upliftment.

The program commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran by Hafiz Mohammed Fazil, convened by Mohammad SamoilFalahi and concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by IMA Vice President, Mr. Arshad Habib.

IMA Kuwait expresses its heartfelt gratitude to all dignitaries and guests who contributed to the success of the event, reinforcing the importance of collective efforts to promote the Quran's message.

IMA Kuwait, an Indian socio-religious organization, operates under the patronage of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Kuwait. It remains dedicated to providing platforms for the spiritual and social development of expatriates in Kuwait, with a particular focus on the Indian community.



Photos during the campaign.

The Conversation

'Media amplifies fear'

Study finds Gen Z prioritizes safety over fun & popularity

By Yalda T. Uhls
University of California, Los Angeles

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

After many years of partisan politics, increasingly divisive language, finger-pointing and inflammatory speech have contributed to an environment of fear and uncertainty, affecting not just political dynamics but also the priorities and perceptions of young people.

As a developmental psychologist who studies the intersection of media and adolescent mental health, and as a mother of two Gen Z kids, I have seen firsthand how external societal factors can profoundly shape young people's emotional well-being.

This was brought into sharp relief through the results of a recent survey my colleagues and I conducted with 1,644 young people across the US, ages 10 to 24. The study was not designed as a political poll but rather as a window into what truly matters to adolescents. We asked participants to rate the importance of 14 personal goals. These included classic teenage desires such as "being popular," "having fun" and "being kind."

None of these ranked as the top priority. Instead, the No. 1 answer was "to be safe."

The findings are both illuminating and heartbreaking. As a teenager, I did countless unsafe things. My peers and I didn't dwell on harm; we chased fun and freedom.

Whereas previous generations may have taken safety for granted, today's youth are growing up in an era of compounded crises - school shootings, a worsening climate crisis, financial uncertainty and the lingering trauma of a global pandemic. Even though our research did not pinpoint the specific causes of adolescent fears, the constant exposure to crises, amplified by social media, likely plays a significant role in fostering a pervasive sense of worry.

Despite data showing that many aspects of life are safer now than in previous generations, young people just don't feel it. Their perception of danger is further shaped by events like the recent fires that devastated Los Angeles, reinforcing a belief that danger, possibly caused by global crises like climate change, lurks everywhere.

This shift in perspective has profound implications for the future of this generation and those to come.

Adolescence, like early childhood, is a pivotal period for brain development. Young people are particularly sensitive to their surroundings as their brains evaluate the environment to prepare them for independence.

This developmental stage - when the capacity to regulate emotions and critically assess information is still maturing - makes them especially vulnerable to enduring impacts.

Studies show that adolescents struggle to put threats into context. This makes them particularly vulnerable to fear-driven messaging prevalent in both traditional and social media, which is further amplified by political rhetoric and blame-shifting. This vulnerability has implications for their mental health,

as prolonged exposure to fear and uncertainty has been linked to increased rates of anxiety, depression and even physical health issues.

So when the media that Gen Z consumes are dominated by fear - be it through headlines, social media posts, political rhetoric or even storylines in movies and TV - it could shape their worldview in ways that may reverberate for generations to come.

Historical events have long been shown to shape the worldview of entire generations.

For instance, the Great Depression primarily impacted the daily lives of the Silent Generation, those born between 1928 and 1945. Moreover, its long-term effects on financial attitudes and security concerns echoed into the Baby Boomer generation, influencing how those born between 1946 and 1964 approached money, stability and risk throughout their lives.

Similarly, today's adolescents, growing up amid a series of compounded global crises, will likely carry the imprint of this period of heightened fear and uncertainty well into adulthood. This formative experience could shape their mental health, decision-making and even their collective identity and values for decades to come.

In addition, feelings of insecurity and instability can make people more responsive to fear-based messaging, which could potentially influence their political and social choices. In an era marked by the rise of authoritarian governments, this susceptibility could have far-reaching implications because fear often drives individuals to prioritize immediate safety over moral or ideological ideals.

As such, these dynamics may profoundly shape how this generation engages with the world, the causes they champion and the leaders they choose to follow.

Interestingly, "being kind" was rated No. 2 in our survey, irrespective of other demographics. While safety dominates their priorities, adolescents still value qualities that foster connection and community.

This finding indicates a duality in their aspirations: While they feel a pervasive sense of danger, they also recognize the importance of interpersonal relationships and emotional well-being.

Our findings are a call to look at the broader societal context shaping adolescent development. For instance, the rise in school-based safety drills, while intended to provide a sense of preparedness, may unintentionally reinforce feelings of insecurity. Similarly, the apocalyptic narrative around climate change may create a sense of powerlessness that could further compound their fears and leave them wanting to bury their heads in the sand.

Understanding how these perceptions are formed and their implications for mental health, decision-making and behavior is essential for parents, storytellers, policymakers and researchers.

I believe we must also consider how societal systems contribute to the pervasive sense of uncertainty and fear among youth. Further research can help untangle the complex relationship between external stressors, media consumption and youth well-being, shedding light on how to best support adolescents during this formative stage of life. (AP)

Grammy weekend festivities start with gala fundraiser

Grateful Dead honored as MusiCares Persons of the Year

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 1, (AP) — Colorful dancing bears during cocktails. Tie-dye clothing mixed with black-tie. Oh yeah, the Grateful Dead was in the house to kick off Grammy weekend.

The legendary jam band was honored for its musical achievements and philanthropic efforts as MusiCares Persons of the Year on Friday night, two days before the Grammy Awards.

The band's iconic skull logo was prominent in the ever-changing graphics on stage. Their well-known dancing bears posed for photos with attendees. Devoted Deadhead Andy Cohen hosted the 2 1/2-hour show at the Los Angeles Convention Center. He recounted convincing his parents to let him drive from St. Louis to Wisconsin to catch his first Dead concert as a teenager.

"I venture to say they are the great American band," Cohen said. "What a wonder they are."

So what if the Dead owns just two Grammys, for lifetime achievement in 2007 and best music film in 2018. They made their mark with a unique style and long improvisations blending such genres as rock, blues, jazz, folk



Bobby Weir, (from left), Justin Kreutzmann, Trixie Garcia, and Mickey Hart accept the 2025 MusiCares Persons of the Year award during the MusiCares Persons of the Year gala honoring the Grateful Dead on Friday, Jan. 31, 2025, in Los Angeles. Woody Harrelson looks on from right. (AP)

and psychedelia.

"Longevity was never a major concern of ours," 77-year-old guitarist Bob Weir said, drawing laughs. "Spreading joy through the music was

all we ever really had in mind and we got plenty of that done."

Drummer Mickey Hart paid homage to the band's free-spirited fans.

"The Deadheads have kept the

dream alive for 60 years now and continue to take this music into the next century," he said. "Before the world even knew what to make of us, our community lifted us up and kept us going. Without support there would be no Grateful Dead."

Actor Woody Harrelson told a few long-winded tales about his adventures with the band, including "going drugless to Thailand with Bobby, which is not easy for either of us."

Weir and Hart were joined onstage to accept the award by three of their bandmates' offspring: Grahame Lesh, Trixie Garcia and Justin Kreutzmann.

Message

Lesh's father, Phil, died in October at age 84. Garcia's father, Jerry, died in 1995 at age 53. Kreutzmann's father, Bill, didn't attend and instead gave his thanks in a video message.

"I can feel his spirit in the house," the 81-year-old Hart said of Bill Kreutzmann. "He's in the music, he's in the rhythm, the heartbeat of everything we built together all these years."

Grahame Lesh was busy all night playing guitar as part of the backing

band led by musical director Don Was. He sang with The War on Drugs during "Box of Rain," composed by his father.

Weir opened the show on guitar backed by an orchestra. They soon gave way to The War and Treaty performing "Samson and Delilah" with Stewart Copeland and Mick Fleetwood taking turns on drum solos.

Technical difficulties briefly affected performances by My Morning Jacket and John Mayer, who rebounded for an extended jam with Was and Jeff Chimienti on "Terrapin Station." Hart kept looking offstage as he drummed during Dead & Company's finale of "Sugar Magnolia" and "Touch of Grey" until a technician appeared to bring him in-ear monitors.

Earlier, Hart was on his feet pumping his right arm to Sammy Hagar's version of "Loose Lucy."

"Bobby, Mick, love you brothers," Hagar said.

Two of the quieter moments were in-the-round performances by Norah Jones on "Ripple" and Bruce Hornsby doing "Standing on the Moon."

Wynonna Judd performed "Ramble On Rose."

"I love you Robert Weir," she said from the stage. "You are my family of choice. You showed up when my momma died."

Wearing a crown of red roses, Grammy nominee Sierra Ferrell teamed with Lukas Nelson on "It Must Have Been the Roses."

Dwight Yoakam had the crowd on its feet dancing during "Truckin.'" Grammy nominee Noah Kahan sang "Friend of the Devil" featuring three guitarists, banjo and bass.

Weir's wife, Natascha, and their daughters, Shala and Chloe, spent much of the night out of their seats dancing at their table near the stage.

Now in its 35th year, the dinner and auction raised money for programs and services supporting musicians in need with an emphasis this year on helping those affected by the recent wildfires in Los Angeles.

"What we have here in Southern California these days is a rebuild that's going to take some time and effort and an immense amount of teamwork," Weir said.

Music

Event combines top acts and stories of loss

FireAid unites music legends for LA wildfire relief

INGLEWOOD, Calif., Feb. 1, (AP) — Pop stars, first responders, rock stars and those who've lost everything in the devastating LA-area wildfires came together for FireAid, a massive benefit concert Thursday that combined spectacular performances with moving storytelling from survivors and reminders of the destruction.

In a night full of surprises, a reunion of Nirvana - fronted by St. Vincent, Kim Gordon and Joan Jett in the place of the late Kurt Cobain - tops the list. They launched into "Breed," "School" and "Territorial Pissings" respectively, inspired and unexpected choices.

Drummer Dave Grohl's daughter, Violet, then emerged on stage for "All Apologies."

Closer Lady Gaga, after powering through the Oscar-award winning "Shallow" and "Always Remember Us This Way" from "A Star Is Born," played a new song on the piano. "It's just for tonight, it's just for you," she said of the song she wrote with fiancé businessman Michael Polansky. "Time is a healer."

"All I need is time," she sang in the folk-y pop chorus. "To heal my broken wings and then I'll soar."

Green Day kicked off the massive show by launching into "Last Night on Earth" at the Kia Forum and were soon joined by Billie Eilish for the first surprise of the night. The lyrics are surprisingly astute: "If I lose everything in the fire / I'm sending all my love to you."

After their set, Green Day frontman Billie Joe Armstrong hugged actor Billy Crystal, who was there to welcome to the crowd at the Kia Forum.

"Our goal is simple tonight, to spend more money than the Dodgers spent on free agents," he joked. He told the audience U2 offered the first big donation of the night: \$1 million dollars.

Crystal said he was wearing the clothes he had on when he evacuated. He lost his home in the Pacific Palisades neighborhood that he lived in for 46 years.

Surprise

Is there any band more Southern California in spirit and geography than the Red Hot Chili Peppers? Bassist Flea did a handstand on stage wearing only a Speedo before they launched into one of their countless odes to the state: "Dani California," "Californication" and "Under the Bridge."

The first true-blue Los Angeles moment came from a surprise performance by Dr. Dre. The progenitor of West Coast hip-hop tackled "Still D.R.E." with Anderson .Paak and Sheila E. before pivoting to Tupac and Dre's classic "California Love."

It was followed by the figurehead of Laurel Canyon folk, a moving set of "Both Sides Now" by Joni Mitchell.

Later in the night, the recently reunited, Orange Country ska punk legends No Doubt launched into



Katy Perry performs during the FireAid benefit concert on Thursday, Jan. 30, 2025, at Intuit Dome in Inglewood, Calif. (AP)

"I'm Just a Girl," "Don't Speak" and "Spiderwebs," led by frontwoman Gwen Stefani.

Katy Perry was joined by the Pasadena Chorale for "Rise" before launching into "Roar" and "California Gurls." She paraded across the stage with the California state flag in hand.

And Eilish and her brother Finneas, who've called Los Angeles home for their entire lives, performed beautiful acoustic versions of her recent hits "Wildflower," "The Greatest" and "Birds of a Feather."

FireAid spread its performances between two venues, the Kia Forum and Intuit Dome, providing a near

seamless stream of music for nearly six hours. Behind early performances, images of firefighters and the devastation brought forth by the fires appeared on screen.

Olivia Rodrigo, Stevie Wonder, Sting and Pink provided memorable sets.

Stevie Nicks did "Edge of Sev-

enteen," "Stand Back" and "Landslide," and told the story of evacuating her Pacific Palisades home that miraculously did not burn down. Her home is mostly wood, built in 1938, and she theorized its loss would have destroyed the whole street.

Earth, Wind & Fire did a medley of their biggest hits: "That's the Way of the World," "Shining Star" and "September." The Black Crowes backed up John Fogerty for "Have You Ever Seen the Rain?" Then the band was joined by Slash.

Lil Baby offered a rare hip-hop break in the night of mostly pop and rock, with his hits "So Sorry" and "Emotionally Scared."

Survivors

Tate McRae performed her 2020 cut "You Broke Me First" and a cover of Crowded House's "Don't Dream It's Over." Jelly Roll brought country music to the event, performing his hit "I Am Not Okay" and a cover of Bob Seger's "Hollywood Nights" with Blink-182 drummer Travis Barker.

Between sets, survivors telling stories of losing their homes were broadcast throughout the arena, both in person and in video packages.

Non-celebrities brought heart. The Williams family, including four daughters and their mother, took the stage and discussed losing four homes in Altadena, California. They introduced the folk rock band Dawes, whose members also were directly affected by the Eaton fire.

Dawes' Taylor Goldsmith lost a portion of the Altadena house he shares with actor-singer Mandy Moore and his home recording studio and instruments were destroyed. Goldsmith's brother and bandmate, Griffin Goldsmith, and his pregnant wife also lost their home in the fire.

Spirits were high. "We're appreciative of this moment. I hope people remember this concert forever," said Scott Jones, 54, who brought his daughter to the concert at the Kia Forum. The Los Angeles-resident and his daughter wore black T-shirts with "First Responders" written across their chests.

"I hope some of the firefighters who are able to attend can come and decompress a little," Jones said. "They needed it. I'm supportive of what they have done for this city."

Throughout the show, viewers and attendees were encouraged to donate via FireAidLA.org.

Los Angeles Clippers owner Steve Ballmer and his wife Connie pledged to match all donations made during the live broadcast, doubling the proceeds. Crystal noted that because of their announcement, U2's million dollar donation was worth twice that amount.

All of the proceeds will go to those affected. A 501(c)(3) was set up, and contributions to FireAid will be distributed under the Annenberg Foundation, which with FireAid has assembled a small committee to advise.

Variety

LOS ANGELES: In a stretch of questioning crucial to the defense of ASAP Rocky, his lawyer on Friday challenged the account of his accuser, who said he suffered a hand injury when the hip-hop performer fired a gun at him in 2021.

Superstar singer Rihanna, Rocky's partner and the mother of their two children, watched from the audience as the man who goes by ASAP Relli, a former friend of Rocky,

underwent a second day of cross-examination at the Los Angeles trial that left him visibly frustrated and at times angry.

She slipped into court for a third day about 30 minutes into the testimony and sat next to Rocky's mother after coming in through a public entrance. After the lunch break, she entered the courtroom together with Rocky for the first time. She left separately and climbed into an SUV outside the courthouse, saying "I'm good, thank you" when a reporter asked how she was holding up. She had been brought in secretly on her two previous visits.

Relli had testified under prosecution questioning that his hand felt hot when Rocky fired at him on a Hollywood street and his hand was grazed. A photo was shown of scrapes that had torn the skin on his knuckles. (AP)



Rihanna

VATICAN CITY: The Vatican's Apostolic Library tapped Dior's creative director Maria Grazia Chiuri, Italian singer Jovanotti and Icelandic illustrator Kristjana S Williams for an exhibition exploring world tours of the late 19th century.

The exhibition, titled "En Route," is the sixth in a series of events intended as a dialogue between the Vatican library's heritage, dating to the 4th century, and contemporary art.

The library enlisted Chiuri, Jovanotti and Williams to explore the stories of selected travelers, and the contemporary meaning of a recently discovered collection of 1,200 newspapers gathered from remote corners of the world by the diplomat and scholar Cesare Poma during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Chiuri focused on six Victorian-era women who defied conventions by traveling the world on their own. She worked with the Chanakya School of Craft in India to create tapestries depicting the routes they traveled. (AP)

NEW YORK: CBS says it will turn over an unedited transcript of its October interview with Kamala Harris to the Federal Communications Commission, part of President Donald Trump's ongoing fight with the network over how it handled a story about his opponent.

Trump sued CBS for \$10 million over the "60 Minutes" interview, claiming it was deceptively edited to make Harris look good. Published reports said that CBS' parent company, Paramount, has been talking to Trump's lawyers about a settlement.

The network said Friday that it was compelled by Brendan Carr, Trump's appointee as FCC chairman, to turn over the transcripts and camera feeds of the interview for a parallel investigation by the commission. "60 Minutes" has resisted releasing transcripts for this and all of its interviews, to avoid second-guessing of its editing process.

The case, particularly a potential settlement, is being closely watched by advocates for press freedom and by journalists within CBS, whose lawyers called Trump's lawsuit "completely without merit" and promised to vigorously fight it after it was filed.

The Harris interview initially drew attention because CBS News showed Harris giving completely different responses to a question posed by correspondent Bill Whitaker in clips that were aired on "Face the Nation" on Oct. (AP)



Billie Eilish, left, performs with Billie Joe Armstrong of Green Day during the FireAid benefit concert. (AP)



John Fogerty performs during the FireAid benefit concert. (AP)



Olivia Rodrigo performs during the FireAid benefit concert at Intuit Dome in Inglewood, Calif. (AP)

Conference to feature over 50 lectures, 10 workshops

Radiology Conference to focus on AI, diagnosis advances

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: The 2025 Radiology Conference will start next Thursday and will continue until Feb 8, 2025 with the theme, "A Vision for the Future," under the patronage of Health Minister Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi.

In a press statement, Head of the Radiology and Radiotherapy Departments Council Dr. Buthaina Al-Kandari revealed "this year's conference comes at a time when the radiology sector is witnessing unprecedented developments, especially in the fields of artificial intelligence and advanced

applications in diagnostic and therapeutic radiology. The theme of the conference reflects our vision characterized by great progress in radiology technologies, which opens new horizons in the accurate diagnosis of diseases in their early stages and improve the quality of health care."

She said the conference reflects an ongoing commitment to develop this specialization; affirming the importance of exchanging expertise and scientific knowledge to develop health services. She pointed out that investing in training national competencies and supporting innovations are essential parts of the role of the Radiology Departments Council in leading the specialization towards a more advanced and innovative future.

Meanwhile, Chairperson of the conference Dr. Khalida Al-Asousi disclosed that this year's conference focuses on head and neck imaging; thereby, highlighting the role of modern technologies, including artificial intelligence, in achieving higher accuracy in diagnosis and effective treatment.

She stated that the scientific program includes more than 50 scientific lectures and 10 specialized workshops, with the participation of international experts and lecturers from Arab and Gulf countries.

She indicated that the conference is distinguished by dedicated scientific tracks, including the doctors' track, which covers diagnostic and therapeutic aspects using modern radiol-

ogy techniques; in addition to the radiology technicians' track, which focuses on developing technical skills and enhancing practical efficiency, and the board doctors' track that presents lectures and workshops within the continuing education system.

She clarified that the conference is not limited to being a platform for exchanging knowledge, as it also seeks to strengthen the link between medical specializations, which is positively reflected on the quality of health care.

She called on all those interested in the field of radiology and related specializations to participate in this renowned event, and benefit from the scientific and training opportunities it provides.

First in 20 years

US approves painkiller to fight opioid addiction risk

WASHINGTON, Feb 1, (AP): Federal officials on Thursday approved a new type of pain pill designed to eliminate the risks of addiction and overdose associated with opioid medications like Vicodin and OxyContin.

The US Food and Drug Administration said it approved Vertex Pharmaceuticals' Journavx for short-term pain that often follows surgery or injuries.

It's the first new pharmaceutical approach to treating pain in more than 20 years, offering an alternative to both opioids and over-the-counter medications like ibuprofen and acetaminophen. But the medication's modest effectiveness and lengthy development process underscore the challenges of finding new ways to manage pain.

Studies in more than 870 patients with acute pain due to foot and abdominal surgeries showed Vertex's drug provided more relief than a dummy pill but didn't outperform a common opioid-acetaminophen combination pill.

"It's not a slam dunk on effectiveness," said Michael Schuh of the Mayo Clinic, a pharmacist and pain medicine expert who was not involved in the research. "But it is a slam dunk in that it's a very different pathway and mechanism of action. So, I think that shows a lot promise."

The new drug will carry a list price of \$15.50 per pill, making it many times more expensive than comparable opioids, which are often available as generics for \$1 or less.

Vertex began researching the drug in the 2000s, when overdoses were rocketing upward, principally driven by mass prescribing of opioid painkillers for common ailments like arthritis and back pain. Prescriptions have fallen sharply in the last decade and the current wave of the opioid epidemic is mainly due to illicit fentanyl, not pharmaceutical medicines.

Chemical

Opioids reduce pain by binding to receptors in the brain that receive nerve signals from different parts of the body. Those chemical interactions also give rise to opioids' addictive effects.

Vertex's drug works differently, blocking proteins that trigger pain signals that are later sent to the brain.

"In trying to develop medicines that don't have the addictive risks of opioid medicines, a key factor is working to block pain signaling before it gets to the brain," Vertex's Dr. David Altshuler, told The Associated Press last year.

Commonly reported side effects with the drug were nausea, constipation, itching, rash and headache.

"The new medication has side effect profiles that are inherently, not only different, but don't involve the risk of substance abuse and other key side effects associated with opioids," said Dr. Charles Argoff of the Albany Medical Center, who consulted for Vertex on the drug's development.

The initial concept to focus on pain-

signaling proteins came out of research involving people with a rare hereditary condition that causes insensitivity to pain.

Vertex has attracted interest from Wall Street for its ambitious drug pipeline that involves winning FDA approval for multiple drugs across several forms of chronic pain, which generally represents a bigger financial opportunity than acute pain.

But the Boston drugmaker's share price plummeted in December when Vertex reported disappointing mid-stage results in a study of patients with chronic nerve pain affecting the lower back and legs. The drug didn't perform significantly better than placebo, the research found.

Biotechnology

"We believe the data reflect a near worst-case scenario for this key pipeline program," biotechnology analyst Brian Abrahams said in a research note to investors, adding that the results jeopardized estimates that Vertex's pipeline could be worth billions across multiple forms of pain.

Still, Vertex executives said they plan to move forward with a new, late-stage study of the drug, theorizing that a different trial design could yield better results and pave the way for FDA approval in chronic pain.

In another development, an arrest warrant has been issued for a New York doctor indicted on Friday by a Louisiana grand jury for allegedly prescribing abortion pills online to a pregnant minor in the Deep South state, which has one of the strictest near-total abortion bans in the country.

Grand jurors at the District Court for the Parish of West Baton Rouge unanimously issued an indictment against Dr. Margaret Carpenter; her company, Nightingale Medical, PC; and the minor's mother. All three were charged with criminal abortion by means of abortion-inducing drugs, a felony.

In addition to Carter, an arrest warrant was issued for the mother, who has not been publicly identified to protect the identity of the minor. District Attorney Tony Clayton told The Associated Press that the mother turned herself in to police on Friday.

The case appears to be the first instance of criminal charges against a doctor accused of sending abortion pills to another state, at least since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in 2022 and opened the door for states to have strict anti-abortion laws.

"We expect Dr. Carpenter to come to Louisiana and answer to these charges, and if 12 people (a jury) think she's innocent then, let it go," Clayton said.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said in a video posted on social media, "I will never, under any circumstances, turn this doctor over to the state of Louisiana under any extradition requests," signaling a potential legal battle between the states.



A group photo from the Gastroenterology and Liver Association conference.

KUNA photo

Minister highlights Kuwait's commitment to medical progress

Kuwait makes major strides in digestive, liver disease care led by national medics

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: Kuwait has made significant strides in the treatment of digestive system and liver diseases, driven by the dedication of national medical professionals and strategic collaboration with international institutions, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi highlighted these achievements in his opening address at the third conference of the Gastroenterology and Liver Association, held on Friday.

The event aims to showcase the latest advancements in research, diagnosis and treatment methodologies for digestive and liver diseases, reinforcing Kuwait's commitment to medical progress.

Dr. Al-Awadhi emphasized the pivotal role of the Haya Al-Habib Digestive System Center at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital, which has become a hub for research and medical studies.

Over the past five years, the center has published more than 30 scientific studies in internationally recognized

conferences and journals, solidifying its reputation as a center of excellence in Kuwait's healthcare sector.

Another notable milestone is the Thunayan Al Ghanim Digestive System Center at Al Amiri Hospital, which received prestigious international accreditation as the first Middle East training center for inflammatory bowel disease diagnosis by the International Bowel Ultrasound Organization (IBUS).

This accreditation highlights Kuwait's leadership in advanced medical training and research.

Kuwait has also made remarkable progress in liver transplantation. The Liver Transplant Unit at Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital has successfully performed more than 123 liver transplants in coordination with international medical institutions.

This achievement underscores Kuwait's ability to provide world-class healthcare services while collaborating with global medical experts.

Dr. Al-Awadhi also highlighted the advancements at the Gastroenterology Department at Jahra Hospital, which specializes in minimally invasive procedures.

The hospital has conducted over 2,000 complex interventional endoscopic surgeries in the past year alone, including precision colon tumor removal procedures that eliminate the need for traditional surgical intervention.

Additionally, 1,200 ultrasound-guided cases have been performed, showcasing Kuwait's adoption of cutting-edge medical technologies.

The minister credited these achievements to the unwavering support of Kuwait's leadership and the Ministry of Health's vision to enhance medical services. He emphasized that collaboration with leading local and international institutions will further bolster Kuwait's position in global healthcare. By integrating advanced technologies and research-driven practices, Kuwait

continues to provide innovative, high-quality medical care.

Meanwhile, Dr. Hiba Al-Farhan, head of the organizing committee, underscored the conference's goal of unifying medical efforts to achieve excellence in digestive and liver disease treatment. The three-day event includes specialized workshops designed to enhance doctors' scientific and practical skills, covering critical topics such as:

- Scientific research design and preparation
- Liver stiffness measurement and fibrosis detection using state-of-the-art techniques
- Advanced gastrointestinal bleeding management
- New diagnostic methods for functional movement of the digestive tract

As Kuwait continues its journey of medical advancement, the conference reaffirms its commitment to fostering innovation, enhancing medical expertise and providing top-tier healthcare services.

Dark chocolate, almonds lower 'bad' cholesterol

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: A recent study indicates that incorporating dark chocolate and almonds into your diet may help reduce low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, commonly known as "bad" cholesterol, within just four weeks.

The research published in the Journal of the American Heart Association, conducted by researchers from Pennsylvania State University and Tufts University in Boston, involved 48 overweight and obese

participants aged 30 to 70.

The objective was to assess the impact of dark chocolate, cocoa, and almonds on risk factors for coronary heart disease, a leading cause of death worldwide.

Over the course of the study, participants followed a controlled diet with four distinct phases:

Control Phase: No consumption of the study foods
Almond Phase: Daily intake of 42.5 grams of al-

monds

Dark Chocolate and Cocoa Phase: Daily consumption of 43 grams of dark chocolate combined with 18 grams of cocoa powder

Combined Phase: Daily intake of both almonds and dark chocolate with cocoa powder

The findings revealed that consuming almonds alone led to a 7 percent reduction in LDL cholesterol levels.

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Sheikh Sabah Badr Al-Sabah welcomes delegations to second Friendly International Volleyball Tournament

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor Sheikh Sabah Badr Al-Sabah warmly welcomed the delegations participating in the second Friendly International Tournament of Salwa Al-Sabah Club for Women's Volleyball, which kicked off last Thursday and will run until February 5.

Sheikh Al-Sabah expressed his delight over the participation of Gulf, Arab, and international teams in this tournament, now in its second edition.

He highlighted the success of the first edition, which underscores the exceptional efforts of the Board of Directors of Salwa Al-Sabah Club, led by Sheikh Naima Al-Ahmad. These efforts contribute significantly to the development of women's volleyball and provide players with valuable experience through interactions with diverse international and Arab volleyball schools.

This statement was made during the opening ceremony of the tournament, attended by the President and members of Salwa Al-Sabah Club, led by Sheikh Naima Al-Ahmad, Ali Al-Kuwari, President of the Qatari and West Asian Volleyball Federations, Dr. Jaber Al-Marri, President of the Kuwaiti Volleyball Federation, Assistant Secretary Nayef Al-Khamili, and several Kuwaiti ambassadors and heads of delegations.

On his part, Dr. Jaber Al-Marri, President of the Kuwaiti Volleyball Federation, affirmed that the Federation has committed all necessary resources to ensure the tournament's success, including providing experienced referees and offering support to Salwa Club. He emphasized that the Federation is determined to make the tournament a success, especially since it is being hosted in Kuwait.

On the first day of the tournament, Salwa

Club defeated the Emirati Fatima Bint Mubarak Academy 3-0. On the second day, the Tunisian national team triumphed over Saudi Al-Ula Club 3-0, while Lebanon's Al-Shabiba Al-Bouchrieh beat the Qatari national team 3-0, and the Swiss Geneva Club won 3-1 against Iraq's Akada Ankawa.

Saudi Al-Ula defeat the Qatari national team 3-1, and Al-Shabiba Al-Bouchrieh beat the Tunisian national team 3-0.

Today's Fixtures
Akada Ankawa vs. Fatima Bint Mubarak Academy
Al-Shabiba vs. Al-Ula

Tunisian national team vs. Qatari national team
Salwa Al-Sabah vs. Swiss Geneva

The tournament continues to showcase intense competition, with teams from around the world vying for top honors.



Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor Sheikh Sabah Badr Al-Sabah opens the tournament in the presence of Sheikh Naima Al-Ahmad.

Dupont shines, France routs Wales in Six Nations opener

Ntamack red card overshadows big win

PARIS, Feb 1, (AP): Superstar scrumhalf Antoine Dupont conducted France's clinical dismantling of Wales by 43-0 to begin its quest for the Six Nations title.

Dupont played only 50 minutes, by which point France was out of sight of the overwhelmed Welsh on the scoreboard.

He set up three of their four first-half tries for a 28-0 lead at the break, and France went on to score seven in total in the drizzle at the Stade de France.

Wales, a 28-point underdog, had its national record losing streak extended to 13 tests since the 2023 Rugby World Cup, and its seventh consecutive loss in the tournament equaled its Six Nations era record from 2002-03.

Plus, the Welsh failed to score a point in the tournament for the first time in 27 years, when France won 51-0 at Wembley Stadium.

The only blemish for France was a late red card for flyhalf Romain Ntamack, playing his first test in 17 months. Ntamack shoulder-charged the head of already-tackled Wales back Ben Thomas and looks set to miss at least next weekend's visit to England.

Dupont was back at the Six Nations after his successful sevens sabbatical and created two tries for right winger Theo Attisogbe in a first half that ended with him creating left winger Louis Bielle-Biarrey's second try and the bonus-point fourth right on halftime.

He's the only player in the Six Nations era to assist on at least three tries twice, according to Opta statistics. He set up four against Italy in 2021.

With victory well in hand, Dupont and the entire tight five in the pack were replaced with 30 minutes to go.

Five minutes later, replacement hooker Julien Marchand dotted down following a well-worked lineout drive.

Center Emilien Gailleton, who had only just replaced Thomas Ramos, added the sixth try when he was set up by a Ntamack cross-field kick.

Even with a player less, the French bullied Wales and back-rower Gregory Alldritt's late pick-and-go try completed a miserable night for Wales.

Ramos converted the first four tries and moved past Christophe Lamaison into second place all-time on France's list of scorers with 387 points. He could overtake Frederic Michalak's record of 436 in this tournament.

A desperate Wales goes to Italy next Saturday.

France is on the road for its next three games, and Dupont expects a torrid time in England then in Ireland in Round 4.

From a quick tapped penalty, Dupont was held up over the line by Tom Rogers in the fourth minute. But he unlocked the defense in the 18th, dumping and then floating a cross-field kick perfectly into Attisogbe's arms.

Moments later, Ramos capped a sweeping move by popping a smart pass to the prolific Bielle-Biarrey.

After Wales center Owen Watkin suffered an apparent leg injury and needed help limping off in the 26th, things got worse for the visitors when hooker Evan Lloyd was yellow-carded for a high tackle.

It's hard enough to stop Dupont at full strength, let alone a man down. The inspirational captain showed his explosive running ability when he spotted a gap, broke a tackle, side-stepped into space, and looped a pass to give Attisogbe his second try in the right corner. Dupont then passed from a try-line ruck to give Bielle-Biarrey his second try.



France's Nolann Le Garrec, try to gather the ball during the Six Nations rugby union match between France and Wales at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, outside Paris. (AP)

Coaches see red for blocking VAR monitor in Lens victory

Pierotti scores brace as Lecce moves out of drop zone

MILAN, Feb 1, (AP): Santiago Pierotti scored twice in the second half and Lecce won at Parma 3-1 to move out of the Serie A relegation zone for the first time since early November.

The win followed two heavy defeats for Marco Giampaolo's side and lifted it from 18th to 13th place in the 20-team table.

Lecce showed admirable resilience after seeing a goal disallowed from Nikola Krstovic in the 24th minute and then going behind to another video-assisted decision, this time a penalty award that was dispatched by Emanuele Valeri.

But Krstovic got the goal his hard work deserved two minutes later and then his assist allowed Argentina-born striker Pierotti to put the visitors ahead after 63 minutes.

A second half substitute, Pierotti made sure of all three points - and only Lecce's second win since mid-December - with a clinching goal in the third minute of stoppage time.

The result extended Parma's grim run of just one league win in its last nine matches. It dropped to 18th.

□ □ □

The coaches of Montpellier and Lens were both sent off for blocking the referee's view of the video review monitor during a turbulent 2-0 win for high flying Lens in Ligue 1.

With 26 minutes gone and visit-

ing Lens 1-0 up, the referee showed a red card to Jean-Louis Gasset and Will Still as they blocked his path to the pitch-side monitor to disallow a second Lens goal.

The unusual decision appeared to confuse both men but it made little difference to the result as Montpellier's recent revival came to a halt.

A first-minute strike from Angolan striker M'Bala Nzola - the fastest in Ligue 1 this season - and



Lecce's Balthazar Pierret and Parma's Mandela Keita, right, in action during the Serie A soccer match between Parma and Lecce at Ennio Tardini Stadium in Parma, Italy. (AP)

Lens' second from debutant Jeremy Agbonifo after an hour were enough.

The result lifted them above Lyon and Lille into fifth place, equal on points with the team above it, Nice. Montpellier remained second from bottom, two points above Le Havre, which plays Angers on Sunday.

□ □ □

A first-half red card for captain Sergio González proved decisive for Leganes as its recent good run ground to a halt in 1-0 home loss to Rayo Vallecano in La Liga.

Leganes had not lost since before Christmas in a five-game run that included a win at home over Atletico Madrid and a point away at Athletic Bilbao. But it was on the back foot for much of the first half and its fortunes were hit seconds before halftime when González pulled down Nteka on the edge of the box and was shown a straight red.

The big center back has one of the best disciplinary records in La Liga this season, with only two yellow cards in 24 games, and the award was harsh. It allowed Rayo to push further forward in the second half and the winner came 13 minutes from time through Pathé Ciss.

The Senegal international needed two attempts to score in a goal-mouth scramble but he hit the target and Rayo extended its unbeaten league run to eight matches.

There was last-minute drama when the referee awarded a penalty to Leganes but although Valentin Rosier followed up to score after Augusto Batalla saved from Miguel de la Fuente, the referee demanded the kick be retaken.

Hero Batalla saved again to guarantee all three points for Rayo and lift it into sixth. Leganes was 16th.

'Highly motivated to compete'

UAE athletes gear up for 9th Asian Winter Games



This aerial photo taken on Jan. 27, 2025 shows Harbin Ice Hockey Arena in Harbin, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province. (Xinhua)

HARBIN, China, Feb 1, (Xinhua): Athletes from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are gearing up to compete in the 9th Asian Winter Games, scheduled to be held in Harbin, China, from February 7-14.

Abdullah Al-Rashid, a member of the UAE national skiing team, told Xinhua that he has been undergoing intensive training for the past two months and aims to achieve top rankings in Harbin.

"I hope to raise my country's flag at the 9th Asian Winter Games in China, which is one of the most important global competitions," Al-Rashid said.

Sultan Al-Kindi, another national team member, affirmed his readiness to compete in freestyle skiing events at the Games, describing it as the most significant international competition he has ever participated in for the UAE.

Al-Kindi expects tough competition due to the presence of high-caliber international athletes in the event.

Meanwhile, Abdullah Al-Balushi, a slalom skiing champion on the UAE national team, highlighted the benefits of a recent training camp in Georgia, saying it has significantly strengthened the athletes' preparation.

"We used the Georgia training camp to better prepare ourselves for the Asian Winter Games in China, and we hope to achieve positive results," Al-Balushi said.

Ibrahim Ali Khadim, a board member of the UAE Winter Sports Federation, emphasized that the athletes' rigorous training in recent months has positioned them well to compete for medals.

"Our players possess a strong competitive spirit and are determined to achieve impressive results in the most important winter sports event in our region," he said.

The UAE delegation for the Games consists of seven athletes specializing in freestyle and slalom skiing, competing in both individual and synchronized events.

Mohammed Moulai, head coach of the UAE skiing team, noted that training sessions will continue until the day before the team departs for Harbin.

"The athletes are highly motivated to compete at a high level, and they recognize that the 9th Asian Winter Games are a crucial milestone in their sporting careers," Moulai said. He also expressed confidence that China would deliver a world-class tournament that would leave a lasting impression on all participants.

The 9th Asian Winter Games will feature competitions in six sports, with 11 disciplines and 64 events.

With a week to go before the opening ceremony of the 2025 Asian Winter Games in Harbin, the Main Media Center (MMC) was officially put into operation.

Located in the Harbin International Conference, Exhibition and Sports Center, the MMC consists of the Main Press Center (MPC) and the International Broadcasting Center (IBC).

The volunteers in the MMC have been ready to provide language and guiding services for registered media and broadcasters, and the foreign currency exchange outlets in the venue are also available. At the official merchandise store of the 9th Asian Winter Games, various kinds of souvenirs including the adorable tiger mascots "Binbin" and "Nini" of Harbin 2025 are eye-catching.

"The MMC will be in 24-hour operation with a full coverage of the IPTV, or Internet Protocol TV, during the Games," introduced Lyu Zhuangzhi, media operation director of the MMC.

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The Australian team celebrates after defeating England in Melbourne to win the Women's Ashes cricket series. (AP)

Sports

Kuwaiti sports official commends record presence at Harbin 2025

HARBIN, China, Feb 1, (Agencies): Kuwait is set to participate in the 9th Asian Winter Games, held in Harbin, China, from February 7-14, with the largest Arab delegation, according to Fahed Al-Ajmi, Chief of the Kuwaiti mission.

Kuwaiti athletes will compete in four sports: ice hockey, figure skating, speed skating, and curling, Al-Ajmi stated in a press release.

He also confirmed that the Kuwaiti ice hockey team has already arrived in Harbin, the host city of the prestigious pan-Asian event, and is set to face Kyrgyzstan in its opening match.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's curling team will take on Mongolia and Thailand in their respective matchups on Tuesday.

Al-Ajmi highlighted that the tournament will feature over 1,500 athletes from 34 countries, making it one of the most competitive editions of the Asian Winter Games.

A new batch of tickets for the upcoming 2025 Harbin Asian Winter Games went on sale at 3 p.m. on Saturday, according to the organizers.

The initial batch of tickets has been available since January 11 for the public and major clients including the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) family members, national and regional Olympic committees, athletes, broadcasters, and sponsors.

As the Games approaches, the organizers announced that refunded tickets and those not claimed by major clients within the validity period will be released for public sale.

Tickets on sale include 94 sessions of ice events, including ice hockey, speed skating, short track speed skating, figure skating, and curling. Starting at the same time on Saturday, tickets for all 12 sessions of snow events, including



A group photo of the ice hockey team after its training.

cross-country skiing, freestyle skiing aeriels, and half-pipe, will also be available for free. However, spectators will need to reserve them on a first-come, first-served

basis. Purchases for ice event tickets and reservations for snow events can be completed on the official ticketing website (<https://tickets.harbin2025.com>) or via the official WeChat ticketing mini-program. Ticket offices at the ice event venues are set to begin operations on Saturday.

The first event of the Games is scheduled to begin on Monday with ice hockey, before the opening ceremony on February 7. The Games will conclude on February 14.

Over 1,270 athletes from 34 countries and regions across Asia will compete, making this edition of the Winter Games the largest in terms of participating delegations and athletes.

Forest moves level on pts with Arsenal after stunning 7-0 win

Chris Wood scores hat trick

LONDON, Feb 1, (AP): Nottingham Forest and striker Chris Wood continued their remarkable seasons in a 7-0 rout of Brighton in the Premier League on Saturday.

Wood, the 33-year-old New Zealand international, scored a hat trick to move to 17 goals in the most prolific Premier League campaign of his career. Only Liverpool's Mohamed Salah (19) and Manchester City's Erling Haaland (18) have more goals this season.

Morgan Gibbs-White, Neco Williams and Jota Silva also scored after an own-goal by Lewis Dunk set the ball rolling at the City Ground for third-place Forest, which is the surprise of the Premier League this season and moved level on 47 points with second-place Arsenal.

It was Forest's biggest win since the Premier League was formed in 1992.

Forest battled to avoid relegation last season but now has a great chance of qualifying for the Champions League, which would put the club back in Europe's elite - where it was a generation ago when winning the European Cup in 1979 and 1980.

Sunday's big attraction is at the Emirates Stadium where Arsenal takes on Manchester City in what promises to be a gruelling game.

City striker Erling Haaland and Arsenal coach Mikel Arteta had to be separated after a late equalizer saved City



Brighton and Hove Albion's Danny Welbeck and Nottingham Forest's Murillo, right, battle for the ball during the Premier League match between Brighton and Nottingham Forest at the City Ground, Nottingham, England. (AP)

a point in the 2-2 draw in Manchester earlier this campaign, which saw Rodri suffer his serious knee injury.

With City's defense still a huge cause for concern despite its vital Champions League win over Bruges in midweek, Arsenal has to view this game as a chance to show that it has overtaken Pep Guardiola's side in the Premier League pecking order.

Manchester United is at home to Crystal Palace, as Ruben Amorim's side aiming to build on its solid Europa League display in Bucharest on Thursday, with whether Marcus Rashford will leave United on loan still

a major topic of conversation.

Tottenham's youngsters guided it to a Europa League win over Swedish side Elfsborg on Thursday, but a visit to Brentford will be a return to Premier League reality for Ange Postecoglou's side, whose defense will suffer against Yoane Wissa and Bryan Mbeumo.

The round of matches ends on Monday with what is always a feisty London derby between Chelsea and West Ham United, which sees new West Ham coach Graham Potter with something to prove as he returns to face the club where he lasted less than a season at the helm.

Aston Villa coach Unai Emery said that England striker Ollie Watkins is committed to the club and he is happy to stay.

After Villa secured direct qualification for the last-16 of the Champions League, the main topic surrounding the club has been Arsenal's interest in signing Watkins before the transfer window closes on Monday.

Reports suggest that Villa has rejected Arsenal's offer of approximately 60 million pounds (around 75 million U.S. dollars) for Watkins, who has scored 81 goals in 201 appearances since joining from Brentford in 2020.

"Some players prefer to leave and some accept to stay here and commit with our challenges. One of them is Ollie Watkins," Emery told the press before the weekend match away to local rivals, Wolverhampton Wanderers.

"He is happy to stay. We asked him how he is feeling every day he is here with Villa and he is happy here," the Spaniard noted.

"The commitment of Ollie Watkins with us is a huge commitment. He appreciates a lot how Villa have always supported him and helped him. Now we need him, like he needed Aston Villa in the last years," continued the coach, who said he was in close contact with the striker.

"I speak to him a lot, he is always adapting to the circumstances we have," commented Emery, who has seen Colombian striker Jhon Duran move to Saudi Pro League side, Al Nassr in a deal that could be worth around 90 million dollars.

Al-Ghanim covers treatment costs for injured Kuwaiti handball stars

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 1: Kuwait Club Chairman Khaled Al-Ghanim has taken responsibility for the medical treatment of Kuwait handball stars Saleh Al-Moussawi and Fawaz Al-Shammari after they sustained injuries during the 29th World Cup, which concludes this evening with the final match between Croatia and Denmark at the "Unity Arena" hall in Norway.

The Chairman and members of the Kuwait Handball Federation's Board of Directors expressed their sincere gratitude to Al-Ghanim for his generous initiative in supporting the players' recovery following their injuries during the 2025 World Cup.

Meanwhile, two matches are scheduled today as part of the activation tournament for public handball teams. Fahaeel will face Al-Tadamon at 5:00 pm, followed by Al-Qurain against Al-Sulaibikhat at 6:30 pm. Both matches will take place at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex Hall.

Al-Sulaibikhat currently leads the standings with 8 points, followed by Al-Qurain with 6 points. Fahaeel and Yarmouk each have 2 points, while Al-Tadamon and Al-Nasr remain at the bottom with no points.

The showdown between Al-Qurain and Al-Sulaibikhat is expected to be the most intense of the day. Al-Sulaibikhat aims to maintain its undefeated streak after winning all four of its previous matches, while Al-Qurain, having won all three of its games so far, seeks to secure a victory and join Al-Sulaibikhat at the top of the standings.

Denmark and Croatia are set to clash in the final of the 29th IHF Men's World Championship in Norway on Sunday, in a showdown that promises to either make history or fulfill a long-awaited dream.



Khaled Al-Ghanim

For the first time in the tournament's history, the championship was hosted across three nations - Croatia, Denmark, and Norway - kicking off on January 14.

Denmark has been dominant throughout the competition, securing victories over Algeria, Tunisia, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Chile, and Brazil in the group stage before defeating Portugal in the semifinals. The reigning champions are on the verge of making history by claiming their fourth consecutive title, a feat never before achieved in the tournament.

However, Croatia stands in their way, determined to pull off an upset and claim their second world title. Croatia impressed in the group stage with wins over Bahrain, Argentina, Cape Verde, Iceland, and Slovenia, though they suffered a setback against Egypt. They secured their spot in the final with thrilling victories over Hungary in the quarterfinals and France in the semifinals, where they triumphed 31-28 in Zagreb.

Croatia last lifted the World Championship trophy in 2003 in Portugal, when they defeated Germany 34-31. Now, they aim to replicate that success and bring the title home once more.

Australia hands Sri Lanka biggest loss in test cricket

GALLE, Sri Lanka, Feb 1, (AP): Australia wrapped up the first test against Sri Lanka with a session and a day to spare, handing the hosts their biggest defeat in test cricket on Saturday.

Sri Lanka was skittled out for 247 in their second innings, succumbing to an innings-and-242-run drubbing. Their previous heaviest test defeat was an innings-and-239-run loss to India in Nagpur in 2017.

Spinners Matthew Kuhnemann and Nathan Lyon ran riot, sharing 16 wickets between them as they dismantled Sri Lanka's fragile batting lineup in both innings.

Kuhnemann, who had already snared a five-wicket haul in the first innings, finished with figures of nine for 149 - his best in test cricket.

"We started off well with the openers setting the tone," Australia captain Steven Smith said. "Usman (Khawaja) was amazing with that double hundred.

He put lot of pressure on the bowlers. Getting 650 allowed us to dictate terms.

"The first day didn't quite reflect the score," Smith added. "It took some spin and we batted exceptionally well. I thought we bowled really well. The thing of having three spinners is that you can keep them fresh and next guy can come and make an impact."

Sri Lanka's resistance was feeble at best. They lost eight wickets in a session before lunch and another seven between lunch and tea, as the defending world champion Australians stamped their authority with smart bowling and exceptional fielding.

Sri Lanka had allowed Australia to rack up a commanding first innings of 654 for six declared. Khawaja's double century, Josh Inglis' debut hundred, and Smith's second test century propelled the visitors into a position of absolute command.

Dinesh Chandimal was the lone warrior in Sri Lanka's first innings, scoring 72, while Jeffrey Vandersay, batting at number nine, brought up a counter-attacking half-century in the second innings. His blistering 53 off 47 balls, laced with seven fours and two sixes, was a stark reminder that the pitch had no demons - application was all that was required.

Sri Lanka had hoped Vandersay would delay the inevitable and help them avoid their worst defeat, but with just four runs needed to surpass that unwanted record, he perished recklessly.

Sri Lanka's batting lacked partnerships, discipline, and smart shot selection.

With just two half-centuries in the entire game, Sri Lanka's fragile batting unit is bound to face serious questions. Changes are expected ahead of the second test, which begins in Galle on Thursday.



Australia's Matthew Kuhnemann bowls a delivery during day four of the first test cricket match between Sri Lanka and Australia in Galle, Sri Lanka. (AP)