



Soccer
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Amiri Diwan photo

His Highness the Amir, in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince, receives the Chairman and CEO of BlackRock Company Larry Fink and his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace.

BlackRock CEO meets HH Amir

Kuwait Amir receives Crown Prince, PM

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace on Monday.
His Highness the Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace on Monday.
Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace on Monday.
Also on Monday, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, received visiting Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of BlackRock Company Larry Fink and his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace.
During the meeting, His Highness the Amir underlined the significance of promoting investment and

economic opportunities and creating a competitive economic environment that bolsters strategic cooperation with foreign companies.
His Highness the Amir also stressed the importance of diversifying the productive and development base targeting knowledge transfer and localization, attracting capital to contribute to bolstering national economy, and developing the Kuwaiti human capital to create jobs for youth in order to push forward the country's development.
For his part, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of BlackRock Company Larry Fink emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation with the State of Kuwait and supporting Kuwait's 2035 Vision goals.
Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Noura Al-Fassam and Director-General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah were present at the meeting.

KUWAIT RESTRICTS POLICE UNIFORMS IN PUBLIC KD 500 fine, jail for leaving kids in cars

Sahel app instantly notifies traffic law violator

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Brigadier Mohammed Al-Subhan, head of the "Unified Gulf Traffic Week 2025" Committee, has clarified that leaving a child under the age of ten alone in a parked vehicle, while the driver steps out for any purpose, constitutes a traffic violation, saying an adult must be present with the child at all times.

If the child is harmed as a result, the driver will be held accountable under the Child Protection Law. The penalty for this violation

may include up to six months in prison or a fine of 500 dinars, or both of the two penalties.
Brigadier Al-Subhan further stated that children under the age of ten must sit in the back seat and be properly secured.
This type of violation is issued directly by law enforcement, rather than through artificial intelligence cameras.
He also highlighted that under the new traffic law, modern cameras equipped with artificial intelligence are capable of detecting whether the driver and front-seat passengers are adhering to seat belt regulations.
Violations are now processed electronically and are sent immediately to the violator through the "Sahel" application.
Meanwhile, the Ministry of Interior has issued a circular to ban police officers from appearing in public places in their police uniforms.

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Push to mandate calorie counts, healthy food options in schools

Kuwait takes on trans fats to protect health

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Deputy Director General of the Community Nutrition Sector at the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) Dr. Shaima Mohammad Al-Asfour affirmed the importance of the regulation on partially hydrogenated fats, as it aims to limit the use of hydrogenated fats in food products in order to reduce the risks of chronic diseases, particularly cardiovascular diseases, by preventing the use of industrial trans fats, which is a leading cause of increased harmful cholesterol levels.

In an interview, Dr. Al-Asfour revealed that the authority is working on a plan to update the school cafeteria regulations and make calorie specification a binding Kuwaiti regulation, in an effort to reduce chronic diseases, especially obesity, by encouraging healthier food consumption patterns in society.

She highlighted the ongoing coordination and cooperation between PAFN and various government ministries, including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Education, and the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry to ensure the effective implementation of the regulations and support monitoring efforts.

Dr. Al-Asfour explained that fats are essential for human health and have many benefits. They are a primary source of energy, as they provide the body with concentrated energy, and assist in the absorption of essential fat-soluble vitamins. Fats also support cell health, contribute to hormonal balance, protect vital organs, and provide thermal insulation.

The partially hydrogenated fats regulation aims to limit the use of hydrogenated fats (trans fats) in food products, both local and imported. The primary goal is to improve public health by reducing the risk of chronic diseases. The regulation is set to be implemented by May 1, 2025.

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Dr. Shaima Mohammad Al-Asfour



KUNA photos

Top: King Abdullah II of Jordan during his meeting with Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah. Above: Kuwait's First Deputy PM, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah upon his arrival in Jordan.

King of Jordan receives Kuwait's First Deputy PM on official visit

AMMAN, Feb 3, (KUNA): King Abdullah II of Jordan received, Monday, Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation; currently on an official visit to the Hashemite Kingdom.

The Kuwait Ministry of Defense, in a press release, said that during the reception, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, to King Abdullah II, wishing him good health and more progress and prosperity for the brotherly Jordanian people.

The reception, attended by senior officials from both sides, also included a review of strong bilateral relations, discussions to enhance cooperation across various sectors for the benefit of both countries, and several issues of mutual interest.

Earlier, Kuwait's Ambassador to Jordan Hamad Al-Marri said on Monday that the visit of First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah to Jordan comes within the framework of historical relations, particularly in the military and security fields.

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KUNA photo

Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of Public Works, during inspection tour of Jabriya.

'Roadworks key to Kuwait's sustainable urban growth'

Al-Mashaan inspects Jabriya road upgrades

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of Public Works, conducted an inspection tour of Jabriya today to assess the latest developments and monitor the progress of ongoing road maintenance projects.

During the visit, she focused on reviewing the work progress and the methods used for asphalt treatment.

In a press statement, Minister Al-Mashaan emphasized that road maintenance projects are part of the Ministry's strategic plan to enhance the road network, ensuring a safe and sustainable environment for both citizens and residents.

The initiative aligns with the urban development goals and the increasing transportation demands.

She further stressed on the Ministry's commitment to closely monitor all stages of the projects, from design to completion, while adhering to internationally recognized quality standards and technical specifications to ensure optimal performance and road durability.

Expats dominate at 69 percent

Kuwait population grows every 5 minutes

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Kuwait's population is growing rapidly, with one person added every 5 minutes, according to the World Population Review report. The increase is driven by a combination of births, deaths, and new arrivals. Births occur every 10 minutes, while deaths happen every 57 minutes. New arrivals contribute one person every 9 minutes, resulting in an average population increase of one person every 5.22 minutes.

The report, which compiles data from 180 countries, uses information from sources such as the United Nations, the International Monetary

Fund, and Kuwait's Central Statistical Administration. It provides updated demographic data, including population size, GDP, and density.

By the end of 2024, expatriates would make up 69% of Kuwait's total population, with 1.1 million Arab expatriates, 1.4 million from Asia, and others, including the bedoun category. This high percentage of non-citizens is considered a demographic challenge, prompting the government to implement plans to address this imbalance.

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Newswatch

MANAMA: Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa emphasized on Monday deep-rooted relations with Egypt, which continue to grow stronger through mutual commitment to development and cooperation.

According to Bahrain's News Agency (BNA), King Hamad expressed pride over close ties between the two nations during his meeting at Al-Sakhir Palace with Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Migration, and Expatriate Affairs Dr. Bader Abdulaati. (KUNA)

ANKARA: Syria's interim president Ahmad Al-Sharaa is set to visit Turkey on Tuesday on his second international visit since he took over as his country's leader, the Turkish Presidency said Monday.

Al-Sharaa's visit to Ankara comes at the invitation of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Fahrettin Altun, head of communications at the presidency, said in an X post. (KUNA)

TUNIS: An earthquake measuring 4.9 degrees on the Richter Scale has hit Sidi Bouzid, central Tunisia, the country's National Institute of Meteorology announced on Monday. (KUNA)

8 CPA signs cooperation agreement with Saudi's Competition Authority



9 Zain main partner of 'Souq Al-Mubarakkiya 2' in Manchester, UK

11 Beyoncé wins album of the year for 'Cowboy Carter'

Prayer Timings

Fajr	05:15	Asr	15:06
Sunrise ..	06:36	Maghrib ..	17:28
Zohr	12:02	Isha	18:46

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

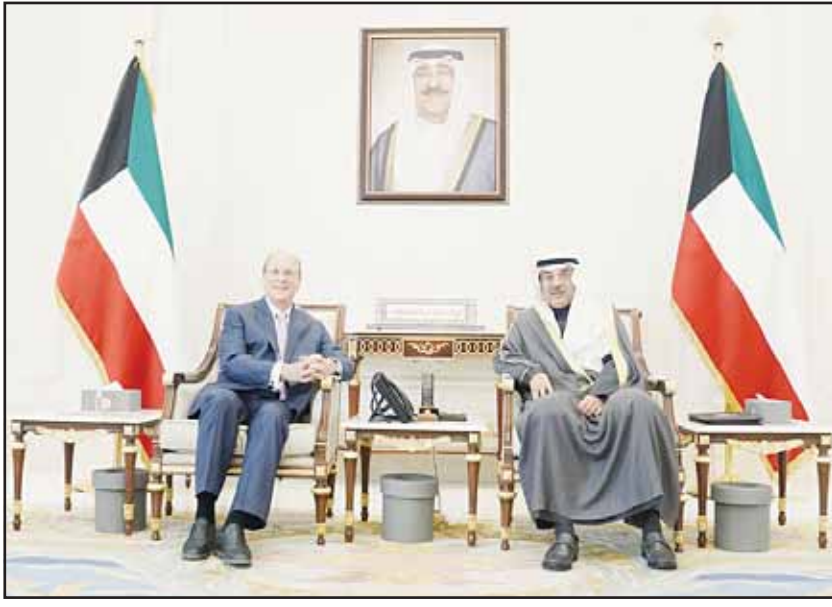
By Day: Mild with light variable wind changing to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 06-30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear with a chance for light fog forming at night.

Weather

By Night: Cold with light to moderate southeasterly wind to variable wind, with speeds of 10-32 km/h with a chance for light fog forming over some areas and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	22	12

Kuwait Airport	22	08
Abdaly	23	06
Bubyan	23	07
Jahra	23	09
Failaka Island	23	11
Salmiyah	21	14
Ahmadi	22	07
Jal Aliyah	23	07
Nuwaisib	22	10



Crown Prince Diwan photo
His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives the Chairman and CEO of BlackRock Company.

Crown Prince receives BlackRock chief

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received visiting Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of BlackRock Company Larry Fink at Bayan Palace on Monday.

Kuwait Amir offers condolences on demise of ex-German leader

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Monday sent a cable to German President Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, offering sincere condolences over the death of former German President Horst Kohler.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a cable to German

President Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, offering sincere condolences over the death of former German President Horst Kohler.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah then sent a cable to German President Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, offering sincere condolences over the death of former German President Horst Kohler.

KCCI hosts US Embassy team

Kuwait seeks US expertise to develop its healthcare sector

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) received a delegation from the US Embassy specialized in the healthcare sector, Sunday, Feb 2.

According to a press release issued by KCCI, the delegation was led by the Chief Commercial Officer at the embassy Daryl Cheng. Representatives from Kuwait's Ministry of Health, the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, and several interested business owners were also present at the meeting.

The meeting began with KCCI extending a warm welcome to the visiting delegation, explaining that the long-standing relationship between the United States and Kuwait reflects shared values and a mutual commitment to promote progress and prosperity. Over the years, this partnership expanded and strengthened in various sectors, including technology, education, energy, and trade.

One of the most important areas of mutual interest is healthcare. Healthcare is not only an economic sector but also an investment in the quality of life of individuals, sustainable development, and the future of any nation. Kuwait has long recognized the importance of enhancing its healthcare system, building advanced infrastructure, and supporting innovation to meet the evolving needs of its citizens.

The COVID-19 pandemic had revealed the critical need for strong global healthcare systems. It highlighted the importance of resilient, innovative, and accessible healthcare infrastructures for all.

While the pandemic exposed weaknesses in global health systems, it also spurred advancements in medical research, digital health, and preparedness to support public

health. Investing in healthcare is essential for national security, economic stability, and social welfare.

In the post-COVID-19 era, governments and organizations are working to strengthen healthcare systems to better meet the future challenges.

KCCI stated that the United States is renowned for its leadership in medical technology, scientific research, and the development of innovative health solutions.

It expressed its eagerness to draw on these experiences to help achieve Kuwait's ambitious plans for developing its healthcare sector in line with the vision of New Kuwait 2035.

Meanwhile, Daryl Cheng thanked KCCI for its hospitality and excellent organization.

He stressed that the large attendance reflects the Kuwaiti business sector's strong interest in opening new economic horizons with the United States.

Cheng affirmed that the U.S. has great interests in Kuwait's development process, and is a major trading partner.

He expressed hope that the meeting would help strengthen bilateral economic relations by building trade and investment partnerships in the healthcare sector, in which the United States is a global leader.

In addition, the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) also presented an overview of the New Kuwait 2035 vision, and focused on projects and partnerships in the healthcare sector, as well as other sectors.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a session for discussion and questions was opened between the two parties concerning opportunities within the healthcare sector.

Major jump in Kuwaiti tourists to Russia; online visa in 3 days

Joint security drills to be regular feature: Gelto

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Kuwait Vladimir Gelto announced that an understanding has been reached with the Kuwaiti side to hold joint security exercises with the Special Forces on a regular basis, indicating that all matters are progressing in the right direction.

He said this in a statement issued on the sidelines of the promotional exhibition of the Russian city of Sochi and the celebration of the second anniversary of launch of direct Jazeera Airways flights to Russia.

The event was attended by employees of Russian travel companies, authorities from the Krasnodar region, and representatives from Jazeera Airways.

Regarding visas, Ambassador Gelto explained that Kuwaitis can apply for a Russian visa online and receive it within three days, without the need to visit the consular section of the embassy. This visa allows a stay in Russia for up to 16 days. For stays longer than 16 days, applicants must visit the consular section of the embassy, where they can apply for a visa that allows them to stay for up to three months.

On the other hand, Kuwait permits citizens from 53 countries to apply for an entry visa online

or upon arrival at the airport. However, Russia is not currently on this list but efforts are ongoing with the Kuwaiti authorities to ensure Russians receive the same treatment.

Meanwhile, Russia has recently regained its status as one of the top tourist destinations for Gulf citizens, particularly from Kuwait. There has been a great increase in Gulf visitors to cities like Moscow and St. Petersburg. In 2024, the number of Kuwaiti tourists visiting Russia more than doubled, thanks to the introduction of electronic visas for Kuwaiti citizens, which made travel to Russia much easier. The number of Kuwaiti tourists in Russia in 2024 is estimated at around 15,000.

In addition, Ambassador Gelto revealed that Kuwait Airways will begin operating its first flight to Moscow at the start of May 2025.

He affirmed that Russian-Kuwaiti relations continue to grow in various fields, with tourism being one of the fastest-growing sectors.

Ambassador Gelto indicated that Kuwait is one of the leading countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in terms of the growth rate of tourists traveling to Russia. This follows the launch of direct flights between Moscow and Kuwait by Jazeera Airways in 2023, which now operate nine flights per week.

Regarding security cooperation between the two countries, and the visit of a Russian security

delegation to Kuwait last week for participating in exercises with Kuwait's Special Forces, Ambassador Gelto explained that Kuwait's Ministry of Interior periodically organizes the "Swapt" security competition for Special Forces. This competition, which involves teams from various countries, witnessed the participation of 26 security teams last year, including a Russian team.

He clarified that the agreement does not include the use of Russian military equipment, stating that it is solely focused on joint security exercises.

Ambassador Gelto highlighted the exchange of visits between officials from both nations, referring to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya's visit to Moscow last year and his meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

He also referred to Al-Yahya's participation in the Russian-Kuwaiti bilateral dialogue meetings.

Ambassador Gelto mentioned the Russian-Gulf strategic dialogue held last year in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, clarifying that this dialogue is held annually either in one of the Gulf countries or Russia.

He proposed the idea of rotating the location to include other Russian cities, given Russia's vast size, suggesting cities like St. Petersburg or Sochi as potential venues. Ambassador Gelto also referred to the visit by the Director of the Middle East and North Africa Department Alexander Kinshak, who previously served as the Russian Ambassador to Kuwait from 2008 to 2013. During his visit to Kuwait last week, Kinshak held consultations with the Kuwaiti side at the level of the two foreign ministries.



Vladimir Gelto



Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait and the judicial delegation from the Kingdom of Morocco.

Kuwait, Morocco to boost judicial cooperation

Kuwaiti Justice Minister Nasser Al-Sumait met Monday with a high-ranking Moroccan judicial delegation to discuss cooperation in legal and judicial affairs, the Ministry of Justice announced.

According to a statement posted on social media platform X, Al-Sumait held talks with

Mohammad Abdul Nabawi, First President of Morocco's Court of Cassation and President-Delegate of the Supreme Judicial Council. Discussions focused on strengthening judicial collaboration and advancing legal ties between the two nations. Al-Sumait emphasized the historical ties between Kuwait and Morocco,

highlighting the importance of enhancing bilateral relations at all levels. The meeting was attended by Moroccan Ambassador to Kuwait Al bin Issa, Supreme Judicial Council official Shakir Fattouh, and Qaddour Al-Hajji, head of the office of the President Delegate of the Supreme Judicial Council. (KUNA)

Support for needy families eyed

Namaa Charity launches 'Iftar' project for Ramadan 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Namaa Charity of the Social Reform Society has launched its Iftar project for this year's Ramadan, in collaboration with the General Secretariat of Awqaf, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This initiative aims to support the needy families both inside and outside Kuwait, in line with the conditions of endowment banks.

Walid Al-Bassam, Head of the Projects and Development Sector at Namaa, explained that the project will be carried out in over 20 countries.

The charitable initiative will provide food baskets and ready-made meals, with meal costs

starting at 500 fils. This pricing ensures that integrated meals are provided to meet the needs of fasting individuals, whether inside Kuwait or abroad.

Al-Bassam further outlined that within Kuwait, the project will distribute magnetic cards to needy families.

These cards will allow families to collect food supplies from participating

markets, providing them with a dignified way to access essential meals and offering various food options to suit their needs.

He emphasized that Namaa Charity is committed to developing strategic partnerships to ensure the long-term sustainability of its charitable efforts, maximizing the impact for those who require assistance. Al-Bassam also expressed his gratitude to the General Secretariat of Endowments for its continuous support of charitable projects, thanking them for their ongoing cooperation in executing humanitarian initiatives that foster social solidarity across Kuwait and beyond.



KUNA photo
A group photo of the participants in the 18th meeting of heads of government agencies concerned with human rights in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

GCC climbing on human rights graph

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): Ambassador Ahmed Al-Bakr, Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs, highlighted the significant progress made by Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in promoting human rights, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In his speech, delivered at the 18th meeting of heads of government agencies responsible for human rights, Al-Bakr emphasized the importance of continued coordination and cooperation to enhance the positive image of the GCC in both regional and international forums.

The meeting, hosted by Kuwait, dis-

cussed key topics such as the coordination of the upcoming 55th regular session of the Arab Permanent Committee for Human Rights and the agenda for the 58th session of the Human Rights Council.

Additionally, the aim of the meeting was to foster the exchange of experiences and best practices for advancing human rights across the GCC countries.

Al-Bakr expressed optimism that the outcomes of the meeting would contribute to the achievement of significant goals, ultimately benefiting the people of the GCC nations.

MEW in major repairs for power and water stations

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has been offering and implementing major tenders for the maintenance of electricity and water production stations to improve their operational efficiency and extend their lifespan.

In this context, informed sources from the ministry explained that a tender for the annual maintenance of equipment and precision devices in power generation and water distillation stations was referred to the State Audit Bureau last Tuesday for auditing and review. This was aimed to ensure the integrity of the procedures before finalizing the contract with the winning company, which had previously received approval from the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT).

Once the ministry receives approval from the Bureau and confirmation of no objections to the contract, it will proceed to sign the contract and initiate the implementation procedures through the budget allocated for maintenance work.

The total value of the tender currently under review is KD 44.402 million, which covers the provision of highly accurate and efficient engineering services to a number of stations. The goal is to ensure their safe operation and prevent malfunctions or breakdowns, particularly during the summer season, when the demand for electricity rises, thus increasing the load and strain on production stations.



KUNA photo
Minister Al-Tabtabaei performs with the local popular band in an atmosphere of patriotism.

Education minister Al-Tabtabaei ushers in national celebrations

By Abdulrahman Al-Shimmari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Minister of Education, Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, along with scouts and guides, raised the Kuwaiti flag this morning at the ministry's general office, to signal the

beginning of the national holiday celebrations across the ministry and all Kuwaiti schools.

This ceremony follows His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's flag-hoisting event at the Bayan Palace yesterday, marking the beginning of the national festivities.



Lessons of Gaza ... and the agony of the Arab world

"THE Hamas operation on October 7, 2023, was not an ordinary or routine action -- it was unprecedented in both its boldness and objectives. Unlike previous confrontations, this operation went beyond the imagination of other Palestinian factions, such as Fatah," columnist, former permanent envoy of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations (UN), the former Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) secretary general **Abdullah Bishara** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Hamas exploited a large gathering in an Israeli community, crossing the border with an intensity and swiftness never seen before. The attack was a shock, ensuring that Israel's response would be unlike its past engagements with Palestinian groups."

"Viewing the operation as a declaration of war, Israel launched a widespread campaign of destruction across Gaza, targeting infrastructure, homes, schools, hospitals and roads. This military campaign extended from late 2023 until January 2025, leaving behind a humanitarian catastrophe affecting the entire population of Gaza."

"More critically, Israel secured unwavering American backing, European support and the neutrality of other nations. It leveraged this international position to expand its military objectives beyond Hamas, escalating tensions in the West Bank by enabling settler-led sabotage and retaliation."

"The conflict also extended to Lebanon, where Israel focused its military operations on Hezbollah, targeting its leadership, bases and supporters in an effort to eliminate it as a regional threat. This strategy included airstrikes on Syrian military positions and targeted operations against Hamas leaders in Iran and Syria, surpassing previous boundaries in its pursuit of perceived threats."

"Even Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, a guest of Iran, became a focal point of Israel's operations, underscoring the intensity of its campaign against Hamas and Iran's leadership."

"Amid intensive diplomatic efforts, countries such as Qatar and Egypt played a crucial role in negotiations to halt Israeli military operations. A truce was eventually reached and took effect on January 19, 2025, though it remained fragile, with a high risk of violations and renewed hostilities."

"This war imparted significant lessons for Hamas and its allies, highlighting key strategic realities:

"Israeli Military Dominance -- The war in Gaza and southern Lebanon reaffirmed Israel's air superiority and its ability to integrate advanced technology into military operations. It demonstrated Israel's status as the dominant military force in the region, equipped with a modern arsenal and capable of shaping conflicts to its advantage."

"Limited Arab Intervention -- Palestinian factions should not expect Arab nations to intervene militarily in a conflict triggered by what was effectively a high-risk operation. Arab governments are focused on domestic stability and economic development, with no strategic incentive to engage in a war with a predictable Israeli response."

"The Need for Palestinian Unity -- The conflict underscored the importance of consolidating Palestinian leadership under the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Arab states widely reaffirmed this position, recognizing the dangers of fragmentation within the Palestinian political landscape. Hamas' unilateral actions significantly impacted the standing of the PLO and deepened internal divisions."

"Western Support for Israel -- The war revealed the extent of unwavering Western support for Israel, particularly from European powers. Unlike Israel, the Palestinian cause received limited diplomatic and material backing from these nations, reinforcing the strategic alignment between Israel and the West."

"The Need for a Palestinian State -- The conflict further demonstrated the necessity of establishing a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza as the only viable resolution to the ongoing crisis. While the United Nations General Assembly consistently votes in favor of Palestinian statehood, US policies -- shaped by strong pro-Israel lobbying -- continue to block Security Council action. The likelihood of a policy shift under the current US administration remains low."

"The Saudi Initiative as a Diplomatic Pathway -- Given the global consensus on the need for a Pal-

stinian state, efforts should focus on reviving the Saudi initiative, which proposes mutual recognition between Israel and Arab nations in exchange for Palestinian statehood. This initiative could serve as a foundation for a lasting solution -- provided that Washington endorses it and persuades the Israeli government to accept it."

"Revitalizing the PLO's Role -- Strengthening the PLO's leadership is essential for restoring Palestinian representation on the international stage. The organization must reassert its authority and demonstrate effective leadership to unify Palestinian ranks. President Mahmoud Abbas, based in Ramallah, is keenly aware of this necessity, as internal divisions continue to undermine the Palestinian cause."

"Historically, the PLO expanded its diplomatic presence across various global capitals, but its leadership inertia allowed other Palestinian factions -- particularly Hamas -- to rise in influence, especially in Gaza."

"Today, Palestinians face a critical moment that demands political unity and a coherent strategy. Without a unified voice, internal divisions will persist, jeopardizing the realization of Palestinian aspirations."

"The war between Israel, Hamas and Hezbollah, which lasted from late 2023 to the end of 2024, resulted in significant political and military gains for Israel. It conducted strikes on Iranian interests, assassinated Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, disregarded Russia's presence in Syria and weakened Hezbollah to the point of political irrelevance by dismantling its military capabilities."

"These developments, triggered by Hamas' initial operation, have reshaped regional dynamics and ushered in new security and political realities."

Also:

"Imagine five major American companies losing a staggering \$900 billion in a single day -- not due to an economic crash or regulatory shift, but because of China's groundbreaking advancements in artificial intelligence," columnist **Walid Ibrahim Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"Against all expectations, China has outpaced American technological intelligence, delivering AI models at a fraction of the cost -- less than one-tenth of what just one of these companies generates."

"This seismic shift sends a clear message to the world: competing in artificial intelligence is not solely about capital, energy resources, or computing power. Rather, it is about strategic innovation, efficiency and leveraging intelligence over excessive spending."



Walid Al-Ahmad "Beijing's technological momentum is now creeping into the heart of Silicon Valley, especially after facing US restrictions on access to advanced technology. Instead of faltering, China adapted -- innovating in software and electronic chip manufacturing at remarkably low costs."

"The result is a global market shake-up, with China dominating both original and traditional manufacturing, producing high-precision chips for everything from needles to missiles."

"The trade war between the US and China is not new, but it erupted visibly in 2018 when then-President Donald Trump imposed \$50 billion in tariffs on Chinese goods -- particularly targeting Huawei. China retaliated swiftly, placing tariffs on 128 American products, with soybeans among the most notable."

"Decades ago, while studying at Kuwait University in the 1980s, we heard a striking prediction from Dr. Kazem Behbehani, may God have mercy on him. In his writings on China, he cautioned: 'One day, you will understand China's significance when it dominates technology and the global economy.'"

"Our Arab nations will regret overlooking its policies and failing to benefit from its rapid rise, which will overshadow both America and the Soviet Union."

"That was in the 1980s -- and today, his words have become a reality."

"Donald Trump once stated: 'We have a huge trade deficit with Canada and Mexico and we will impose additional tariffs on them!'"

"And his stance on the Middle East: 'Jordan and Egypt must take in Gaza residents'."

"Fasten your seatbelts ... Where will Trump take the world next?"

"For now, the global stage is set for a fierce technological battle. The question remains: America or China -- who will lead the future of innovation?"

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and Minister of Defense and Military Production of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Lt Gen Abdul Majeed Saqr following the signing of a military cooperation agreement.



KUNA photos Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah during his meeting with his counterpart, Egyptian Minister of Interior Major General Mahmoud Tawfiq Qandil.

Kuwait and Egypt sign military ties agreement

CAIRO, Feb 3, (KUNA): Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Interior Minister, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah discussed on Sunday with Egyptian Defense Minister Gen. Abdulmajeed Saqr, ways to enhance military cooperation and achieve security and stability in the region. This meeting is part of Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef's official visit to Egypt, Kuwait's Ministry of Defense said in a statement. Sheikh Fahad signed a military cooperation agreement with Gen. Saqr, followed by a visit to the 'Tomb of the Unknown Soldier,'

honoring martyrs of the Egyptian Armed Forces, as well as visiting the tomb of late President Anwar Sadat, in recognition and commemoration of his significant national role, noted the statement.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Sabah discussed with the Egyptian Minister of Interior Maj. Gen. Mahmoud Qandil, various issues of common interest and ways to enhance security cooperation. Sheikh Fahad praised strong and historic ties with Egypt, emphasizing the need to enhance cooperation across various sectors, particularly security.

According to the statement, Sheikh Fahad also met with Maj. Gen. Hassan Rashad, Director of the General Intelligence Service, to discuss security cooperation, mechanisms for information sharing, and expertise exchange to address challenges and enhance stability in both countries. Sheikh Fahad commended the pivotal role of Egyptian security institutions in supporting regional stability.

Sheikh Fahad also met with the Ambassador of Kuwait to Egypt Ghanim Al-Ghanim, as well as some embassy members.

3-man gang involved in major human, visa peddling busted

Millions made in transfer, sale of work permits

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: In a significant blow to residency trafficking operations, Kuwait's Residency Affairs Investigation Department, under the directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, has busted a three-man gang involved in illegal visa trade, reports Al-Rai daily.

The gang led by an Egyptian resident a.k.a. "The Fox," included two employees each working in the General Department of Residency Affairs and the Public Authority for Manpower.

According to sources, the trafficking network was notorious for facilitating the transfer of work permits of "violators" inside Kuwait and bringing in foreign workers in exchange for large sums of money.

The investigations revealed that the gang charged 400 dinars for transferring a work permit within Kuwait and as much as 2,000 dinars to bring a worker from abroad.

Further probes into the operation uncovered manipulation of records and fictitious assessments of 275 licenses -- some of which did not even exist. The trafficking scheme resulted in over a million dinars in illegal profits from issuing work permits and transferring residencies for 553 Egyptian workers.

The culprits also exploited the system by closing company records after issuing workers' residencies, as a result of which workers unknowingly

became violators of the law. The security forces immediately placed a 'block' on all violators, with the Public Prosecution taking appropriate legal action.

The authorities have emphasized that workers who report residency trafficking will be exempt from punishment, urging individuals to come forward to help combat these illegal activities.

The new residency law has significantly increased penalties for residency trafficking, with prison sentences ranging from three to five years or fines from 5,000 to 10,000 dinars. The penalty is heightened for public employees involved in the crime.

In response to the growing issue, the Residence Affairs Sector has implemented stringent procedures and controls, including:

- Strict oversight of transactions under the new laws and decisions.

- A dedicated hotline for reporting residency trafficking.

- A comprehensive audit plan to ensure companies' data and operations are legitimate.

- Electronic monitoring and auditing systems.

- Surprise field inspections to ensure compliance.

The authorities continue their efforts to crack down on residency trafficking and uphold the rule of law in Kuwait.

1 dead in accident: Two vehicles collided on the Fifth Ring Road near Rabya, resulting in the death of an individual, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to security sources, when the Operations Room of the Ministry of Interior received information about the accident, securitymen, paramedics and firefighters rushed to the location and discovered

that the accident had resulted in a fatality.

The victim's body was referred to the Forensic Medicine Department, and an investigation into the incident has been launched.

Brawl in hospital: The Jahra security forces responded to a report of an altercation at the maternity building of Jahra Hospital, reports Al-Anba daily. An official source stated that upon investigation, it was found that four Kuwaiti citizens and a security guard were detained for interrogation with regards to the incident. The security source added that the report was received recently and the investigation into the incident is underway.

Coast Guard marathon: The General Directorate of the Coast Guard organized a unique sports event, the 'First Coast Guard Marathon,' under the patronage and in the presence of Major General (Naval) Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Yousef, Director-General of the Coast Guard. The event aimed to strengthen community bonds among its members and their families, reports Al-Anba daily.

The marathon saw wide participation across all age groups, with a 1-kilometer race for youth and children, while adults, both men and women, competed in a 5-kilometer race.

The event was complemented by a variety of cultural and entertainment activities, offering something for everyone.

At the end of the event, Major General Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Yousef honored the participants, presenting prizes to the winners. He emphasized the importance of such activities in fostering communication and collaboration between the Coast Guard members and their families.

Murder trial opens

He provoked me, I fired two bullets -- defendant

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Criminal Court held the first session of the trial for the accused in the murder of traveler Hani Al-Mousawi, who was killed in front of his mother in Jabriya. The court decided to postpone its ruling until the end of the session.

During the trial, the accused appeared in handcuffs from the Central Prison, and denied any connection to the victim. However, he admitted to the crime, stating, "I fired two bullets at the victim because he provoked me with problems he caused."

Lawyer Hassan Al-Mousawi, representing the family of the deceased, claimed civil status and urged the court to quickly issue a verdict in line with the principle of prompt justice.

The defendant's lawyer requested that his client be referred for a psychiatric evaluation and asked for a list of communication calls from Zain Company.

In response, Lawyer Al-Mousawi stated that some of the requests were contradictory and irrelevant to the premeditated murder. He expressed surprise at the attempt to absolve the defendant of responsibility for the crime, while other requests clearly affirmed his responsibility for his actions.

The incident involved a horrific murder in Jabriya, where a well-known Kuwaiti traveler in his forties was shot and killed by a citizen in his home. His body was subsequently transferred to the forensic medicine department.

It was reported that the Operations Room of the Ministry of Interior had dispatched detectives after receiving information about the shooting at a house in Jabriya by a Kuwaiti citizen who shot and killed the victim before he could be taken to the hospital. Detectives were able to apprehend the killer, and he underwent investigation to determine the circumstances and motives behind the crime. He was later referred to the Public Prosecution on charges of premeditated murder.

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KUNA photo

Ambassador Sheikh Sabah Nasser Al-Malek Al-Sabah presents his credentials as Ambassador and Plenipotentiary of the State of Kuwait to New Zealand Governor-General Cindy Kero.

Kuwait envoy presents credentials to New Zealand Governor-General

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3. (KUNA): Kuwaiti Ambassador Sheikh Sabah Nasser Al-Malek Al-Sabah presented his credentials as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Kuwait to New Zealand's Governor-General Cindy Kero.

This came during a special reception held on this occasion, the Kuwaiti Embassy in Wellington said in a press release sent to KUNA.

During the reception, the Kuwaiti ambassador conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to New Zealand's Governor-General,

wishing him long good health and New Zealand and its friendly people progress and prosperity.

Sheikh Sabah Nasser also hailed bilateral relations between Kuwait and New Zealand, underlining the significance of developing distinguished partnership and friendship between both friendly nations.

For his part, New Zealand's Governor-General commended the deep relationship between Kuwait and New Zealand, wishing the Kuwaiti ambassador the best of luck and success in his duty for the common interest of both nations.

PAAET allows dismissed students to re-enroll at their own expense

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Deanship of Student Affairs at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) announced that re-enrollment applications for dismissed students at their own expense are now open. The application period began on Sunday, February 2, and will close at 2 pm on Tuesday, February 4.

Applications must be submitted via PAAET's official website, and students are urged to adhere to the specified dates to ensure proper processing. Additional information can be obtained by scanning the QR code attached to the official announcement.

This decision reflects PAAET's keenness to offer dismissed students an opportunity to resume their studies in accordance with the approved regulations and procedures.

National Operetta greenlit with 455,500 dinar budget

CSC upgrades digital services

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Ministry of Information is currently preparing for signing a contract with a local company to organize the National Operetta on the occasion of the National Day and Liberation Day at a total cost of KD 455,500.

Sources told the newspaper that the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) approved the ministry's request to hold the National Operetta in early December 2020; while the Purchasing Committee agreed to proceed with the contract on Jan 20, 2025.

It has been reported that the State Audit Bureau (SAB), after reviewing the documents and based on mutual inquiries between it and the ministry, approved the contract with the company and stipulated that the validity period of the approval be limited to 90 days; affirming that the operetta will be a distinctive addition to the upcoming national celebrations.

On the other hand, Undersecretary of the ministry Nasser Al-Muhaisen issued an administrative circular on the "Guidance Manual for the Content of the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) Systems."

The newspaper obtained a copy of the circular, stating the need to guarantee the good quality of services provided to employees and achieve technological development in government work.

The circular stated that a decision has been taken to start upgrading the website of the CSC and the smartphone application starting from Feb 1, 2025.

It stressed the need for all employees to view the guide by scanning the QR Code attached to the circular, which includes all information and instructions on using the new electronic services.

It advised the employees to contact the Administrative Affairs Department in the Administrative and Financial Building for any inquiries related to the services provided.

These measures are in line with the ongoing efforts to enhance the digital transformation in government work in order to ease procedures, as well as save the time and effort of employees.

KISR achieves 'shim fish' farming milestone

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) has successfully completed the cycle of farming Shim fish for the first time in the Middle East.

This achievement marks the production of larvae from Shim fish raised in closed systems, providing an ideal

environment for the species with precise scientific standards.

Dr. Faisal Al-Humaidan, the KISR Acting Director General, highlighted that this success contributes to food security and elevates Kuwait's standing in global scientific circles.

This milestone advances fish farming in the country, promising significant benefits.

Excellence award for school libraries launched

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Kuwait Libraries and Information Association, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education's Libraries Department,

has launched the Excellence Award for School Libraries under the patronage of Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaei.

The initiative aims to recognize the most creative and innovative libraries that enhance their role as key pillars of

the educational process.

Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Suwait, Chairman of the Association, emphasized that the award seeks to highlight school libraries as centers of inspiration and learning, appreciating efforts to develop them and introduce innovative ideas

that improve educational services for students and teachers.

The award will offer valuable financial rewards to libraries that earn the title of "Distinguished Library", fostering a positive competitive environment to enhance library services in Kuwait's schools.

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Photo during the 2nd Administrative Forum for Supervisory Position Holders.

'Leadership: Reality and Ambition'

KU holds 2nd Administrative Forum for Supervisory Position Holders

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Under the patronage and in the presence of the acting Secretary-General of Kuwait University Prof. Mishari Al-Aifan, the 2nd Administrative Forum for Supervisory Position Holders, titled "Leadership: Reality and Ambition", was launched on Sunday, February 2, 2025.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait University, the forum took place at the Conference Center in Sabah Al-Salem University City in Shadadiya. Several important figures including the Assistant Secretary-General for Administrative Affairs Ali Sadiq Al-Ustadh, the acting Assistant Secretary-General for Facilities Management Affairs Muhammad Al-Sulaiman, the Assistant Secretary-General for Financial Affairs Abdullah Jaber Al-Mutairi, media professional Dr. Bassam Al-Jazzaf, Deputy Director-General of the Youth Sector at the Public Authority for Youth Dr. Walid Al-Ansari, and various department directors and supervisors at Kuwait University participated in the forum.

It aims at enhancing the skills of leaders and supervisors at Kuwait University by offering training workshops, enabling experience exchange among supervisors, and highlighting the latest developments at the university to support the educational process.

At the start of the forum, the acting Secretary-General of Kuwait University Prof. Dr. Mishari Al-Aifan affirmed that the forum aims to achieve a common goal that reflects the high status of Kuwait University and improves the quality of work within the university.

Educational process

He highlighted that the forum serves the educational process in continuation of the university's educational and administrative development.

Al-Aifan revealed that the forum stems from the General Secretariat's awareness of the pivotal role the administrative apparatus plays at Kuwait University, describing it as the backbone and key pillar for fulfilling the university's vision in education, scientific research, and community service.

He explained that the administrative apparatus is a fundamental partner in both academic and administrative excellence, which is capable of navigating the evolving challenges and ensuring that the university meets its responsibilities. This includes issuing decisions and circulars that help organize the administrative process and maintain high performance standards, as well as filling supervisory positions to encourage talent and achieve further progress.

Al-Aifan highlighted Kuwait University's commitment to embrace administrative

competencies due to their contribution to the development of the educational process.

He acknowledged the role of these competencies in the successful operation of Sabah Al-Salem University City, particularly in executing transition plans efficiently by coordinating efforts among various parties and providing necessary support services. This collaboration has helped transform Sabah Al-Salem University City into an educational environment that meets the highest international standards.

He concluded by thanking all those involved in organizing the forum, expressing confidence that it will contribute to the advancement of Kuwait University and the nation under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, his loyal Crown Prince, and the wise government.

Meanwhile, the Assistant Secretary-General for Administrative Affairs Ali Sadiq Al-Ustadh said the 2nd Administrative Forum embodies Kuwait University's vision of enhancing and developing leadership and administrative thinking among supervisory leaders to achieve institutional excellence.

He stressed that leadership is not merely a position, but a responsibility and trust that requires skills and creativity to serve both the nation and society.

Al-Ustadh explained that the General Secretariat of Kuwait University is committed to organizing discussion sessions with public and leadership figures, as well as training workshops that enhance administrative capabilities and competencies, and showcasing successful experiences.

The forum aims to highlight the achievements and experiences of supervisory position holders, including directors and supervisors at Kuwait University, and demonstrate their efficiency and administrative abilities in improving work quality and supporting the educational process.

Kuwait University has always been home to administrative competencies that contribute to achieving desired goals and outcomes, and driving development and progress in line with the university's strategic plan.

Al-Ustadh expressed his hope that the forum would result in fruitful recommendations that reflect the collective experiences of all participants through the training courses, which have played a significant role in refining their capabilities and developing their expertise to benefit Kuwait University.

In addition, the acting Deputy Director-General of the Youth Sector at the Public Authority for Youth Dr. Walid Al-Ansari said the forum included a workshop that was focused on managing differences and disputes.

LOCAL

Director inspires success for new semester

PAAET achieves perfect accreditation

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam, Director-General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, congratulated students and trainees on the start of the second semester, wishing them a successful academic and training period.

He acknowledged the pivotal role of faculty and training staff in enhancing the skills of students, preparing them for the labor market with high efficiency.

In a press statement, Dr. Al-Fajjam emphasized the Authority's commitment to providing an educational environment aligned with the latest developments, using modern teaching and training methods to foster deep understanding and develop applied skills. This, he stated, contributes to elevating students' academic and professional competence.

He encouraged students and trainees to fully utilize the educational and training opportunities available, both in classrooms and through hands-on projects, while emphasizing the importance of discipline and adherence to

regulations for achieving academic and career success. Dr. Al-Fajjam also urged faculty and staff to offer not just education and training, but also guidance, counseling, and motivation, using interactive, practical teaching methods to enhance learning and prepare students for the workforce.

Moreover, Dr. Al-Fajjam proudly announced that the Applied Education Authority had achieved a significant milestone by receiving a "Satisfied" rating with a perfect score of 140/140 from the National Authority for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality.

This exceptional accomplishment reflects the efforts made by the Authority under his leadership and the collective contributions of its academic and administrative sectors in improving education quality and aligning academic programs with international standards.



Dr. Al-Fajjam

Continued from Page 1

KD 500

These public places include markets, shopping malls, cooperative societies, wedding and event halls, cemeteries, and mourning gatherings.

The ministry affirmed that disciplinary action will be taken against officers who violate the circular, with exceptions made only for those whose duties require their presence in these locations.

In other news, the Ministry of Interior continues its efforts to arrest and deport expatriates who violate residency and labor laws.

According to security sources, the Deportation Center has completed the transfer of female detainees from the old detention building in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh to a new, internationally-compliant facility in the Sulaibiya area.

The sources also revealed that the number of deportations in January alone reached approximately 2,000 individuals belonging to various nationalities.

The sources explained that the Deportation Department continues to streamline the deportation process for violators referred from all security sectors, ensuring that the necessary humanitarian requirements are met during the detainees' detention period.

The Ministry of Interior confirmed that it will not hesitate to enforce the law and hold violators accountable, including both the worker and the employer.

Kuwait population

Kuwait has long experienced high immigration levels, ranking third in net immigration rate globally in 2007, driven by its oil wealth and high living standards. The country's population density stood at 237 people per square kilometer at the end of 2024, making it the 37th most densely populated country worldwide, despite its relatively small land area of 17,818 square kilometers.

King of

This came in a statement by KUNA made by Al-Marri, following the arrival of Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef and the accompanying delegation at Queen Alia International Airport, noting that the visit will last for two days.

Al-Marri added that Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef will hold meetings with Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Bisher Khasawneh,

and Minister of Interior Mazin Al-Farraj, as well as military and security officials to explore ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef's visit to Jordan comes as part of a regional tour that previously included Egypt and will later include Oman, noting that the visit aims to strengthen joint Arab cooperation.

Upon his arrival, Sheikh Fahad was received by the Jordanian Minister of Interior, Mazin Al-Farraj, and several senior military and security officials in Jordan.

Kuwait takes

Hydrogenated fats are vegetable oils that undergo a chemical process to transform from a liquid to a solid state by adding hydrogen for enhancing their consistency and extending their shelf life. Foods containing hydrogenated fats include commercially baked goods, biscuits, cakes, margarine, fried foods, fast foods, and coffee creamers.

These fats are linked to an increased risk of heart disease and artery problems, as they raise harmful cholesterol levels (LDL) and lower the beneficial cholesterol (HDL). They also contribute to weight gain and other health issues such as diabetes.

Below is part of the interview held with Deputy Director General of the Community Nutrition Sector at PAFN Dr. Shaima Mohammad Al-Asfour -

Question: What are the criteria for identifying products that contain hydrogenated fats?

Answer: Products can be identified by checking the ingredient list on the packaging. Any product that contains hydrogenated oils or trans fats among the ingredients is subject to this regulation. Also, products are tested in laboratories to ensure they comply with the required standards.

Q: What is the mechanism for monitoring local and imported products and the role of the authority in this?

A: PAFN plays a major role in monitoring local products by conducting field inspections to ensure companies comply with the standards. Non-compliant companies face penalties, and product samples are analyzed regularly in laboratories.

For imported foods, PAFN imposes strict regulations, including verifying the accuracy of nutritional information and ensuring the permissible limit of partially hydrogenated fats is below 2. It also conducts laboratory tests on food shipments at customs ports to ensure compliance.

Q: What is the penalty for non-compliance with the regulation?

A: Penalties for non-compliance include financial fines for violating companies, along with criminal penalties, which may result in referral to the Public Prosecution.

Q: What is your plan to confront the public's addiction to unhealthy foods?

A: PAFN is working on educating consumers about the dangers of hydrogenated fats through intensified media campaigns and encouraging companies to offer healthy alternatives that maintain the same quality and taste.

We are also developing a plan to raise public awareness about the objectives of the regulation, which will include launching awareness campaigns via traditional media such as television and radio, as well as through digital platforms like social media.

Q: You gave companies 4 months to change production plans. Is that enough?

A: Most major companies were informed of the regulation in advance and have been aware of the requirements for some time. However, PAFN will continue to monitor their progress and offer support as needed to expedite compliance.

Q: Have you faced challenges in companies' resistance to change?

A: We have observed some variation in response. While most major food companies are committed to Gulf and international standards, a few have expressed concerns about the cost of implementing changes. In response, PAFN has organized meetings and workshops to highlight the importance of the regulation and its positive impact on public health. The challenges mainly involve reformulating products and the cost of healthier alternatives, but we are actively working on solving these issues.

Q: You have announced the preparation of many future projects and plans. What are they?

A: We are working on converting the calorie specifications into a binding Kuwaiti regulation. We are also in the process of developing the current canteen regulations. We are studying a new regulation aimed at reducing chronic diseases, particularly obesity, by changing the food consumption patterns in society.

Furthermore, PAFN is coordinating with various ministries, including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Education, and the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce, to ensure the effective implementation of these regulations and support oversight efforts.

MEW steps up 'smart meter' deployment, debt collection

Ministry enhances efficiency, consumer compliance

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Acting Assistant Undersecretary of the Customer Service Sector at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Falah Al-Mutairi said the sector received the first batch of smart meters -- totaling 125,000 meters -- for the second phase of the smart meters project, numbering 500,000.

Al-Mutairi made the announcement at a ceremony honoring the new batch of 23 judicial police officers who graduated from the Higher Judicial Institute in accordance with Law No. 48 of 2005.

The ceremony was held on Monday at the ministry's headquarters under the patronage of Undersecretary Dr. Adel Al-Zamel.

In his speech at the ceremony, Al-Mutairi also confirmed that the installation of these meters started recently for some areas that did not complete the installation in the first phase.

He stated that the concerned committee in the ministry is currently setting the technical specifications related to smart water meters and it will soon launch the tender for this project.

He added the judicial control team plays an important role in controlling encroachments on the electricity and water networks in the country. "We hope that in the coming period, they will monitor violations and address incorrect situations. Since the issuance of Law



Al-Mutairi

No. 48/2005, four batches have graduated to work as judicial officers. We hope they will serve the ministry and their country, particularly since the ministry is about to start preparations for the summer season. We urge everyone to intensify their efforts to maintain the electricity and water networks to guarantee the continuity of services for all consumers," he asserted.

He also unveiled the plan to open more customer service offices in the governorates. He pointed out that 97

percent of the services in the ministry are electronic, stressing that the rationalization of water and electricity consumption is the responsibility of citizens and expatriates. "We wish everyone rationalizes consumption for their benefit and that of the State," he stated.

He affirmed that the ministry continues to collect debts from consumers in governmental, private housing, investment, industrial or agricultural sectors. "We always stress to the consumers the need to pay bills in order to avoid service interruption due to non-payment," he added.

He said the ministry uses all types of technology to send a warning to defaulters -- by email, text messages or notifications on its application or Sahel.

He pointed out that the ministry's debt collection rate is very satisfactory, as it exceeded half a billion Kuwaiti Dinars in the first seven months of the current fiscal year. "We expect to collect a higher amount by the end of the fiscal year," he stressed.

He went on to say "we have started the evening shift in all governorates. There is an evening shift office in each governorate that serves their respective residents. These offices receive customers and complete their transactions during the experimental evening period."



Attending the conference on the integration of persons with disabilities as a goal of sustainable development, with the participation of governmental and private entities.

'Education essential for social integration'

Kuwait University hosts conference on empowering women with disabilities

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): A conference and exhibition on the integration of people with disabilities launched Monday at Kuwait University as part of New Kuwait 2035 carrying themes of educational assimilation and empowering women with disabilities.

Addressing the gathering, Conference organizer Kefaya Al-Alban said the event includes a number of discussion panels with specialists and academics as well as people with disabilities to discuss integration, involvement and empowerment.

Dean of Student Affairs at Kuwait University, Jassim Al-Hamdan underlined the university's keenness in supporting disabled people and ensuring their active participation.

He recalled several university graduates of different majors who are now employed and working diligently in both public and private sectors.

As for High Council of Planning and Development official, Nadia Al-Hamdan, she affirmed in her speech that integrating people with disabilities is one of the objectives of sustainable development and a cornerstone to a more

just and inclusive society.

Empowering people with disabilities, especially women, is not only a moral or legal obligation but it is a true investment in the development of societies and building better futures, she stated.

Educational assimilation is the first step towards achieving that goal, she remarked, adding that this would contribute to the acquisition of knowledge, development of skillsets and establishing independence.

It began in Kuwait in 1995, partly and wholly, she relayed, to help achieve holistic education and end social and mental isolation.

Kuwait has sought to achieve these objectives through legislations that have marked a turning point in government care as it transformed from an orthodox model to active integration.

On his part, member of faculty Dr. Khaled Mahdi spoke of the challenges faced by assimilation saying this requires more efforts, and underlined the necessity of considering architectural design to make of facilities more accessible.

Nominations welcome for Arab researchers across 5 fields

KFAS starts accepting applications for 2025 Kuwait Prize

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) announced that it has started accepting applications for the 2025 Kuwait Prize from researchers in Kuwait and other Arab countries. The prize, awarded in five different categories, offers a reward of KD 40,000 Kuwaiti for each category.

According to a press release issued by KFAS, the Kuwait Prize, which was launched in 1979 based on directives of the country's wise leadership, aims to honor distinguished Kuwaiti and Arab scientists who have made authentic contributions to their research fields. The prize is one of the most prestigious Arab and regional awards, aimed at building a strong foundation for science, technology, and innovation. The initiative also seeks to encourage researchers, promote scientific advancements, and support the development process in the Arab world.

Applications for participation in the competition will remain open until May 31, 2025.

KFAS explained that the first field for this year's award is "basic sciences", which includes mathematical disciplines such as algebra and correspondences, optimization and mathematical modeling, calculus of differences, differential equations, dynamic equations and systems, logic and theory of computation, statistics and operations research, analysis of random processes, financial and actuarial mathematics, and mathematical data science.

The second field is "applied sciences", which focuses on environmental sciences. This includes areas such as atmospheric sci-

ences, earth sciences, ecosystem science, environmental chemistry, biodiversity, climate change sciences, environmental biotechnology, water pollution, waste management, environmental health, and environmental metrics.

The third field is "economic and social sciences", which focuses on sociology and includes urban sociology, rural sociology, cultural sociology, women's sociology, demography, and internet sociology among others.

The fourth field is "Humanities, Arts, and Literature", which focuses on literature and art in the Arab world. This includes, for example, analytical studies of modern and ancient Arabic literary texts such as poetry, theater, and narratives, literary critical theories, the history of Arabic literature in different eras, the literature of Arab countries, as well as studies in the art of cinema, Arabic music, and visual arts in the Arab world.

The fifth field is "Emerging Interdisciplinary Sciences", which this year focuses on computational biology and its applications. This includes areas such as bioinformatics, biostatistics, and theoretical molecular biology.

KFAS explained that the award conditions include the following:

■ Nominees must be of Arab nationality, with proof of Arab origin through documents such as a birth certificate, Arab passport, or other relevant paperwork submitted with the nomination application.

■ They must not have previously won in any category of the Kuwait Prize.

■ They are allowed to participate in only one category.

■ They must be distinguished researchers in the scientific field of the award and hold a doctorate or fellowship in medical specialties.

■ Nominations are accepted from universities, governmental and civil organizations, previous winners of the award, research and nomination committees, accredited international organizations, and through self-nomination. Nominations from political bodies and entities are not accepted.

■ In the case of self-nomination, the nominee must submit a detailed statement with the nomination request, outlining the justifications for their eligibility. The nomination must be accompanied by letters of recommendation from three individuals affiliated with scientific institutions, confirming the nominee's qualifications for the award.

■ The nominee's scientific production must have been published over the past 20 years in a continuous and innovative manner, with significant relevance to the subject of the award. Scientific production includes research published in peer-reviewed scientific journals, research presented at scientific conferences, authored, translated, edited, and verified books, book chapters, art exhibitions, and artistic works (for the fields of arts and literature), as well as international patents. The research must be published in a major bibliographic database, and the book must have an approved international numbering (ISBN).

Those interested in applying for the award can view the conditions and submit their applications by contacting KFAS via the award's email - kuwaitprize@kfass.org.kw.

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INTERNATIONAL



US Sen Alex Padilla, D-Calif speaks as (from left), Sen Ben Ray Lujan, D-NM, Sen Tim Kaine, D-Va, Sen Chris Van Hollen, D-Md, Sen Jeff Merkley, D-Ore, Sen Sheldon Whitehouse, D-RI, and Sen Patty Murray, D-Wash., listen during a news conference on Russ Vought's nomination at the Capitol in Washington on Jan 30. (AP)

Candidates attack Trump's policies

NJ Dems square off in 1st gubernatorial debate

LAWRENCEVILLE, N.J., Feb 3, (AP): Six New Jersey Democrats, including two sitting members of Congress, the mayors of the state's two biggest cities, the head of the biggest teachers union in the state and a former top lawmaker squared off Sunday in the first debate this year in the contest for governor.

The nearly two-hour debate comes four months ahead of the June primary and coincides with the first year of Donald Trump's second administration, with candidates attacking his policies. It also comes as Gov. Phil Murphy, a two-term Democrat, is barred by term limits from running again.

Newark Mayor Ras Baraka concentrated sharp attacks against Trump's executive orders, particularly on immigration, just days after federal officials arrested people in his city.

"We can't fight extremism with moderation," Baraka said.

The debate covered in-the-weeds state issues, like public school funding and public employee pensions, but also touched on national issues like immigration and transgender rights.

In addition to Baraka, Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop, Reps. Josh Gottheimer and Mikie Sherrill, Sean Spiller of the New Jersey Education Association and former state Senate President Steve Sweeney met on the campus of Rider University for the debate.

A major touchstone was making the state, which has among the highest property taxes in the country, more affordable. Gottheimer talked about getting a larger share of funding from the federal government to help drive down property taxes and make the state more affordable - the No. 1 issue he said he hears about from voters. Sherrill said more affordable housing needs to be built in the state. Sweeney touted his efforts to reimagine school funding from his time in the Legislature. Spiller called for ending "back room" deal-making to make people's voices heard and the state more affordable. Fulop talked about changing the state's highest tax brackets to bring in more revenue for the state budget, which funds things like property tax relief.

The candidates largely agreed that

the state's transit agency, New Jersey Transit, has been a failure and needs to improve.

New Jersey voters sometimes oppose the president's party following a national election year. But Murphy bucked that trend recently when he won a year after Joe Biden.

He succeeded two-term Republican Chris Christie, winning the 2017 election by double digits.

He campaigned as a self-styled progressive, and four years later reprised the role. His two terms have seen a number of significant bills enacted, including legalizing recreational marijuana, fully funding public pensions and a state aid formula for schools that went underfunded in previous years.

Republican gubernatorial candidates are scheduled to debate later this week.

Meanwhile, Democratic Arizona Gov Katie Hobbs renewed a push to regulate groundwater in rural parts of the drought-stricken state, and she's more optimistic this time that her efforts will find support in the Republican-controlled Legislature.

US president wants dramatic change

Trump's second week in office delivers daily dose of deliberate jolts, chaotic orders

WASHINGTON, Feb 3, (AP): US President Donald Trump's second week in office seemed to deliver a daily dose of deliberate jolts for the country.

There were chaotic reminders of his first term. The White House found itself backtracking on its directive to freeze federal spending on grants and loans. And the Republican president indulged unsupported accusations after a deadly plane crash near Washington.

Trump also escalated his moves against the institutions that he was elected to lead. His administration ousted prosecutors who worked on Capitol riot cases and laid the groundwork for purging FBI agents. Elon Musk, Trump's billionaire ally, began efforts to dramatically downsize the federal workforce.

Trump and his team had impressed even some of their critics with a steady stream of executive orders in their first week. The administration seemed better organized and more effective than the last time Trump was president.

But in his second week, Trump's White House stumbled over itself with a confusing memo that was intended to freeze federal funding, causing disruptions and leading to lawsuits. A judge temporarily blocked the directive, and the memo was quickly rescinded. Then, Trump responded to the deadliest American aviation disaster in decades by basellessly blaming diversity initia-

tives, demonstrating his willingness to shoehorn tragedy into his personal political crusades.

The cascade of controversy and outrage recalled some of the more infamous moments of Trump's first term, such as the chaos of his initial travel ban on people from Muslim countries and his freewheeling briefings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout the 2024 campaign, Trump made it clear that he would not settle for making small tweaks in Washington. He wanted dramatic change, particularly in institutions such as the Justice Department that he felt had wronged him over the years.

Once he was back in office, the first step was pardoning nearly everyone charged in the Jan 6, 2021, riot. In the past week his administration went even further. Prosecutors were pushed out, and top FBI officials were ordered to retire or be fired. A senior Justice Department official who previously worked on Trump's legal defense team asked for the names of every FBI agent who worked on Jan. 6 cases.

Other shakeups were reported across the nation's capital. A top Treasury official quit and federal websites were scrubbed of "gender ideology." There appeared to be few, if any, limits to how far Trump and his allies would go to remake Washington.

As Trump deals with various chal-



US President Donald Trump speaks to reporters next to Air Force One after arriving back at Joint Base Andrews, Md on Feb 2. (AP)

enges facing the country, he has repeatedly pointed to efforts to promote diversity, equity and inclusion in society, or DEI, as the root cause of a multitude of problems.

One of Trump's earliest moves upon retaking the Oval Office was to issue orders to undo the federal government's DEI efforts. Trump and his supporters suggested such initiatives are discriminatory and lead to incompetence.

His administration is so intent on

eradicating it from government that it is requiring federal workers to report any surreptitious DEI programs that continue. But he hasn't stopped there.

While investigators were just getting started on investigating the cause of a midair collision near Reagan National Airport between an Army helicopter and a jetliner, Trump began speculating that federal diversity and inclusion efforts were somehow to blame. The president could not back up those claims when re-

peatedly pressed on it by reporters in the White House briefing room.

When asked why he thought diversity had something to do with the crash, he said, "Because I have common sense. OK?"

A day earlier, Trump reprimanded Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell over inflation and again pointed to DEI, saying on his social media network that "if the Fed had spent less time on DEI" and other liberal issues, "inflation would never have been a problem."

Punctuating the week was the Trump administration's first big policy setback: the abrupt freeze, and then unfreezing, of federal grant funds amid a public revolt.

Communities across the nation depend on federal grants and loans to run a vast array of programs and services, from housing and veterans services to community health care centers. The sudden spending "pause" announced in an Office of Management and Budget memo sent shockwaves coast to coast.

"Every corner of the country is feeling the wrath of Donald Trump's cruel plan," said Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York at a news conference at the Capitol.

The memo was rescinded, although the underlying Trump executive orders to clamp down on spending that does not align with his policies on climate, DEI and more do remain. The White

House about-face showed the limits of the administration's broader effort to reduce the size and scope of government.

Rolling back government in the abstract is one thing. But cutting programs that deliver services to veterans, parents, children, older adults and others is a totally different political equation.

Trump campaigned on "dismantling the deep state," and the federal workforce got a large dose this past week of just how disruptive that effort will be.

The new administration had already imposed a federal hiring freeze. Then, millions of federal employees got a "fork in the road" email shortly after business hours ended on Monday offering them eight months of paid leave if they agreed to resign.

Those who quit were promised they would be paid through Sept 30. They would not necessarily be required to work and could seek new employment in the meantime. But there were broad concerns about the legality of the offer and whether Trump was trying to create a toxic work environment.

Employees have to decide whether to take the deal by Thursday. Those who opt to stay will be required to work from the office full time and face "enhanced standards of suitability and conduct." The email also warned that future downsizing of the governmental workforce was likely.

Faced with Trump's threats over Greenland, Denmark's leader seeks support from EU

BRUSSELS, Feb 3, (AP): Denmark's prime minister insisted on Monday that Greenland is not for sale and called for a robust response from her European Union partners should US President Donald Trump press ahead with his threat to take control of the island.

"I will never support the idea of fighting allies. But of course, if the US puts tough terms on Europe, we need a collective and robust response," Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen told reporters in Brussels as EU leaders gathered for defense talks.

Greenland, home to a large US military base, is an autonomous territory of Denmark, a longtime U.S. ally. Last month, Trump left open the possibility that the American military might be used to secure Greenland, as well as the

Panama Canal. "We need Greenland for national security purposes," he said.

Frederiksen said she has "great support" from her EU partners on the fact "that everybody has to respect the sovereignty of all national states in the world, and that Greenland is today a part of the Kingdom of Denmark. It's part of our territory and it's not for sale."

She acknowledged US concerns about security in the Arctic Region, where Russia and China have been increasingly active.

"I totally agree with the Americans that the High North, that the Arctic region is becoming more and more important when we are talking about defense and security and deterrence," Frederiksen said, adding that the U.S. and Denmark could have "stronger footprints"

in Greenland, in security terms.

"They are already there and they can have more possibilities," she said, underlining that Denmark itself can also "scale up" its security presence. "If this is about securing our part of the world, we can find a way forward," Frederiksen said.

Last week, her government announced a roughly 14.6 billion kroner (nearly \$2 billion) agreement with parties including the governments of Greenland and the Faeroe Islands to "improve capabilities for surveillance and maintaining sovereignty in the region."

It would include three new Arctic naval vessels, two additional long-range surveillance drones and satellite capacity, the Defense Ministry in Copenhagen said.

Frederiksen's remarks came as EU leaders met for defense talks but with no clear sign yet from Trump about how he intends to try to end Russia's war on Ukraine. The Europeans fear that any attempt to pull together a quick deal would not be favorable to Ukraine.

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte were set to join the bloc's 27 leaders at a self-styled "retreat" at Egmont Place in the Belgian capital. The summit agenda focuses on EU-US cooperation, military spending and ramping up Europe's defense industry.

The meeting comes as Europe's biggest land conflict since World War II approaches its third anniversary, and with confidence in Trump shaky as he threatens his allies with tariffs. Trump already slapped duties on European steel and aluminum during his first term.

doors and a damaged ceiling. It didn't say what caused the blast, but the state news agency Tass cited an unidentified law enforcement source as saying a bomb was planted in the building.

The Investigative Committee said it opened a criminal inquiry on charges of murder by means injurious to the public, attempted murder of two or more people and arms trafficking.

Tass and the RIA Novosti news agency, both citing a law enforcement source, identified one of the dead as Armen Sarkisyan, the founder of a volunteer battalion fighting in Ukraine who also heads a boxing federation in the Russian-controlled Donetsk region. Both agencies said he died in the hospital.

Tass also reported that Sarkisyan's bodyguard was killed by the blast.

Officials initially reported that the blast killed one and injured four, but later said one of them died in the hospital. Three others remain hospitalized. (AP)



Belgium's King Philippe, (center front), and new Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever, (front center left), pose with ministers after a swearing in ceremony for the new government at the Royal Palace in Brussels on Feb 3. (AP)

'Govt will clean up the budget'

De Wever sworn in as Belgian prime minister

BRUSSELS, Feb 3, (AP): Belgium has a new prime minister whose political purpose was long to break up the nation, gut the state structures and give ever more autonomy to his northern Flanders at the cost of everyone else.

Bart De Wever took the oath early Monday, looking straight at King Philippe, the latest monarch of a royal house he so long had little but disdain for because it symbolized the old concept of Belgian unity.

"I swear allegiance to the king," he said.

It was another indication how times change, and bold demands for Flemish independence have made room for the hope of gradual change and finding a renewed balance between Dutch-speaking Flanders, with 6.7 million people, francophone Wallonia, with 3.7 million, and multilingual Brussels, with 1.2 million.

The prime minister and leading ministers took the oath in Dutch and French while several others on the 15-member team from both sides of the linguistic divide stuck to their own language during a short ceremony at the Royal Palace.

"You can ... not take part in a government and wait until the system can be taken as a whole. I never be-

lieved in that," he told De Standard newspaper. "The other option is to take part when you can, and obtain things for your community, and that is what we did."

"When you don't take part, you are certainly left emptyhanded," he added.

Language issues are woven throughout the past century, as the French-dominated nation gradually made way for a balanced political scene while Wallonia's industrial prowess waned and Flanders' economic power rose.

De Wever of the Flemish nationalist N-VA party succeeds Alexander De Croo, who has remained in office as a caretaker since the June elections last year. De Wever will join his fellow European Union leaders at a summit in Brussels later Monday.

"We will have a government that will clean up the budget, implement a fair social policy, reward work, implement the strictest migration policy ever, abolish the nuclear phase-out, and invest in safety," N-VA said in a statement.

One issue immediately stood out - gender balance. When De Croo had achieved quasi parity between men and women on his team, De Wever only has three women on his team

of 15, and none among the four vice premiers. He has said he regrets it, but never made it a key point in the coalition talks.

De Wever brought an eclectic mix of five parties together to break a 7-month deadlock in coalition talks. The Flemish nationalist was only given a shot at successfully brokering a coalition because the PS socialists, De Wever's political nemesis, lost their generations-long grip on Wallonia. It allowed him to get a deal with a free-market MR party.

In Flanders, the Vooruit socialist party will have to make sure the cornerstones of Belgium's welfare society survive. The government program is set to cut social benefits in an attempt to tackle the nation's debt-burdened budget. Overall, the nation has debt totaling just over 100% of GDP, putting it among the worst in the 27-nation EU.

With Vooruit on board, the francophone MR liberals, the centrist CD&V and Engages and the N-VA complete the coalition, controlling 81 of 150 seats in the House for a comfortable majority.

The length of coalition talks highlighted however how difficult it was to bridge fundamental gaps between the different parties.

Europe

Crews deployed on Santorini:

Schools were closed and emergency crews deployed on the volcanic Greek island of Santorini on Monday after a spike in seismic activity raised concerns about a potentially powerful earthquake.

Precautions were also ordered on several nearby Aegean Sea islands — all popular summer vacation destinations — after more than 200 undersea earthquakes were recorded in the area over the past three days.

"We have a very intense geological phenomenon to handle," Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said from Brussels, where he was attending a European meeting. "I want to ask our islanders first and foremost to remain calm, to listen to the instructions of the Civil Protection (authority)."

Mobile phones on the island blared with alert warnings about the potential for rock slides, while several earthquakes caused loud rumbles. (AP)

Moscow blast kills 2: An explosion rocked an upscale residential block in Moscow early Monday, killing two people — including the founder of a battalion that battled Kyiv's forces in eastern Ukraine — and injuring three others, Russian authorities and news reports said.

Footage released by Russia's Investigative Committee showed a building lobby with shattered glass



Sarkisyan

Pyongyang unlikely to embrace Trump's overture soon

N.Korea slams Rubio for calling it 'rogue' state in 1st direct criticism of Trump govt

SEOUL, South Korea, Feb 3, (AP): In its first direct criticism of the Trump administration, North Korea lashed out at US Secretary of State Marco Rubio for calling it a "rogue" state and warned Monday that such "coarse and nonsensical remarks" will never contribute to US interests.

The statement is the latest in a series of North Korean signals that it's not interested in resuming diplomacy with the United States anytime soon, though Trump has said he'll reach out to its leader Kim Jong Un.

Many experts say that Kim, preoccupied with his deployment of troops to Russia, is likely concentrating on developments in the Russia-Ukraine war for now. But they say Kim would eventually seriously consider Trump's overture if he assessed he cannot maintain the current solid partnership with Russia after the war ends.

"Now, Kim Jong Un is desperate to maintain the unshakable alliance with Russia but it remains to be seen whether Russia would do so as he wishes,"



In this June 30, 2019 file photo, US President Donald Trump meets with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at the border village of Panmunjom in the Demilitarized Zone, South Korea. (AP)

said Moon Seong Mook, an analyst for the Seoul-based Korea Research Institute for National Strategy.

During his first term, Trump met Kim three times in 2018-19, becoming the first sitting US president to hold a

summit with a North Korean leader. The negotiations over North Korea's nuclear program eventually fell apart, but Trump's return spawned speculation that a fresh round of talks could begin soon.

On his inauguration day, Trump, speaking to US troops in South Korea via video, bragged of his personal ties with Kim.

"You have somebody with pretty bad intentions, I guess," Trump said. "You would say that although I developed a pretty good relationship with him but he's a tough cookie."

During a Fox News interview broadcast on Jan 23, Trump called Kim "a smart guy". Asked whether he will reach out to Kim again, Trump replied, "I will, yeah."

North Korea hasn't directly responded to Trump's overture but has pressed ahead with its weapons testing activities and bellicose rhetoric against the US. In December, Kim vowed to implement the "toughest" anti-US policy.

Kim likely doubts what concessions he could wrest from Trump, given their previous talks collapsed in Vietnam after the American president rebuffed Kim's offer to dismantle his main nuclear complex, a limited denuclearization step, in return for broad sanctions relief. The breakdown was probably a setback for Kim domestically though the summits provided him with the badly needed diplomatic recognition on the world stage.

"Kim personally suffered huge humiliation due to a no-deal in Hanoi," said Kwak Gil Sup, head of One Korea Centre, a website specializing in North Korea affairs. "I don't think he would promptly respond to Trump's overture."

Kim said in November that the negotiations with the United States only confirmed Washington's "unchangeable" hostility toward his country and described his nuclear buildup as the only way to counter external threats. Kwak said North Korea will still likely avoid high-profile provocations like a

nuclear test, knowing that Trump focuses more on other issues like tariff wars and China.

On Monday, North Korea's Foreign Ministry said that Rubio's comments reaffirmed that the US hostile policy remains unchanged. It likely referred to Rubio's appearance on "The Megyn Kelly Show" on Jan 30, in which he called North Korea and Iran "rogue states" while addressing foreign policy challenges.

Kim's priority seems to be an estimated 10,000-12,000 North Korean troops sent to support Russia's three-year war efforts against Ukraine, the North's first major participation in a foreign war. North Korea has supplied a vast amount of artillery and other conventional weapons to Russia as well.

In return, North Korea appears to be receiving economic and military assistance from Russia. Last June, Kim and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a landmark pact vowing mutual military assistance if either country is attacked.

Asia

Severe flooding in Australia:

Thousands of people have been evacuated from their homes amid widespread severe flooding in northern Australia.

Authorities in the northeastern state of Queensland on Monday warned residents of the state's tropical north to expect further flooding following days of torrential rainfall.

Thousands of people have been ordered to evacuate from the city of Townsville, over 1,000 km north of the state capital of Brisbane, and from surrounding towns.

The region has received over one meter of rainfall over three days, with up to 300 millimeters forecast for Monday by the Bureau of Meteorology.

State Premier David Crisafulli said on Monday morning that modelling shows the flooding has not yet peaked, urging residents of a stretch of coast over 600 km long between the cities of Mackay and Cairns to take heed of emergency warnings. (Xinhua)

The Mayor of Hinchinbrook town, **Ramon Jayo**, told Australian Broadcasting Corporation television that the collapse was a "disaster" for the town, which will likely rely on supplies arriving by helicopter as



Jayo

it faces its worst flooding since the 1960s. (Xinhua)

Heavy snow in Japan: A strong winter pressure pattern and the season's most intense cold air mass are set to bring heavy snow and strong winds to areas along the Sea of Japan starting Tuesday, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA).

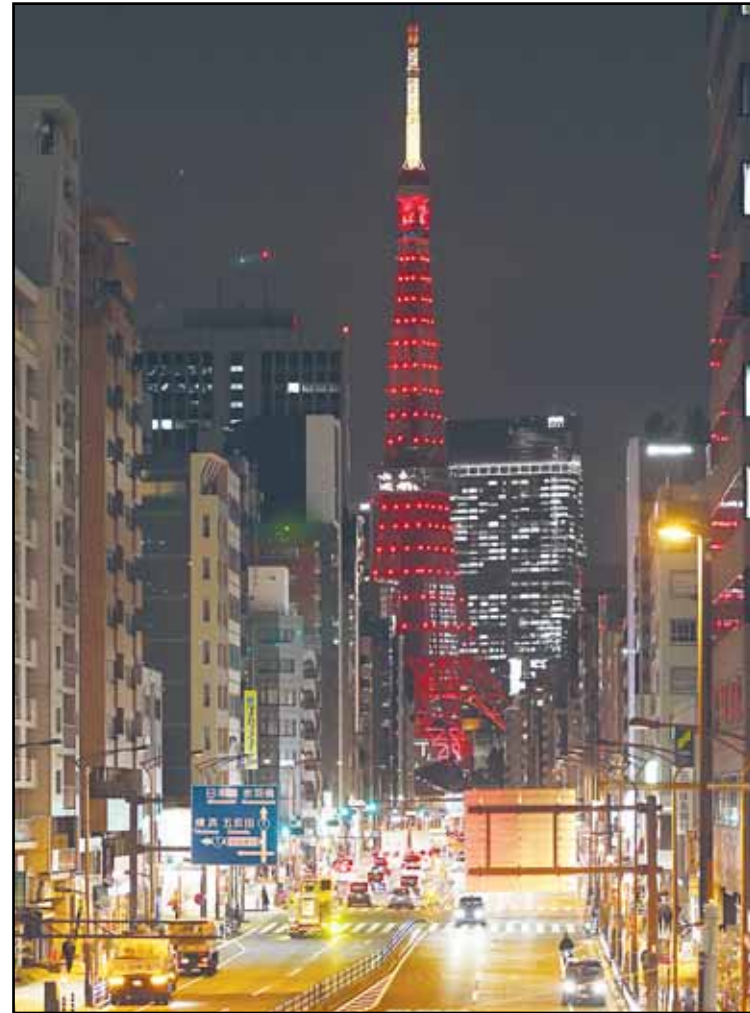
In the 24 hours leading up to Tuesday morning, heavy snow is expected, with up to 50 cm in Hokkaido, 40 cm in Hokuriku, 30 cm in Tohoku, 25 cm in Gifu Prefecture, 20 cm in Kinki, Chugoku, and Niigata Prefecture, and 10 cm in northern Kyushu.

By the morning of Feb. 5, snowfall will further increase, reaching 70 cm in Tohoku, Hokuriku, Niigata, and Gifu, 50 cm in Hokkaido, Kinki, and Chugoku, 20 cm in Shikoku and northern Kyushu, and 15 cm in southern Kyushu. (Xinhua)

Indonesia flash floods kill 1: Flash floods hitting Indonesia's West Nusa Tenggara province on Sunday afternoon left at least one person dead and seven others missing, a rescuer said on Monday morning.

The natural disaster struck Wera sub-district of Bima regency, sweeping away seven houses, collapsing one bridge, and cutting off electricity, said Saidar Rahmanjaya, head of the operational unit of the provincial search and rescue office.

"One woman was found dead in Wora village of Wera sub-district this morning. Our search and rescue mission targets seven people who were reported missing," Rahmanjaya told Xinhua over the phone. (Xinhua)



This photo taken on Jan 28, 2025 shows the Tokyo Tower illuminated in festive red to celebrate the Chinese New Year, an annual event that has been running since 2019 to promote cultural exchanges, in Tokyo, Japan. (Xinhua)

Guinea-Bissau seeks stronger media cooperation with China

BISSAU, Feb 3, (Xinhua): Guinea-Bissau looks forward to deepening cooperation with China to advance its media industry and amplify its voice on the global stage, Amadu Djamanca, director general of Guinea-Bissau National Television, has said.

China actively promotes African voices on the global landscape, providing African media outlets with opportunities to share their narratives, Djamanca said in a recent, exclusive interview with Xinhua in the capital, Bissau.

He expressed the hope to strengthen bilateral cooperation through content-sharing and personnel training, leveraging China's experience to boost the capacity of Guinea-Bissau's media professionals.

Establishing long-term partnerships with Chinese media outlets would help Guinea-Bissau showcase its culture on a broader stage, and enable more Chinese audiences to learn about the country's stories, Djamanca said.

He said that, unlike some Western countries that attempt to impose their values on Africa, China takes a fundamentally different approach. Beijing respects the sovereignty of African nations, upholds the principle of mutual benefit, and does not attach any political conditions.

Djamanca, who visited China



Amadu Djamanca, director general of Guinea-Bissau National Television, speaks in an exclusive interview with Xinhua in Bissau, Guinea-Bissau on Jan 28. (Xinhua)

in 2024, said: "China's infrastructure, technological innovation, and urban development are truly impressive."

"That visit was a great inspiration to me, reinforcing my belief that Guinea-Bissau has the full potential to achieve prosperity, and China's experience provides valuable lessons for us," he said.

Djamanca highlighted China's longstanding commitment to supporting Guinea-Bissau's development, offering assistance in critical sectors such as infrastructure and agriculture.



South Africans cheer ahead of the inauguration of South Africa's Cyril Ramaphosa as President at the Union Buildings South Lawns in Pretoria, South Africa on June 19, 2024. (AP)

Musk criticizes country

Trump plans to cut US funding to S.Africa

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Feb 3, (AP): US President Donald Trump has said he will cut all funding to South Africa and has launched an investigation into the country's policies, claiming that a "massive" human rights violation against white people is happening over a new land expropriation law.

Trump made the pledge to stop all future funding on his Truth Social platform on Sunday, writing: "South Africa is confiscating land, and treating certain classes of people VERY BADLY."

In South Africa, Trump wrote, a "massive Human Rights VIOLATION, at a minimum, is happening for all to see," without giving details or providing evidence.

"The United States won't stand for it, we will act," Trump added. "Also, I will be cutting off all future funding to South Africa until a full investigation of this situation has been completed!"

The South African government said Monday that the Trump administration needed to have a better understanding of the new law, which is meant to help redress the impact of decades of white minority rule in South Africa under the apartheid regime, which ended in 1994. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said in a statement that "the South African government has not confiscated any land."

No significant action has been taken since the bill was signed into law.

During the apartheid era, land was

taken from South Africa's Black majority, who were forced to live in areas designated for Blacks only. The law has been debated and considered for years as a means, according to the government, to right historic wrongs.

Elon Musk, who is one of Trump's close allies, was born and raised in South Africa and has also targeted Ramaphosa's government, previously accusing it of being anti-white and claiming in 2023 that it was allowing a "genocide" against white farmers.

Experts in South Africa say that while there are cases of white farmers being killed, it's rather a reflection of the country's desperately high levels of violent crime across the board, which are some of the worst in the world.

In comments to reporters, Trump said Sunday "they're taking away land, they're confiscating land and actually they're doing things that are perhaps far worse than that."

Trump didn't say exactly which policy he was referring to, or which people were being mistreated. But his comments appeared to be in reaction to the new land law that South Africa passed last month that gives the government scope to acquire land from private parties if it's in the public interest.

The law has been criticized by some interest groups in South Africa as opening the way to seize land from some of the country's white minority. However, the government says people's rights are

still protected and land can only be taken in specific circumstances where it's not being used productively and it's in the public interest that the land is redistributed. The race of the land owner isn't a factor.

Ramaphosa's office released a statement Monday, saying: "The recently adopted Expropriation Act is not a confiscation instrument, but a constitutionally mandated legal process that ensures public access to land in an equitable and just manner as guided by the constitution."

"South Africa, like the United States of America and other countries, has always had expropriation laws that balance the need for public usage of land and the protection of rights of property owners."

South African Foreign Minister Ronald Lamola said that the Trump administration should use the investigation it says it is launching "to deepen their understanding of South Africa's policies as a constitutional democracy. Such insights will ensure a respectful and informed approach to our democratic commitments."

South Africa is a major beneficiary of US funding under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, which contributes around \$400 million a year to the country's HIV/AIDS program. That funding was already under threat after Trump's freeze on foreign aid across the world.

'Panama must reduce Chinese influence around canal or face possible US action'

PANAMA CITY, Feb 3, (AP): US Secretary of State Marco Rubio brought a warning to Panamanian leader José Raúl Mulino on Sunday: Immediately reduce what President Donald Trump says is Chinese influence over the Panama Canal area or face potential retaliation from the United States.

Rubio, traveling to the Central American country and touring the Panama Canal on his first foreign trip as top US diplomat, held face-to-face talks with Mulino, who has resisted pressure from the new US government over management of a waterway that is vital to global trade.

Mulino told reporters after the meeting that Rubio made "no real threat of retaking the canal or the use of force."

Speaking on behalf of Trump, who has demanded that the canal be returned to US control, Rubio told Mulino that China's presence in the canal area may violate a treaty that led the United States to turn the waterway over to Panama in 1999. That treaty calls for the permanent neutrality of the American-built canal.

"Secretary Rubio made clear that this status quo is unacceptable and that absent immediate changes, it would require the United States to take measures necessary to protect its rights un-



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, (left), and Panama Canal Authority Administrator Ricardo Vásquez shake hands after touring the Miraflores Locks at the canal in Panama City on Feb 2. (AP)

der the treaty," the State Department said in a summary of the meeting.

The statement was unusually blunt in diplomatic terms, but in keeping with the tenor and tone Trump has set for foreign policy. Trump has been increasing pressure on Washington's neighbors and allies, including the canal demand and announcing Saturday

that he was imposing major tariffs on Canada and Mexico. That launched a trade war by prompting retaliation from those close allies.

Mulino, meanwhile, called his talks with Rubio "respectful" and "positive" and said he did not "feel like there's a real threat against the treaty and its validity."

Uruguay's president-elect won't live in 3-story presidential palace, like Mujica

MONTEVIDEO, Feb 3, (AP): Uruguay's president-elect Yamandú Orsi has turned down the luxuries of the official presidential residence and will instead continue to live with his family in a modest beachside town outside of the capital Montevideo.

"We resolved some things like staying there in Salinas; my children are going through another stage, which is secondary education, and they are going to do it there," the left-wing politician told journalists late on Saturday in remarks that were made public Sunday.

Salinas is 38 kilometers (24 miles) to the east of Montevideo. Orsi, who will take office on Mar. 1, said he and his family would often have to stay in the capital.

The decision echoed the one taken by former President José Mujica at his inauguration on Mar. 1, 2010. Mujica also refused to reside in the three-story Suarez palace, complete with a rose garden, a pond, a swimming pool, a sports court and a barbecue. He stayed on his farm in Cerro, on the outskirts of Montevideo, where he still lives.

The personal residence of Mujica



Uruguay President-elect Yamandú Orsi attends a press conference after meeting with current President Luis Lacalle Pou in Montevideo, Uruguay on Nov 27, 2024. (AP)

and his wife and former vice-president, Lucía Topolansky, had to be remodeled and security cameras and escape routes added, among other changes.

Other presidents such as Tabaré

Vázquez (2005-2010 and 2015-2020) and Oscar Gestido (1967) also refused to live in the official residence, located in the upscale Prado neighborhood.

CBK Bonds, related Tawarruq

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3; The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK Bonds and related Tawarruq at a total value of KWD (200) million for three months with Rate of Return (4.125%).

Main 50 index drops 36.68 points

Boursa Kuwait closes higher, general index up 30.98 points

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (Agencies): Boursa Kuwait closed Monday's trading session with its general index rising 30.98 points, or 0.40%, to 7,854.96 points.

A total of 592.5 million shares were traded through 24,893 transactions, with a total value of 140.5 million dinars (approximately \$432.7 million).

The Main Market Index declined by 48.28 points, or 0.66%, to 7,212.56 points, with 397 million shares changing hands through 13,046 transactions worth 64.5 million dinars (about \$198.6 million).

Meanwhile, the Premier Market Index gained 53.48 points, or 0.64%, reaching 8,404.56 points, as 195.4 million shares were traded through 11,847 transactions totaling 75.9 million dinars (approximately \$233.7 million).

The Main 50 Index also saw a decline, dropping 36.68 points, or 0.50%, to 7,244.47 points, with 325.4 million shares traded across 7,920 transactions, amounting to 54.14 million dinars (about \$166.7 million).

Boursa Kuwait started February on a positive note, with collective gains across all market indices.

On Sunday, the Main Market Index rose by 4.19 points, or 0.06 percent, reaching 7,260 points, with liquidity totaling 55.11 million dinars and a trading volume of 384.6 million shares through 12,465 transactions.

The General Market Index also saw an increase of 39.31 points, or 0.50 percent, reaching 7,823 points, with

liquidity of 110.2 million dinars and a trading volume of 546.8 million shares through 20,311 transactions.

Selective buying was observed in the Premier Market, where the index gained 50.51 points, or 0.61 percent, to close at 8,351 points.

The liquidity in the Premier Market stood at 55.11 million dinars, with a trading volume of 162.1 million shares and 7,846 transactions.

Notably, five companies in the Main Market accounted for 69 percent of the total liquidity, with a combined value of 38 million dinars.

This contributed to a market value gain of 232.6 million dinars, bringing the market's total value to 46.306 billion dinars, up from 46.074 billion at the end of January.

During the session, 132 stocks were traded, with 69 companies seeing price increases, 47 companies experiencing declines, and 16 companies' prices remaining stable.

The industry and real estate sectors led the weighted indices with a 0.92 percent rise, while the consumer goods and energy sectors saw declines of 1.89 percent and 1.14 percent, respectively.

In terms of the most traded stocks, Business City led with a trading value of 15.05 million dinars, followed by Oula Fuel, Arzan, Baytak, and Kuwait Real Estate. Al-Bayt experienced the highest increase, up 15.03 percent, while Wataniya D.Q. saw the most significant decline, dropping by 11.25 percent.

'Kuwait-UAE' trade exchange sees remarkable growth, says Al-Najem

DUBAI, Feb 3, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ziad Al-Najem, praised on Monday deep-seated relations with the United Arab Emirates, especially in the political, economic and cultural aspects, as it is an example of cooperation and development among Arab countries.

This came in his speech on behalf of Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel in the opening of the Kuwaiti-Emirati week in Dubai.

"The UAE is one of Kuwait's largest trading partners in the world and the largest in the Arab world, after the trade exchange movement between the two countries witnessed remarkable growth in recent years," he said.

"The private sector in Kuwait sought to invest in emerging opportunities in the UAE market, especially in the fields of real estate, services, financial investments and tourism, and this resulted in the establishment of the first Kuwaiti business council in the region under the umbrella of the Dubai Chamber nine years ago," he noted.

He pointed out to the bilateral agreements between the two countries in several fields, including communications, cybersecurity and information technology, as well as the agreement to prevent double taxation to facilitate the movement of goods, services and capital between the two countries and enhance the ability of local companies to compete in the two markets.

Al-Najem expressed his confidence in the future of economic relations between Kuwait and the UAE, including promising and bright prospects that

guarantee prosperity and development for all in the Arabian Gulf region.

On his part, Chairman of the Kuwait Banking Association Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Al-Sabah highlighted numerous promising opportunities for cooperation between the banking sectors of Kuwait and the UAE.

He emphasized that both countries could collaborate on joint financing for investment projects, develop renewable energy initiatives, exchange expertise and talent, promote sustainable development, and leverage digital transformation and innovation experiences.

Sheikh Ahmed underlined the pivotal role of Kuwait's banking sector in fostering financial stability and driving economic growth. He attributed this to the sector's strength, resilience, solid capital reserves, high liquidity, and low levels of non-performing loans. These factors, he noted, reflect the prudent regulatory framework of the Central Bank of Kuwait and effective risk management strategies that have enabled the sector to navigate economic shocks and crises successfully.

Sheikh Ahmed Al-Sabah pointed out that over the course of 10 years, the volume of trade exchange between the two countries witnessed significant growth, as the total trade exchange amounted to about AED 317 billion between 2013 and 2022 (about KD 26.6 billion), while the volume of non-oil trade exchange between the two countries in 2023 reached about AED 45 billion (about KD 3.8 billion), compared to AED 44.1 billion in 2022 (about KD 3.7 billion).

Business



Arab Competition Conference held in Kuwait under Minister's patronage.

CPA signs cooperation agreement with Saudi's Competition Authority

Arab Competition Network Conference held in Kuwait

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Competition Protection Agency (CPA) signed a cooperation agreement with Saudi Arabia's Public Authority for Competition to exchange expertise, conduct joint studies, and provide training in the field of competition protection. The agreement was signed on the sidelines of the Fourth Arab Competition Network Conference, which was hosted by Kuwait Monday under the patronage of the Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel.

In his speech during the conference, Chair of CPA Rashid Al-Ajmi explained that free and fair competition is a fundamental pillar of any economy. It drives innovation, improves the quality of products and services, and enhances societal welfare. He affirmed that the partnership between Arab competition protection agencies is vital to achieving common goals.

Al-Ajmi stressed that the one-day conference was designed to facilitate



Kuwaiti CPA signs cooperation deal with Saudi Arabia's Public Authority for Competition. Photos by Samer Shiger

the exchange of expertise, discuss international best practices, and deal with the challenges faced by competition protection efforts in the region.

He expressed his hope for collaborative strategies that will support greater coordination among Arab countries, contributing to a more open and prosperous economic environment.

He also stressed that hosting the conference affirms Kuwait's commitment to supporting regional efforts aimed at enhancing a fair competitive environment that benefits both national and regional economies.

Meanwhile, Chair of the Arab Competition Network and CEO of the Saudi General Authority for Competition Dr. Fahad Al-Shathri stated in his speech

that the global economy is undergoing rapid developments in several sectors. These changes require competition authorities to address them in a balanced manner to ensure the effectiveness of competition systems.

He highlighted several challenges faced by competition authorities, such as the growing role of digital transformation in enhancing the competitiveness of businesses, the ease of market entry, and the increasing diversity of goods and services.

Al-Shathri affirmed the importance of countries adopting industrial policies to support local industries and boost their competitiveness.

He explained that the Arab world offers many promising economic op-

portunities that can be unlocked by strengthening fair competition policies and improving the business environment. However, this requires collaborative efforts, the exchange of knowledge, and the adoption of leading international practices.

In addition, Director of the Arab Economic Integration Department at the League of Arab States Dr. Ahmed Jameel said developing competition policies in Arab countries is a fundamental pillar for achieving sustainable Arab economic integration and the success of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area.

He affirmed that fair competition not only improves the business environment but also plays a major role in enhancing economic efficiency, stimulating innovation, and attracting investments in a way that benefits Arab economies.

Dr. Jameel explained that the Arab Competition Network has become a model for enhancing Arab cooperation. Since its establishment, the network has successfully created an effective platform for exchanging expertise, supporting capacity building, and enhancing coordination between Arab competition authorities.

He commended the growing role of the Arab Competition Network Awards, which have become a driving force for encouraging innovation and excellence in competition policies.

Dr. Jameel said these awards help in disseminating best practices and motivating relevant parties to adopt policies and procedures that enhance fair competition.

China's weak economic activity weighs on global oil demand

Oil prices firm in Q4 2024 on OPEC+ cuts extension, 2025 outlook remains soft

By National Bank of Kuwait

Oil prices fell in 2024, weighed down by concerns over the robustness of global oil demand growth amid weak economic activity in China especially and burgeoning non-OPEC+ supply led by output gains in the Americas. Prices were rangebound in Q4, with the impact of geopolitical catalysts largely neutered by ample OPEC+ spare production capacity due to the group's production cuts. The IEA expects oil demand growth to accelerate slightly in 2025 to just over 1 mb/d as sentiment has turned a little more positive about the macroeconomic landscape, though these small demand gains are unlikely to offset gains on the supply side. The supply overhang has been partly mitigated by OPEC+'s decision to delay and slow down the pace of supply cut unwinding but, at 0.7 mb/d (IEA), is still expected to lead to inventory builds and downward pressure on prices. That said, new US sanctions on Russia, which lifted oil prices in January, and the prospect of further sanctions on Iran as the Trump Administration has indicated, could provide some upside risk to the oil outlook.

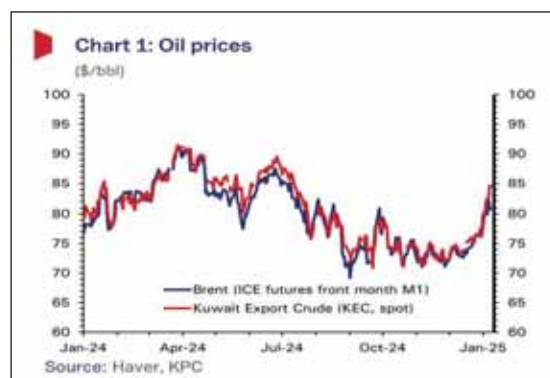
Markets

OPEC output hike delay drives prices higher; US sanctions on Russian energy bolster price rally

Oil prices rose in Q4 2024, lifted by OPEC+'s decision to both delay and slow the pace of unwinding of members' voluntary production cuts, which helped to partly mitigate concerns of an oversupplied market in 2025. International benchmark Brent crude closed up 4% q/q in December to \$74.6/bbl. (Chart 1.) Brent briefly traded above \$80/bbl as heightened tensions between Iran and Israel spilled over into direct but limited military strikes. Local crude marker Kuwait Export Crude (KEC) gained 2% q/q to close at \$75.8/bbl.

2024 was the second consecutive year that oil prices declined, with Brent shedding 3.1% and KEC dropping 4.8% over oil demand growth worries, especially amid weak economic activity and shifting oil consumption patterns in China. 2024 also witnessed a significant decline in oil price volatility, with Brent trading in a narrow \$22/bbl range during the year. This reflected the absence of major catalysts and the weaker passthrough onto oil prices of supply-disrupting geopolitical developments, the impact of which has been mitigated by ample global spare production capacity due to OPEC+ supply cuts.

Brent futures continued to rise in the new year, surging past \$80/bbl after the US introduced more wide rang-



ing sanctions on the Russian oil and gas sector, targeting producers, tankers, intermediaries, traders, and ports. The surprise announcement led to some Chinese ports banning sanctioned Russian vessels, leaving buyers of Russian crude in Asia scrambling to find alternatives. Moreover, fears of more strictly enforced sanctions on Iran by the Trump administration has stoked supply worries in 2025. Lastly, a cold snap in North America and Europe raised demand for heating oil, supporting prices.

Hedge funds added to bullish bets in Q4

After turning net bearish on Brent for the first time on record in September amid oversupply concerns, money market positioning shifted back into net bullish territory as the year drew to a close. International Commodities Exchange (ICE) figures showed that in the week ending 14 January 2025, speculative net length – the difference between the volume of 'long' contracts (bets on prices rising) and the volume of 'short' contracts (bets on prices falling) – reached its highest since May 2024 (226,859 lots). (Chart 2). Meanwhile, trading activity, measured by open interest, or the number of outstanding futures and options contracts, fell to 3 million contracts in January, from a 2024 peak of 3.3 million contracts last October amid heightened geopolitical risk in the Middle East.

Demand

Global oil demand growth in 2024 undershot expectations; outlook improves on economic activity

Oil demand growth estimates for Q4 2024 proved stronger than initially expected, with consumption boosted by lower



fuel prices and a cold snap that hit economies in the Northern Hemisphere. The International Energy Agency (IEA) pegs annual oil demand growth in Q4 at 1.5 mb/d, raising the overall 2024 estimate to 0.94 mb/d from 0.85 mb/d. OPEC, on the other hand, appears to have settled on a demand growth figure of 1.5 mb/d for 2024, according to its January 2025 oil market report, having revised down its forecasts by a whopping 750 kb/d over six consecutive months. Less than stellar oil consumption in China caught OPEC and many others by surprise. Indeed, the most recent official figures show that China's crude oil imports fell by 1.9% in 2024, the first non-pandemic-related annual decline in two decades. Transportation fuel use was especially hit amid increasing electric vehicle penetration and substitution of oil for LNG in heavy duty road vehicles.

For next year, the IEA sees oil demand growth increasing slightly by 1.05 mb/d amid an improved macroeconomic outlook. This is in line with the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) recent January 2025 update, which sees growth this year at an upwardly revised 3.3%. OPEC, for its part, sees oil demand growing by 1.45 mb/d this year, a forecast that once again puts it at the more bullish end of estimates. Both agencies agree that non-OECD economies will be the main driver of oil demand growth this year, with OPEC seeing a rise in transportation fuels in China, India and Asia more broadly. This trend is set to continue into next year, according to OPEC. In a first look at 2026, the producer bloc forecasts a similarly robust rate of growth for global oil demand (+1.4 mb/d/y/y) with non-OECD countries accounting for 1.3 mb/d.

Supply

OPEC+ extends voluntary cuts to end-March 2025 and plans to restore output at a slower pace

Faced with the prospect of looser market fundamentals, OPEC+ decided in December 2024 to extend the 2.2 mb/d of "Group of Eight" voluntary cuts by three months to end-March 2025. Furthermore, supply will also be restored to the market at a slower pace than originally planned, at 135 kb/d rather than 180 kb/d, thereby extending the tapering process phase by six-months to September 2026. The UAE's 300 kb/d baseline increase, initially scheduled to start in January 2025 over a nine-month period, will now also be pushed back to April and implemented over an 18-month period instead. According to OPEC secondary sources, Declaration of Cooperation (DoC) crude production (OPEC+) fell by 15 kb/d m/m in December to 40.7 mb/d. (Chart 5). Leading the gains was Libya where output rose 52 kb/d m/m to 1.29 mb/d, the highest since May 2013, as the government looked to restore and boost production capacity to 1.6 mb/d. Offsetting the gains were declines in the UAE (-44 kb/d), Kazakhstan (-35 kb/d), Saudi Arabia (-24 kb/d), and Iraq (-23 kb/d). Kazakhstan has made more headway in complying with its quota than Iraq, with the former's output only 6 kb/d above quota while the latter is still exceeding its level by 129 kb/d.

In the US, crude production rose to a record 13.57 mb/d by end-December, according to weekly data published by the Energy Information Administration (EIA). The EIA estimates output gains in 2025 to be modest, with crude production rising 340 kb/d to 13.62 mb/d (year average), factoring in limited impact of Trump's "drill, baby, drill" policies. Meanwhile, the outlook for non-DoC supply remains significantly more robust, with the IEA projecting a 1.5 mb/d increase in 2025, which would comfortably outpace estimated demand growth regardless of OPEC policy and lead to a supply surplus and inventory builds. OPEC's estimates reveal a similarly strong non-DoC supply growth outlook for both 2025 and 2026 at 1.2 mb/d, led by higher output in the Americas.

Following the latest round of US sanctions on the Russian energy sector and in view of the prospect of additional or stricter enforcement of current sanctions on Iranian oil supplies, the market could tighten and provide OPEC+ with a window to maintain or accelerate its current supply cut tapering plans. The IEA estimates that around 1.6 mb/d of Russian seaborne exports could be at risk from the recent US sanctions, enough to offset the supply surplus expected this year.

Engaging with Kuwaiti youth and investing in their digital capabilities

Zain main partner of 'Souq Al-Mubarakiya 2' in Manchester, UK

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Zain has announced its partnership with the second edition of Souq Al-Mubarakiya, a unique event held in Manchester, United Kingdom, under the patronage of the Embassy of Kuwait to the United Kingdom. The event is a prelude to the upcoming Kuwait 64th National Day and 34th Liberation Day celebrations.

Organized by Youthvent, the event attracted a large turnout of Kuwaiti students, their families, and Kuwaiti nationals residing in the UK. Zain had a strong presence at the event, with the attendance of Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO, along with Nawaf Al-Gharabally, CEO of Zain Kuwait, and several company executives. The leadership's participation reaffirmed Zain's ongoing commitment to supporting and engaging with Kuwaiti students abroad while contributing to national initiatives that strengthen the sense of belonging and cultural identity.

Bader Al-Kharafi stated: "This remarkable event unites us under the banner of patriotism and national pride. Kuwaiti students abroad are ambassadors for their nation, and the skills they acquire today will shape Kuwait's future. It is a responsibility they carry alongside their pursuit of knowledge and education."

He added: "We live in an era driven by technology, where rapid advancements—particularly in artificial intelligence—are reshaping the world. Technology is no longer a luxury or an option; it is a necessity for building a strong and prosperous future. Today, our country needs creative minds capable of leveraging these tools with intelligence and responsibility."

Emphasizing the importance of staying connected to one's roots, Al-Kharafi addressed Kuwaiti youth abroad saying: "Beyond academic and technological advancements, maintaining a strong connection to your Kuwaiti community is equally vital. Being abroad should never mean losing touch with your heritage; rather, you must stay close to one



Bader Al-Kharafi and Nawaf Al-Gharabally with Zain executives and the event's organizers.

another, exchange ideas, support each other, and work together to present a positive image of Kuwait. This is the core purpose of this event, and Zain is proud to be present with you in your journey abroad and to reaffirm that we stand with you, support you, and take pride in your achievements." He further stated: "At Zain, our role as a leader in tech-

nological innovation goes beyond providing digital solutions. We see ourselves as partners in empowering youth and strengthening engagement with Kuwaitis abroad. Our 4WARD-progress with purpose strategy is clear: we want to build Better Lives and create Lasting Connections, and this vision forms the foundation of our social strategy to actively

Bader Al-Kharafi:

■ "Kuwaiti students abroad are ambassadors for their nation, and the skills they acquire today will shape Kuwait's future"

contribute to the communities we serve."

The Souq Al-Mubarakiya 2 event featured a variety of engaging cultural and entertainment activities aimed at fostering interaction among Kuwaiti students across the UK and Kuwaiti nationals residing there. The activities carried a traditional theme, reinforcing national pride and a sense of belonging.

The event also included a panel discussion featuring Waleed Al-Khashti, Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer, who discussed Zain's role in community engagement through its numerous annual initiatives spanning youth support, sports, culture, education, and health.

Additional highlights included Zain's interactive competition segment, where attendees participated in contests and won prizes. Kuwaiti businesses were also present, showcasing their local products and services to visitors. The entertainment lineup featured performances by Miami Kuwait Band and artist Mutref Al-Mutref, as well as a Stage Talk segment presented by Khaled Al-Ansari and Captain Fawzi Ibrahim.

Zain's sponsorship of this national gathering reflects its deep belief in the vital role that youth and students play in shaping the country's future. The company remains committed to participating in such events to engage with the next generation, hear their perspectives, and support their aspirations abroad.

Secure and fast Gulf payments

ABK launches AFAQ Gulf payments on mobile app

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to announce that AFAQ, the Gulf payments service, is now available through the Bank's mobile app. This innovative service allows ABK customers to conduct money transfer transactions directly to beneficiaries in Bahrain,

developments in the banking industry. This innovation strengthens our position as a preferred banking partner and enhances our competitive edge within the Kuwaiti banking sector."

Al Bloushi emphasized that the service was successfully implemented after thorough testing and receiving the necessary approvals from the Central Bank of Kuwait. He noted that AFAQ facilitates economic integration among GCC countries and enhances cooperation among central banks in the region, positively impacting all parties involved.

The advantages of the AFAQ service include swift completion of money transfer operations, and a streamlined clearing and financial settlement process.

"We remain dedicated to meeting our customers' banking and financial needs at the highest levels, aiming to build trust and increase satisfaction with the services we provide," Al Bloushi added.

In closing, he affirmed that ABK will continue to innovate and introduce more digital services and solutions in the future as part of the Bank's ongoing digital transformation strategy. This commitment reinforces ABK's distinctiveness and leadership across all sectors in the market.



Al Bloushi

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman with the highest levels of security, reliability, and speed.

AFAQ is a regional payment initiative that seamlessly connects the Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) systems of each Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country. It offers an array of benefits, particularly in expediting transfers and completing transactions.

Mohammad Al Bloushi, General Manager of Operations at ABK, stated, "The introduction of AFAQ on our app showcases our unwavering commitment to delivering more digital services and staying at the forefront of



Menzies Aviation partners with Malaysia's largest airport.

Menzies hits 300-airport milestone

LONDON, Feb 3: Menzies Aviation, the leading service partner to the world's airports and airlines, has announced a major milestone in its global expansion, reaching 300 airports worldwide. This growth underscores the company's continued commitment to becoming the undisputed number one supplier of aviation services on a global scale.

presence across six continents. As part of its strategic vision, Menzies' announcement is a testament to its efforts to improve operational efficiencies, enhance customer service, and contribute to the safety and sustainability of the aviation industry.

Philipp Joeinig, Group CEO, Menzies Aviation, said: "We are excited to welcome Kuala Lumpur International Airport to our growing network of more than 300 airports in 65 countries. This expansion provides our airlines customers with easier access to our high-quality, trusted aviation services across six continents. We remain dedicated to providing the safest, most secure, and sustainable landside and airside solutions in every location we operate."

The latest addition to its extensive network is Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KUL), the largest and busiest airport in Malaysia. In 2023, KUL managed 47.2 million passengers, 980,040 tonnes of cargo, and 819,026 aircraft movements, solidifying its position as a key hub in Southeast Asia. This strategic expansion into KUL marks an important step in strengthening Menzies' global

Trump imposes tariffs on Canada, Mexico & China, sparks trade war

Canada responds with retaliatory tariffs on US goods

PALM BEACH, Feb 3, (AP): President Donald Trump said Sunday that Americans could feel "some pain" from the emerging trade war triggered by his tariffs against Canada, Mexico and China, and claimed that Canada would "cease to exist" without its trade surplus with the United States.

The trade penalties that Trump signed Saturday at his Florida resort caused a mix of panic, anger and uncertainty, and threatened to rupture a decades-old partnership on trade in North America while further straining relations with China.

Trump on Sunday night returned from Florida and threatened to impose steeper tariffs elsewhere, telling reporters that the import taxes will "definitely happen" with the European Union and possibly with the United Kingdom as well.

He brushed aside retaliatory measures from Canada, saying, "If they want to play the game, I don't mind. We can play the game all they want." Trump said he plans to speak with his Canadian and Mexican counterparts on Monday.

By following through on his tariffs campaign pledge, Trump may also have simultaneously broken his promise to voters in last year's election that his administration could quickly reduce inflation. That means the same frustration he is facing from other nations might also spread domestically to consumers and businesses.

"Will there be some pain? Yes, maybe (and maybe not!)," Trump said in a social media post. "But we will make America great again, and it will all be worth the price that must be paid."

His administration has not said what specific improvements would need to be seen in stopping illegal immigration and the smuggling of fentanyl to merit the removal of the tariffs that Trump imposed under the legal justification of an economic emergency. But Trump, speaking to reporters after Air



A protester holds the flags of Canada and the United States outside on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, on Saturday, Feb. 1, 2025. (AP)

Force One, landed said that the trade imbalances with Canada and Mexico would also need to be erased as a condition for lifting the tariffs.

The president also tried to clarify his post about the possible inflation, saying on Sunday: "We may have in the short term, a little pain, and people understand that. But long term, the United States has been ripped off by virtually every country in the world."

The tariffs are set to launch Tuesday and triggered confusion as Canada's U.S. ambassador, Kirsten Hillman, told ABC News that her country was perplexed by the move because "we view ourselves as your neighbor, your closest friend, your ally."

In his Truth Social post, Trump took particular aim at Canada, which responded with retaliatory measures. Trump is placing a 25% tariff on Canadian goods, with a 10% tax on oil, natural gas and electricity. Canada is imposing 25% tariffs, more than \$155 billion Canadian (US\$105 billion), on U.S. products, including alcohol and fruit.

Despite Trump's assertions that the U.S. does not need Canada, one-quarter of the oil that America consumes per day is from its ally to the north. He reiterated his false claim that America subsidizes Canada by running a trade imbalance, a reflection in part of Canada exporting energy to the U.S.

Trump contended that without that surplus, "Canada ceases to exist as a viable Country. Harsh but true! There-

fore, Canada should become our Cherished 51st State. Much lower taxes, and far better military protection for the people of Canada - and no tariffs!"

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is encouraging Canadians to buy more Canadian goods, and says Trump's moves will only cause pain across North America. More than 75% of Canada's exports go to the U.S. Canada will first target alcohol, cosmetics and paper products; a second round later will include passenger vehicles, trucks, steel and aluminum products, certain fruits and vegetables, beef, pork, dairy products and more.

Canada is the largest export market for 36 states and Mexico is the largest trading partner of the U.S.

Mexico's president, Claudia Sheinbaum, also announced new tariffs and suggested the U.S. should do more within its own borders to address drug addiction. She and Trudeau spoke after Trump's announcement and agreed "to enhance the strong bilateral relations" between Canada and Mexico, according to the prime minister's office.

The Chinese government said it would take steps to defend its economic interests and intends to file a lawsuit with the World Trade Organization.

For Trump, the open question is whether inflation could be a political pressure point that would cause him to back down. As a candidate, Trump repeatedly hammered Democrats over

the inflation under President Joe Biden that resulted from supply chain issues during the coronavirus pandemic, the Biden administration's own spending to spur the recovery and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Trump said his previous four years as president had low inflation, so the public should expect the same if he came back to the White House. But he also said specifically that higher inflation would stagger the U.S. as a nation, a position from which he now appears to be retreating with the promise of even more tariffs to come.

The U.S. president did not offer details Sunday about when he would impose tariffs elsewhere, but he said they would be coming "pretty soon" for the EU, which is also composed of U.S. allies.

Larry Summers, treasury secretary in the Clinton administration, said the tariffs were a "self-inflicted wound to the American economy."

He told CNN's "Inside Politics" that "on the playground or in international relations, bullying is not an enduringly winning strategy. And that's what this is." And the ultimate winner, Summers suggested, would be Chinese leader Xi Jinping because "we've moved to drive some of our closest allies into his arms" and "we're legitimizing everything he's doing by violating all the international norms that we set up."

Outside analyses make clear that Trump's tariffs would hurt the voters that he intended to help, meaning that he might ultimately need to find a resolution.

An analysis by the Budget Lab at Yale shows that if the tariffs were to continue, an average U.S. household would lose roughly \$1,245 in income this year, in what would be the overall equivalent of a more than \$1.4 trillion tax increase over the next 10 years.

Goldman Sachs, in a Sunday analyst note, stressed that the tariffs go into effect on Tuesday, which means they're likely to proceed "though a last-minute compromise cannot be completely ruled out."

The investment bank concluded that because of the possible economic damage and possible conditions for removal "we think it is more likely that the tariffs will be temporary but the outlook is unclear."

As part of its ambitious expansion plan and dedication to enhancing customers' banking experience

KIB opens new branch in Al Sideeq, expanding network to 19 locations

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has expanded its network with the opening of a new retail banking branch in Al Sideeq, making it its 19th location. This move reflects KIB's commitment to meeting customer needs and strengthening its geographical presence. The new branch offers a comprehensive range of advanced services, supported by cutting-edge banking technologies, designed to cater to the diverse requirements of its customer base.

The new branch's opening ceremony was held under the patronage of the Governor of Hawalli, Ali Salem Al-Asfar, and was attended by KIB's Vice Chairman and CEO, Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, along with KIB's General Manager of Retail Banking, Othman Tawfeq, and several of the Bank's senior executives.



Governor of Hawalli Ali Salem Al-Asfar, KIB's Vice Chairman and CEO Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, KIB's General Manager of Retail Banking Othman Tawfeq, and KIB's Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit Marwa Marafie, during the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Commenting on the occasion, Tawfeq expressed his pride, stating: "We are thrilled to inaugurate our 19th banking branch, a significant milestone in KIB's expansion strategy. This achievement underscores the Bank's commitment to enhancing the customer experience by expanding its range of services."

He added: "The new branch boasts a modern and sophisticated design, equipped with state-of-the-art banking technologies that allow customers to complete their transactions with maximum security and efficiency. This reflects our commitment to providing customers with fast and convenient access to our services, whether in residential or commercial areas."

Tawfeq emphasized that this expansion reflects KIB's dedication to its strategy

of strengthening its presence in the Kuwaiti market and reaching a wider customer base. It also aligns with the Bank's ongoing investments in innovative banking solutions designed to streamline transactions, save customers time and effort, and support sustainable development in Kuwait.

It is worth mentioning that KIB continues to advance its digital infrastructure by expanding services across multiple channels. With its extensive branch network, the Bank offers a unique banking experience that seamlessly blends traditional services with innovative digital solutions. This approach sets new benchmarks for excellence in Kuwait's banking sector, aligning with its main slogan, "Bank for Life."



KIB's Vice Chairman and CEO Raed Jawad Bukhamseen presents honorary shield to Governor of Hawalli Ali Salem Al-Asfar.



A group photo of Raed Jawad Bukhamseen and Othman Tawfeq with the KIB team.

20 customers winning cash prizes worth KD 1,500 each

Kuwait Finance House announces winners of Al-Rabeh draw

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the AlRabeh draw with 20 customers winning cash prizes worth KD 1,500 each for the 1st and 2nd weeks of 2025.

The winners of KD 1,500 are: Saoud Al-Otaibi, Abdullah Al-Qenai, Abdulaziz Al-Ameeri, Abdullah Al-Enezi, Mubarak Al-Daihani, Bader Al-Maraghi, Hadeyah Al-Rasheedi, Musaed Al-Azmi, Ahlam Malallah, Adlah Al-Jassar, Abdulaziz Al-Mutairi, Maha Al-Bathali, Abdulrahman Al-Hudaib, Hamed Al-Enezi, Badreya Al-Adwani, Ramez Attia, Naghem Al-Omar, Mosaab Al-Hajri, Tariq Al-Fardi, Yasmeen Al-Ameerah.

The AlRabeh campaign provides prizes and draws that offer customers several chances of winning "weekly, monthly and quarterly". The campaign crowns 536 winners throughout the year.

The draw took place under the supervision of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

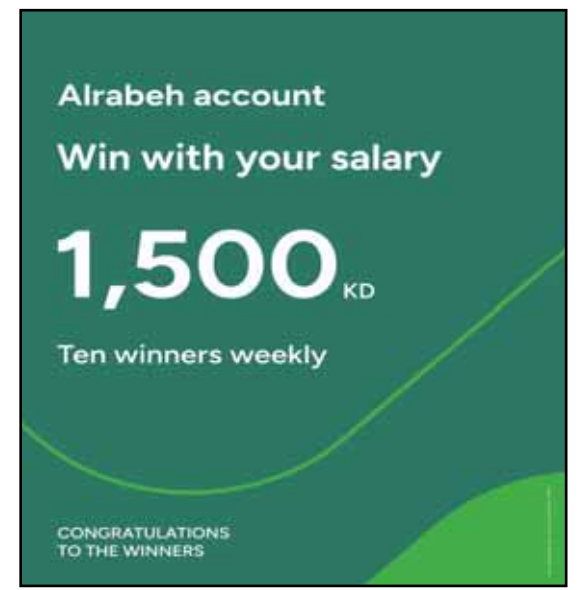
The campaign is part of KFH's ongoing efforts to offer exceptional products and services that meet customers' aspirations, enhance the Bank's leadership in the local and global markets, as well as reflect its excellence in offering innovative banking solutions as per the highest quality standards.

The Al-Rabeh account is a salary account available to customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Customers can open Al-Rabeh account in any of KFH branches in Kuwait, or through the Bank's online channels. The account can be opened in the Kuwaiti Dinar and is targeted for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Salary transfer is a prerequisite for customers to enter the draw provided that the transfer of salary to

Al-Rabeh account is constant.

Regarding the terms and conditions of the prizes and draws, a customer can deposit 3 salaries during the 3 months prior to the draw, and the minimum balance of the account should not be less than KD 50 at the end of each month during the 3 months prior to the draw. Ten draws take place on a weekly basis for KD 1,500 for 10 winners each, 1 KG of KFH gold will be drawn monthly for one winner and K.D 25,000 for one winner every quarter, reaching a total number of 536 winners during the year.

KFH is keen to further meet customers' requirements and aspirations and their increasing needs as well as offer innovative and modern services, therefore achieving customer satisfaction, which is one of the fundamentals at KFH. The Bank has achieved a qualitative shift in the level of financial services by utilizing technology.



The campaign visual.

Ten account holders win KD 1,000 each

Warba announces winners of Al Sunbula weekly draw

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Warba Bank, Kuwait's premier provider of corporate and investment banking services, today announced the winners of the latest Al Sunbula weekly draw as part of its continued commitment to reward loyal customers. The draw was held in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in addition to Warba Bank officials.

This week, ten Al Sunbula account holders each received a cash prize of KD 1,000. The winners are as follows: Ms. Shamael Adel Mohammad Al-Baloul, Mr. Ibrahim Mubarak Hashr Bin Kattal, Mr. Abdulaziz Abdullah Barak Al-Otaibi, Mr. Ali Abdullah Mohammad Al-Ajmi, Mr. Hamad Mohammad Jassim Al-Matar, Mr. Mishari Obaid Mohammad Al-Mutairi, Ms. Sarah Zaki Mohammad Mahmoud, Mr. Abdullah Shlewh Abdullah Al-Ajmi, Mr. Faisal Ajeer Manawer Al-Otaibi, and Ms. Amal Ali Fahad Hussein Bozabar.

Designed to support customers' savings goals, Al Sunbula account offers a unique savings opportunity, combining attractive returns on their savings with the chance to win cash prizes through regular draws year-round.

Explained the eligibility criteria, Mr. Abdulaziz Saud Al-Bakhait, Area Manager of the Retail Banking Group at Warba Bank, said, "Customers are required to deposit a minimum of KD 100 to qualify for both the weekly and grand Al Sunbula draws. For every KD 10 in their account, customers receive one entry based on the lowest monthly balance, increasing their chances of winning as their balance grows. The balance must remain in the account for a full month to be eligible to the weekly draw, and two months to be eligible to the grand draws. What differentiates Al Sunbula is that



Abdulaziz Saud Al-Bakhait

there are no restrictions on deposits or withdrawals, and the more a customer deposits, the higher their chances of winning."

In addition to the benefits of Al Sunbula account, Warba Bank recently introduced its latest banking solution, Customer Onboarding, as part of its ambitious five-year strategy. This innovative digital service allows non-Warba customers to easily open an Al Sunbula account online via the Bank's website, without the need to visit a branch. Through this new automated system, unique within Kuwait's banking sector, new customers can complete their account setup in five minutes, at any time and from any location.

Having achieved significant milestones in a short period, Warba Bank has acquired a leading position as a provider of innovative digital banking services to individuals and businesses. The Bank is also one of the local banks with the highest number of shareholders, further strengthening its commitment to serving every segment of the local community.

Lulu's 'Happiness Loyalty Program' reaches 6 mln shoppers

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Lulu Hypermarket proudly announced a remarkable milestone as its 'Happiness Loyalty Program' surpasses 6 million members across the GCC! This achievement marks a significant step in Lulu's commitment to rewarding loyal customers with exclusive benefits, discounts, and exciting rewards.

Since its inception, the Happiness Loyalty Program has redefined the shopping ex-



Lulu's 'Happiness Loyalty Program'

perience, offering instant discounts, points on every purchase, and special member-only privileges. With its seamless integration across all Lulu Hypermarkets in the region, the program continues to grow, bringing smiles to millions of shoppers.

Join the 6 million and growing Happiness family today! Sign up in-store or via the Lulu happiness website and start earning rewards instantly.

Free medical camp aids over 250 people

Kuwait Tamil Makkal Sevai Maiyam hosts 6th Annual Free Medical Camp in Fahaheel

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The "Kuwait Tamil Makkal Sevai Maiyam" in collaboration with Shifa Al Jazeera Hospital - Fahaheel Administration, organized a grand 6th Annual Free Medical Camp on Friday, 31st January 2025 at Shifa Al Jazeera Hospital in Fahaheel.

More than 250 people benefited from the free medical check-ups. The event was made possible with the support of Dr. Rabiullah, the founder of Shifa Al Jazeera Hospital, and the hospital's administrative manager, Mr. Gunaseelan Pillai.

Mr. N.L. Abdul Haleem, Charge d' affaires of the Sri Lankan Embassy in Kuwait honored the occasion as the special guest. Representatives from various associations also attended the event.

The event was organized by the Kuwait Tamil Makkal Sevai Maiyam's President Abdul Rahman, Secretary Gautam, Medical Secretary Sultan, Coordinator Abdul Rashid, Mr. Abuthahir, Mr. Halik, Mr. Selvaraj, social worker Mr. Alibai, and the administrators & staff members.



Photo during the event.

Over 10,000 beneficiaries in IMA Kuwait's month-long Quran Campaign

IMA Kuwait concludes successful Quran Campaign with Grand Conference

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Under the patronage of the Foreign Relations Department of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, the Indian Muslim Association (IMA) Kuwait concluded its month-long Quran Campaign with a Grand Quran Conference at Masjid Al Kabir on 24th January 2025. The Conference included a series of impactful events such as Concluding Main Event, Ladies Wing Final Day Event, Youth Wing's Mega Quiz Grand Finale, Exhibitions, Calligraphy and Quiz Competitions, drawing significant community participation from all parts of Kuwait.

Campaign Highlights:

The Campaign aimed to instill the Noble Virtues and Ethics of the Holy Quran in everyday Life, inspired by the exemplary character of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Central Theme (His character was the Quran), encouraged the Muslim Ummah to reconnect with Quranic teachings and align their lives with the values of Justice, Compassion and Truthfulness.

The Campaign reached over 10,000 Individuals from diverse backgrounds, including Students, Youths, Women, Professionals and Families. It utilized: IMA's Weekly Quranic Study Sessions, Friday Sermons at various Masjids, Individual & Family Meetings, Interviews on Radio Kuwait & Kuwait TV, a Quran Retreat Workshop, Social media platforms, and more to spread its message.

Main Event Highlights:

The Quran Conference's keynote speaker Dr. Taha Mateen, a visiting Scholar from India, delivered a thought-provoking speech titled 'Prophet' - The Living Quran', emphasizing that the Quran is not just a book of recitation but a guide for transformation. He spoke on the Quran's relevance to modern-day challenges, urging individuals to reflect its values in their actions. He described the Prophet Muhammad as a living embodiment of the Quran, whose life serves as a model for humanity. The event was witnessed by a large audience of over 1500 people.

Mr Mohammad Umar Falahi, IMA President, delivered the second keynote speech on the 'Message of IsraWaMeraj' highlighting the significance of this miraculous journey. He described how Allah honored Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) during hardship, elevating his status by granting him the miraculous journey beyond the heavens, a testament to Allah's infinite power and Prophet's (PBUH) unique position. The gift of Salat, given during this journey, underscores its central role in Islam. He further highlighted key lessons from IsraWaMeraj, including Islam's harmony with human nature, the need for social justice, and the elimination of Societal Evils like Interest and Adultery. He urged Muslims to uphold the rights of the weak, foster Equality and reflect on the Universal Message of Islam, as exemplified by the Prophet's leadership in Bayt al-Maqdis. This Event serves as a timeless guide for Faith, Morality and Societal reform.



Photos during the event.

Ladies Wing Campaign Final Day Event

The IMA Ladies Wing's Quran Campaign Finale at Masjid Al Kabir featured a large gathering of women. Dr. Mubashshira Firdos Khan from India delivered a speech on 'Quran - The Path of Salvation for Humanity', highlighting the Quran's role in building compassionate families and nurturing emotional and spiritual well-being. The event also featured prize distributions for calligraphy and Quranic knowledge, an interactive quiz, and an exhibition on the Quran's scientific and historical significance.

Youth Wing's Students Mega Quiz Competition

The Youth Wing's Grand Finale at Masjid Al Kabir marked the Finale of Students Mega Quiz Competition showcasing the Quranic knowledge of students and brilliance of Youth. The Prize Distribution Ceremony, attended by families and a large audience, celebrated the students' achievements.

Several Distinguished Guests graced the Event with their presence that included Mr Saud Al Mutairy, Manager Masjid Al Kabir & Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Mr Jamal Al Nouri, Chairman Shaikh Abdulla AlNori Charitable Trust, Shaikh Mohammed Al Shatti, Head of faculty of Islamic Studies Kuwait University, Mr Mohammed Ali, Coordinator Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Mr Muzammil Malik, a well-known Indian Businessman in Kuwait & Heads / Representatives of several Indian Muslim Associations in Kuwait.

Another highlight of the event was a beautiful rendition of Naat (poetry in praise of Quran Sharif), performed by Mr Tayyab Bawazirand convened by Mr Waleed Umri. At the end of Program, Dinner Packets were served to all audience, fostering a sense of community and togetherness.

The Program commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran by Mr Tayyab Bawazirand convened by Mr Waleed Umri. At the end of Program, Dinner Packets were served to all audience, fostering a sense of community and togetherness.

IMA Kuwait sincerely extends its gratitude to the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Kuwait, Radio Kuwait & Kuwait TV (KTV2) for their unwavering support in facilitating such impactful events and programs, including granting permissions for Duroos across various Masjids in Kuwait by the concerned ministry. A special thanks goes to the Masjid Al Kabir administration for their exceptional cooperation in hosting our programs. Additionally, IMA Kuwait is deeply thankful to the Social Reform Society and Salsabel Charity Organization for their generous sponsorship of food packets for the attendees.

IMA Kuwait is an Indian socio-religious organization that operates under the patronage of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Kuwait. IMA always focusses to provide platform for enhancement of expatriates living in Kuwait for their spiritual & social aspect through various programs & social gatherings. It looks forward for organizing various beneficial programs in future, considering the occasions and requirements of expatriates in general and specifically Indian community.

Grammys

Lamar bags major awards for 'Not Like Us'

Beyoncé wins album of the year for 'Cowboy Carter'

LOS ANGELES, Feb 3, (AP) — Beyoncé won album of the year for "Cowboy Carter" at Sunday's Grammys, delivering her - at last - the show's elusive top award.

The superstar, who is both the most awarded and nominated artist in Grammys history, has been up for the category four times before and many feel she has been snubbed by its top honors.

In winning album of the year with "Cowboy Carter," Beyoncé has become the first Black woman to win the top prize in the 21st century. The last was Lauryn Hill with "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill" 26 years ago. Before her was Natalie Cole and Whitney Houston. That means Beyoncé is only the fourth Black woman to win album of the year at the Grammys.

Members of the Los Angeles Fire Department presented Beyoncé with the trophy, one of several times the show reflected the recent wildfires that burned thousands of homes.

"It's been many, many years," Beyoncé said in her speech. "I want to dedicate this to Ms. Martell," she said, referencing Linda Martell, the performer who became the first Black woman to play the Grand Ole Opry.

Achievement

"We finally saw it happen, everyone," host Trevor Noah said, nodding to the long overdue achievement for one of music's transcendent artists.

Kendrick Lamar won song and record of the year for his diss track "Not Like Us," taking home two of the night's most prestigious awards.

"We're gonna dedicate this one to the city," Lamar said before shouting out Los Angeles area neighborhoods.

It is the second hip-hop single to ever win in the category. The first was Childish Gambino's "This Is America."

The Weeknd has mended his fractious relationship with the Grammy Awards with a surprise performance of his new single, "Cry For Me" and "Timeless" with Playboi Carti.

His decision is a direct reflection of the changes the Recording Academy has made to diversify its voting body, CEO Harvey Mason Jr. said in his introduction. The Weeknd has been openly critical of the Grammys organization, dating back to 2020 when he wrote on Twitter: "The Grammys remain corrupt."

It was just one of many pleasant surprises Sunday night. Chappell Roan was named best new artist.

She read a speech from a notebook, speaking directly to major labels and the music industry, instructing them to "offer a living wage and health-care, especially to developing artists." She described getting signed as a minor, getting dropped and entering the workforce during COVID-19 with no work experience and no health care. She asked them to treat artists like "valuable employees."

"Labels, we got you," she concluded her speech. "But do you got us?"

In one of the biggest moments of the evening so far, Taylor Swift presented the award for best country album to Beyoncé. She became the first Black woman to ever win in the category.

Honor

"Genre is a cold word to keep us in our place as artists," she said in her speech. "I'm still in shock. Thank you so much for this honor."

Beyoncé entered the night as the leading nominee.

A little bit of the wild west, a little bit of West Hollywood. Roan brought a rocking version of her "Pink Pony Club" to the Grammy stage. Joined by a posse of dancing clown cowboys, she sang from atop a giant pink horse.

In incorporating the wildfires throughout the show, the Grammys put the spotlight on the city's resiliency.

Noah's opening speech was dedicated to those affected by the fires, promising a show that not only celebrates them, but one that also celebrates "the city that brought us so much of that music." The Grammys have also allotted ad time to be used by local businesses affected by the fires.

As the show neared its end, Noah announced that viewers had contributed \$7 million to relief efforts Sunday night so far.

On a stage set up to look like the mountains of Los Angeles, the LA born-and-raised Billie Eilish and her



Beyoncé accepts the award for album of the year for 'Cowboy Carter' during the 67th annual Grammy Awards on Sunday, Feb. 2, in Los Angeles. Blue Ivy Carter looks on from right. (AP)



Kendrick Lamar poses with the award for record of the year, best rap performance, best rap song, best music video and song of the year. (AP)



Victoria Monet, (left), presents the award for best new artist to Chappell Roan. (AP)



Sabrina Carpenter poses with the award for best pop solo performance, and best pop vocal album. (AP)



Sean Ono Lennon, (left), accepts the award for best rock performance for 'Now and Then' on behalf of The Beatles from Bob Clearmountain. (AP)



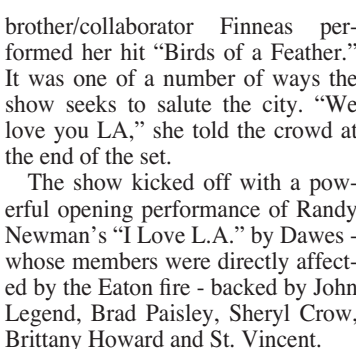
Taylor Swift, (left), presents the award for best country album to Beyoncé for 'Cowboy Carter.' (AP)



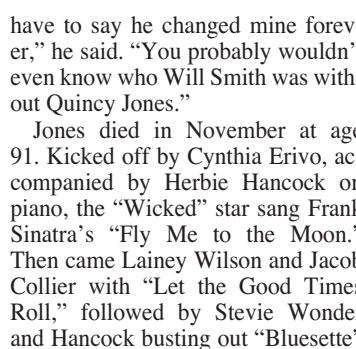
Diana Ross presents the award for song of the year during the 67th annual Grammy Awards on Feb 2. (AP)



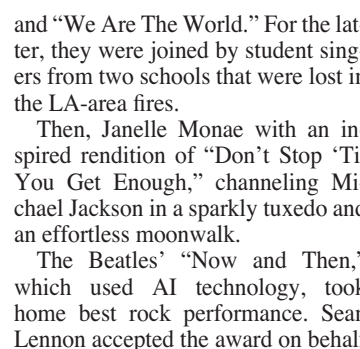
Alicia Keys accepts the Dr. Dre Global Impact Award during the 67th annual Grammy Awards. (AP)



Jacob Collier, (left), and Tori Kelly pose with the award for best arrangement, instrumental or a cappella for 'Bridge Over Troubled Water.' (AP)



Shakira accepts the award for best Latin pop album for 'Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran.' (AP)



Herbie Hancock, (left), and Stevie Wonder perform during the Grammy Awards. (AP)



Samara Joy poses with the awards for best jazz performance and vocal. (AP)



Doechii poses with the award for best rap album for 'Alligator Bites Never Heal.' (AP)



Charli XCX poses in the press room with the award for best pop dance recording for 'Von dutch.' (AP)



Anderson Paak, (left), and Knxwledge, pose with their award for the best progressive R&B album for 'Why Lawd?.' (AP)



Sierra Ferrell poses with her awards for best American roots song, performance and best Americana album, performance. (AP)

have to say he changed mine forever," he said. "You probably wouldn't even know who Will Smith was without Quincy Jones."

Jones died in November at age 91. Kicked off by Cynthia Erivo, accompanied by Herbie Hancock on piano, the "Wicked" star sang Frank Sinatra's "Fly Me to the Moon." Then came Lainey Wilson and Jacob Collier with "Let the Good Times Roll," followed by Stevie Wonder and Hancock busting out "Bluesette"

and "We Are The World." For the latter, they were joined by student singers from two schools that were lost in the LA-area fires.

Then, Janelle Monae with an inspired rendition of "Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough," channeling Michael Jackson in a sparkly tuxedo and an effortless moonwalk.

The Beatles' "Now and Then," which used AI technology, took home best rock performance. Sean Lennon accepted the award on behalf

of his father John Lennon. "As far as I'm concerned, it's the best band of all time," he said of the Beatles.

First time winners were abundant. They included Carpenter, Roan, Doechii, Charli xcx, songwriter Amy Allen, Música Mexicana star Carin León, French metal band Gojira and country folk artist Sierra Ferrell.

The Red Hot Chili Peppers' Anthony Kiedis and Chad Smith led the crowd in a short singalong of their hit "Under the Bridge," reminding the crowd to "support their friends and neighbors as they rebuild their lives," said Kiedis. Then they presented the best pop vocal album award to Carpenter for "Short n' Sweet."

"I really wasn't expecting this," she said. "This is, woo, my first Grammy so I'm going to cry." (She's now won two, but the earlier award was handed out a pre-tecast ceremony that many artists don't attend.) She also performed.

Shakira won Latin pop album for "Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran" and gave a powerful, short speech. "I want to dedicate this award to all my immigrant brothers and sisters in this country," she said.

Lady Gaga and Bruno Mars teamed up for a cover of "California Dreamin'." Later, SZA presented them with the award for best pop duo/group performance for "Die With A Smile."

Grammys



From left: Paris Hilton, Tori Kelly, Nikki Glaser, Alicia Keys and Clairo arrive at the 67th annual Grammy Awards on Sunday, Feb. 2, 2025, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Plenty of sparkle and statement looks

Color pops, subdued hues shine on Grammys red carpet

LOS ANGELES, Feb 3, (AP): The 67th Grammy Awards kicked off Sunday with a red carpet full of black and subdued tones against the backdrop of loss and devastation from the Los Angeles wildfires.

But there was plenty of sparkle and statement looks in huge sleeves and embellishment. The color red had a moment on Haley Kalil and others.

"While the Grammys carpet is one where we see most celebrities take major risks, some of the night's most notable artists stayed true to their personal style," said Bianca Betancourt, digital culture editor for Harper's Bazaar.

Madeline Hirsch, fashion features director for InStyle, agreed.

"There was a lot more edge and personality than usual on this red carpet. Everyone followed their own vision and aesthetic, which was fun to watch," she said.

Here's a few celebrity looks and fashion moments from the red carpet:

Sierra Ferrell won BIG with four Grammys. She did it just as BIG in a huge white gown that evoked a way enthusiastic bride with no fashion fears, designed by Jeffrey Kelly Designs.

Ferrell's dress included huge luminescent sleeves, pearl embellishment all over and a matching choker piece. And she didn't forget her bold bride's veil: a head piece with pearls and flower touches above large pearl chandelier earrings. And she had a scepter, where she stashed her accept-

ance speech.

"Honestly this is kind of hilarious," she joked after returning to the stage for a third time. "Yikes!" she started her fourth acceptance speech.

Chappell Roan walked in a vintage look from Jean Paul Gaultier Haute Couture, long wavy red hair flowing down her back. Her signature white powder makeup was full of color: yellows and blues and pinks and reds.

Roan's look had touches of teal and images of Degas' dancers on the skirt. It was Gaultier vintage from spring 2003.

"The singer has become known for her bold, artistic red carpet choices that reflect her unique sense of style and personality, and tonight was no exception," said Claire Stern Milch, digital director for Elle.

Roan's gown is from spring 2003. It was first worn by Beyoncé in Elle that April. The two are up against each other for Grammys.

"Chappell Roan inherently understands that if you want to be a pop star, you need to pave your own lane. She also understands you don't just wear vintage to wear vintage - you do it to continue your sartorial storytelling," Betancourt said. "It's probably her best red carpet look yet."

Jaden Smith walked the red carpet in Louis Vuitton with a large black castle on his head, his face peeking out. His sister, Willow Smith, was at his side. She went for classic young Hollywood in a tiny, sparkling black two piece with a long matching coat.

Willow wore her hair loose and natural as she worked her itty bitty look, a pair of towering black platform sandals on her feet.

Rapper Ye, formerly known as Kanye West, is no stranger to causing a scene at the Grammys.

Ye and his partner, Bianca Censori, took the spotlight with her barely there transparent dress that left nothing to the imagination. Censori is known for causing a stir with her sheer street style.

At the Grammys, she dropped her dark fur coat to reveal her exposed backside to the flash of cameras.

Sabrina Carpenter was among those who stuck close to her signature style codes, Betancourt said. She opted for a baby blue satin gown by Jonathan Anderson for Loewe with a tousled updo and plunging back with feather boa detailing.

"It was just the right amount of sexy and old Hollywood glam that her red carpet looks usually aim for," Betancourt said.

Red is an enduring trend in fashion of late, thanks to Taylor Swift's commitment to the color at boyfriend Travis Kelce's Kansas City Chiefs games. And it had a moment at the Grammys on Swift and many others.

Swift wore a short red sparkler by Vivienne Westwood. A little chain at one side of the hem dangled with red jewels, including a tiny "T."

"It's my favorite of hers to date," Hirsch said of Swift's look. "You can't go wrong with a Vivienne Westwood mini-

dress, and she's been wearing the designer quite a bit over the past year."

Among other vibes: swifty and sparkly metallics. Kacey Musgraves represented in a long, gold belted skirt paired with a simple white muscle T-shirt. Musgraves' look hails from Ralph Lauren Collection for spring 2025.

Beyoncé skipped the red carpet but showed up in custom Schiaparelli to collect the best country album award.

The body-hugger was embroidered in a bandana pattern. It's covered in sparkling sequins and beads in champagne and cream. Her opera gloves elevated the look.

Her gown was a high fashion take on country-western style. She's been doing country couture since her album "Cowboy Carter" was released last March.

With black detailing, the look evoked tiger stripes. There were feathers at the bottom.

It was a custom Roberto Cavalli Couture creation. The mermaid design is a true body hugger. It was covered in hand-embroidered beads and sequins.

"It was probably her most pared back look yet," said Betancourt. "Yes, tiger print and feather trim is indeed subdued when it comes to Cardi B."

Collier was a bright spot. Really bright. He wore a heavily sequined coat of many colors with matching trousers, his hair sticking up high and proud.

He's part of a crew honoring the late Quincy Jones, who helped launch his career when he was still a teen.



The Weeknd performs a medley during the 67th annual Grammy Awards on Feb. 2, in Los Angeles. (AP)



Cynthia Erivo performs 'In Other Words.' (AP)



Sabrina Carpenter performs a medley during the annual Grammy Awards. (AP)



Finneas O'Connell, (left), and Billie Eilish perform 'Birds of a Feather'. (AP)

Partial list of Grammy winners

LOS ANGELES, Feb 3, (AP): Beyoncé, Kendrick Lamar, Sabrina Carpenter, Chappell Roan and many more are Grammy winners.

Beyoncé won album of the year and best country album for "Cowboy Carter." She entered Sunday's Grammys with a leading 11 nominations, bringing her career total to 99 nods. That makes her the most nominated artist in Grammy history.

Here's a partial list of winners:

- **Album of the year:** "Cowboy Carter," Beyoncé
- **Song of the year:** "Not Like Us," Kendrick Lamar
- **Record of the year:** "Not Like Us," Kendrick Lamar
- **Best New Artist:** Chappell Roan
- **Best Pop Vocal Album:** "Short n' Sweet," Sabrina Carpenter
- **Best Pop Solo Performance:** "Espresso," Sabrina Carpenter
- **Best Pop Duo/Group Performance:** "Die with a Smile," Lady Gaga and Bruno Mars
- **Best Dance/Electronic Recording:** "Neverender," Justice and Tame Impala
- **Best Pop Dance Recording:** "Von dutch," Charli xcx
- **Best Rap Album:** "Alligator Bites Never Heal," DoeChii
- **Best Rap Song:** "Not Like Us," Kendrick Lamar, songwriter (Kendrick Lamar)
- **Best Rap Performance:** "Not Like Us," Kendrick Lamar
- **Best Melodic Rap Performance:** "3," Rapsody featuring Erykah Badu
- **Best R&B Performance:** "Made For Me (Live on BET)," Muni Long
- **Best R&B Album:** "11:11 (Deluxe)," Chris Brown
- **Best Traditional R&B Performance:** "That's You," Lucky Daye
- **Best R&B Song:** "Saturn," Rob Bisel, Carter Lang, Solana Rowe, Jared Solomon and Scott Zhang, songwriters (SZA)
- **Best Progressive R&B Album:** (Tie) "Why Lawd?," Nx-Worries (Anderson. Paak & Knowledge) and "So Glad to Know You," Avery Sunshine
- **Best Dance Electronic Album:** "BRAT," Charli xcx
- **Best Rock Performance:** "Now and Then," the Beatles
- **Best Rock Album:** "Hackney Diamonds," the Rolling Stones
- **Best Remixed Recording:** "Espresso (Mark Ronson x FNZ Working Late Remix)," FNZ and Mark Ronson, remixers (Sabrina Carpenter)
- **Best Americana Performance:** "American Dreaming," Sierra Ferrell
- **Best American Roots Song:** "American Dreaming," Sierra Ferrell and Melody Walker, songwriters
- **Best Americana Album:** "Trail of Flowers," Sierra Ferrell
- **Best Bluegrass Album:** "Live Vol 1.," Billy Strings
- **Best Folk Album:** "Woodland," Gillian Welch and David Rawlings
- **Best Regional Roots Music Album:** "Kuini," Kalani Pe'a
- **Best Country Album:** "Cowboy Carter," Beyoncé
- **Best Country Solo Performance:** "It Takes A Woman," Chris Stapleton
- **Best Country Duo/Group Performance:** "I MOST WANTED," Beyoncé, featuring Miley Cyrus
- **Best Country Song:** "The Architect," Shane McAnally, Kacey Musgraves and Josh Osborne, songwriters (Kacey Musgraves)
- **Best Music Video:** "American Symphony"
- **Best American Roots Performance:** "Lighthouse," Sierra Ferrell
- **Best Traditional Blues Album:** "Swingin' Live at The Church in Tulsa," The Taj Mahal Sextet
- **Best Contemporary Blues Album:** "Mileage," Ruthie Foster
- **Best Latin Pop Album:** "Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran," Shakira
- **Best Música Urbana Album:** "Las Letras Ya No Importan," Residente
- **Best Latin Rock or Alternative Album:** "¿Quién Trae las Cometas?," Rawayana
- **Best Música Mexicana Album (including Tejano):** "Boca Chueca, Vol. 1," Carin León
- **Best Tropical Latin Album:** "Alma, Corazon y Salsa (Live at Gran Teatro Nacional)," Tony Succar, Mimy Succar
- **Best Reggae Album:** "Bob Marley: One Love - Music Inspired By The Film (Deluxe)," Various Artists
- **Best Global Music Performance:** "Bemba Colorá," Sheila E. featuring Gloria Estefan and Mimy Succar
- **Best African Music Performance:** "Love Me JeJe," Tems
- **Best Alternative Music Album:** "All Born Screaming," St. Vincent
- **Best Jazz Vocal Album:** "A Joyful Holiday," Samara Joy
- **Songwriter Of The Year, non-classical:** Amy Allen
- **Producer of the year, non-classical:** Daniel Nigro
- **Producer of the year, classical:** Elaine Martone
- **Best Score Soundtrack for Visual Media:** Hans Zimmer, "Dune: Part II"
- **Best Compilation Soundtrack for Visual Media:** "Maestro: Music by Leonard Bernstein," Bradley Cooper and Yannick Nézet-Séguin, artists; Bradley Cooper, Yannick Nézet-Séguin & Jason Ruder, compilation producers; Steven Gizicki, music supervisor
- **Best Comedy Album:** "Dreamer," Dave Chappelle
- **Dr. Dre Global Impact Award:** Alicia Keys



Lainey Wilson performs 'Let the Good Times Roll.' (AP)



Benson Boone performs 'Beautiful Things' during the Grammy Awards. (AP)



Lady Gaga, (left), and Bruno Mars perform 'California Dreamin' during the 67th annual Grammy Awards on Sunday, Feb. 2, in Los Angeles. (AP)



Shakira performs a medley during the Grammy Awards. (AP)

How to tell real nutrition science from pseudoscience

Nutrition advice is rife with misinformation, expert warns

By Aimee Pugh Bernard

University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

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

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The COVID-19 pandemic illuminated a vast landscape of misinformation about many topics, science and health chief among them.

Since then, information overload continues unabated, and many people are rightfully confused by an onslaught of conflicting health information. Even expert advice is often contradictory.

On top of that, people sometimes deliberately distort research findings to promote a certain agenda. For example, trisodium phosphate is a common food additive in cakes and cookies that is used to improve texture and prevent spoilage,

but wellness influencers exploit the fact that a similarly named substance is used in paint and cleaning products to suggest it's dangerous to your health.

Such claims can proliferate quickly, creating widespread misconceptions and undermining trust in legitimate scientific research and medical advice. Social media's rise as a news and information source further fuels the spread of pseudoscientific views.

Misinformation is rampant in the realm of health and nutrition. Findings from nutrition research is rarely clear-cut because diet is just one of many behaviors and lifestyle factors affecting health, but the simplicity of using food and supplements as a cure-all is especially seductive.

I am an assistant professor specializing in medical education and science communication. I also train scientists and future health care professionals how to communicate their science to the general public.

In my view, countering the voices of social media influencers and health activists promoting pseudoscientific health claims requires leaning into the science of disease prevention. Extensive research has produced a body of evidence-based practices and public health measures that have consistently been shown to improve the health of millions of people around the world. Evaluating popular health claims against the yardstick of this work can help distinguish which ones are based on sound science.

Conflicting information can be found on just about everything we eat and drink.

That's because a food or beverage is rarely just good or bad. Instead, its health effects can depend on everything from the quantity a person consumes to their genetic makeup. Hundreds of scientific studies describe coffee's health benefits and, on the flip side, its health risks. A bird's-eye view

can point in one direction or another, but news articles and social media posts often make claims based on a single study.

Things can get even more confusing with dietary supplements because people who promote them often make big claims about their health benefits. Take apple cider vinegar, for example - or ACV, if you're in the know.

Apple cider vinegar has been touted as an all-natural remedy for a variety of ailments, including digestive issues, urinary health and weight management. Indeed, some studies have shown that it might help lower cholesterol, in addition to having other health benefits, but overall those studies have small sample sizes and are inconclusive.

Advocates of this substance often claim that one particular component of it - the cloudy sediment at the bottom of the bottle termed "the mother" - is especially beneficial because of the bacteria and yeast it contains. But there

is no research that backs the claim that it offers any health benefits.

One good rule of thumb is that health hacks that promise quick fixes are almost always too good to be true. And even when supplements do offer some health benefits under specific circumstances, it's important to remember that they are largely exempt from Food and Drug Administration regulations. That means the ingredients on their labels might contain more or less of the ingredients promised or other ingredients not listed, which can potentially cause harms such as liver toxicity.

It's also important to keep in mind that the global dietary supplements industry is worth more than US\$150 billion per year, so companies - and wellness influencers - selling supplements have a financial stake in convincing the public of their value.

There's no doubt that good nutrition is fundamental for your health. Studies

consistently show that a balanced diet containing a variety of essential nutrients can help prevent chronic diseases and promote overall well-being.

For instance, minerals such as calcium and iron support bone health and oxygen circulation in the blood, respectively. Proteins are essential for muscle repair and growth, and healthy fats, like those found in avocados and nuts, are vital for brain health.

However, pseudoscientific claims often twist such basic facts to promote the idea that specific diets or supplements can prevent or treat illness. For example, vitamin C is known to play a role in supporting the immune system and can help reduce the duration and severity of colds.

But despite assertions to the contrary, consuming large quantities of vitamin C does not prevent colds. In fact, the body needs only a certain amount of vitamin C to function properly, and any excess is simply excreted. (AP)

Mixed views on weight-loss meds for teens

About 50 pct of Americans support weight-loss drugs use for obesity

LOS ANGELES, Feb 3, (AP) - More US adults believe it is a good thing than a bad thing for adults to use weight-loss drugs like Ozempic, Wegovy and other brands if they are struggling with obesity or have a health condition tied to weight, but they are not broadly supportive of teens who have obesity using the medications, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

When it comes to ages 12 to 18 who are dealing with obesity, Americans are divided: About one-third say the use of weight-loss drugs in this context is a "very" or "somewhat" good thing, a similar share say it's a bad thing and about 3 in 10 say it isn't good or bad.

For adults, about half think it's a good thing, and about 2 in 10 think it's a bad thing.

The popular weight-loss drugs known as GLP-1 receptor agonists, which were originally meant to treat diabetes, surged in popularity after the Food and Drug Administration approved them for weight loss in 2021. Now, they're all over the place - celebrities, TV advertisements, social media, news media, your neighbor.

Doctors and researchers say the injectable drugs are an effective tool when it comes to treating obesity. The American Medical Association has urged health insurance companies to cover the drugs, and the American Academy of Pediatrics has said that doctors should consider giving the medications to kids 12 and older who



A woman holds up a dosage of Wegovy, a drug used for weight loss, at her home in Front Royal, Va., on March 1, 2024. (AP)

are struggling with obesity.

The AP-NORC poll results indicate that even as doctors urge the drugs' use, some Americans continue to have concerns about weight-loss drugs, particularly for teens and people who aren't struggling with obesity.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 100 million adults in the U.S. are obese - defined as having a body mass index of 30 or higher - and more than 22 million adults are severely obese, with a BMI of 40 or higher.

Obesity is classified as a chronic disease that needs medical attention, because it can result from genetics, envi-

ronmental factors and socioeconomic factors. Patients who use the drugs as an extra boost to lose weight can face criticism that they're somehow "cheating," said Dr. Cate Varney, who treats patients with obesity at UVA Health in Charlottesville, Virginia.

"It's like telling somebody to nail a nail into a board and then giving one person a hammer and another person, you know, like a chopstick," Varney said, adding, "we're leveling the playing field with these medications."

Anjanette Ewen lost 67 pounds on Mounjaro, and credits that weight loss as the reason she found a cancerous lump on her breast.

US exit poses risks to global health efforts

WHO chief urges world leaders to push US to reconsider withdrawal

GENEVA, Feb 3, (AP) - The World Health Organization chief asked global leaders to lean on Washington to reverse President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the UN health agency, insisting in a closed-door meeting with diplomats last week that the US will miss out on critical information about global disease outbreaks.

But countries also pressed WHO at a key budget meeting last Wednesday about how it might cope with the exit of its biggest donor, according to internal meeting materials obtained by The Associated Press. A German envoy, Bjorn Kummel, warned: "The roof is on fire, and we need to stop the fire as soon as possible."

For 2024-2025, the US is WHO's biggest donor by far, putting in an estimated \$988 million, roughly 14% of WHO's \$6.9 billion budget.

A budget document presented at the meeting showed WHO's health emergencies program has a "heavy reliance" on American cash. "Readiness functions" in WHO's Europe office were more than 80% reliant on the \$154 million the US contributes.

The document said US funding "provides the backbone of many of WHO's large-scale emergency operations," covering up to 40%. It said responses in the Middle East, Ukraine and Sudan were at risk, in addition to hundreds of millions of dollars lost by polio-eradication and HIV programs.

The U.S. also covers 95% of WHO's tuberculosis work in Europe and more than 60% of TB efforts in



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), speaks to journalists during a press conference at the World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, on April 6, 2023. (AP)

Africa, the Western Pacific and at the agency headquarters in Geneva, the document said.

At a separate private meeting on the impact of the US exit last Wednesday, WHO finance director George Kyriacou said if the agency spends at its current rate, the organization would "be very much in a hand-to-mouth type situation when it comes to our cash flows" in the first half of 2026. He added the current rate of spending is "something we're not going to do," according to a recording obtained by the AP.

Since Trump's executive order, WHO has attempted to withdraw funds from the U.S. for past expenses, Kyriacou said, but most of those "have not been accepted."

The U.S. also has yet to settle its owed contributions to WHO for 2024, pushing the agency into a deficit, he added.

WHO's executive board, made up of 34 high-level envoys including many national health ministers, was expected to discuss budget matters during its latest session, which opens Monday and is set to run through Feb. 11.

Singapore seizes nearly 1mln illegal health products

Gerber recalls teething sticks over choking risk

ARLINGTON, Va., Feb 3, (Agencies) - A baby food maker is recalling edible sticks meant to ease teething pain over a possible choking hazard.

Gerber announced Friday that it was recalling and discontinuing its brand of "Sooth N Chew" teething sticks after receiving customer complaints about choking. The company said one emergency room visit had been reported.

The teething sticks are edible teething marketed to parents and guardians of children six months and older. They come in strawberry-apple and banana flavors.

Gerber said it was working with the

US Food and Drug Administration on the recall.

Customers who bought the teething sticks should return them to stores where they were purchased for a refund, the company said.

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Singapore's Health Sciences Authority (HSA) seized 970,707 units of illegal health products and removed 7,351 listings from local e-commerce and social media platforms in 2024, the agency said in a statement on Monday.

Codeine cough syrup accounted for the largest share of seized products

at 54 percent, followed by sexual enhancement medicines at 19 percent, sedatives at 18 percent, and other prescription drugs at 9 percent.

Among the removed listings, 37 percent were skin and hair enhancement products, while 24 percent were contact lenses. Another 7 percent consisted of treatments for chronic conditions such as high cholesterol, hypertension, allergies, and pain relief.

The HSA also issued warnings to 2,868 online sellers last year.

Three consumers were hospitalized due to serious adverse effects from illegal products, the authority reported.

Kenya on high alert over Sudan Ebola virus

Pakistan launches anti-polio campaign

ISLAMABAD, Feb 3, (Xinhua) - Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday kicked off a nationwide anti-polio campaign for the year 2025, reaffirming his government's determination to completely eliminate the polio disease from the South Asian country.

The immunization campaign, which will run from Feb. 3 to Feb. 9, would target millions of children in the country to save their future and health, the prime minister said while addressing the launching ceremony.

He said that polio teams would reach the far-flung areas and villages across the country to eradicate the disease, hoping that the teams would successfully meet the huge national responsibility by utilizing their complete energies.

Sharif said a total of 73 polio cases were reported last year in the country, which emerged as a huge challenge, besides posing a setback, adding that this year only one new case had been reported so far.

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Ebola: Kenya's Ministry of Health said on Friday it has intensified surveillance at all entry points across the country following an outbreak of Sudan Ebola Virus Disease in neighboring Uganda.

"As a precautionary measure, surveillance systems have been enhanced in all counties and points of entry," Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Health Mary Muthoni said in a statement issued in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, on Friday evening.

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Moore claims vacant USBA heavyweight title

Shields outpoints Perkins for 1st undisputed heavyweight bout in women's boxing

FLINT, Mich., Feb 3, (AP): Claressa Shields unanimously outpointed Danielle Perkins on Sunday night in the first undisputed heavyweight bout in women's boxing to remain undefeated.

Shields, a two-time Olympic gold medalist with titles in five divisions, was in control of the fight from the start. She knocked down Perkins, landing a right hand on her chin with 15 seconds left in the 10th and final round.

The 29-year-old Shields improved to 16-0 with three knockouts.

"I want a rematch with Hanna Gabriels," she said.

The 42-year-old Perkins, who led St. John's basketball team in blocked shots two decades ago, won her first five fights before losing to Shields.

Perkins, weighing 177-plus pounds and standing at 6 foot, was a few inches taller and a few inches heavier than Shields.

She took some of Shields' best shots early in the bout, hitting the canvas only when the referee pushed her when separating the fighters in the third round. After both boxers faded in the middle rounds, Shields closed the seventh with a flurry of punches.

Shields won gold medals at 165 pounds at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics, making her the first boxer from the United States to win consecutive Olympic medals.

The powerful puncher looks at home in the 200-pound division, though also did at 175, 168, 160 and 154 pounds.

Shields knocked out WBC heavyweight champion Vanessa Lepage-Joanisse last summer in front of about 12,000 people at Little Caesars Arena in Detroit, where the Red Wings play.

Shields took latest next fight to the home of the Ontario Hockey League's Flint Firebirds in an arena with about 6,000 seats and a floor filled with fans in folding chairs.

She said the bout could have been New York, adding there was almost a deal with Barclays Center, Las Vegas in the Motor City.

It was important to Shields, though, to bring the first undisputed heavyweight bout in women's boxing history to her resilient hometown that was featured in the movie "The Fire Inside," based on her life.

In the co-main event, Brandon Moore (17-1) won the vacant USBA heavyweight title after Skylar Lacy (8-1) was disqualified in the eighth round for unsportsmanlike conduct. Lacy used his left shoulder to drive Moore back and out of the ring and onto a table commentators were using for streaming service DAZN.

Shields, an advocate for women in boxing, was proud to push for females to be featured in four of the 10 fights in Flint.

Ashleyann Lozada Motta, who became the first Olympic women's boxer from Puerto Rico at the 2024 Paris Games, made his professional debut and won a unanimous decision in a feisty, four-round fight against Denise Moran (3-1).



Claressa Shields, left, fights with Danielle Perkins during the undisputed heavyweight title match at Dort Financial Center in Flint. (AP)

Canter clinches second title on European tour in Bahrain

McIlroy stars at Pebble Beach; A Lim Kim takes LPGA Tour opener

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif., Feb 3, (AP): Rory McIlroy played a game nearly as magnificent as the Pebble Beach scenery Sunday as he powered his way past a pack of contenders and closed with a 6-under 66 for a two-shot victory in the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am.

McIlroy is one of the top attractions in golf, which only added to the appeal of the surprising sunshine and crashing surf at America's most famous coastal golf course. And just like that, a sleepy start to the PGA Tour season had some life to it.

On a day when six players had at least a share of the lead, McIlroy took the top spot for good with an 18-foot birdie putt on the 10th hole into a stiff breeze along the Pacific. He effectively ended the drama with a towering drive and a 7-iron into the 571-yard 14th hole, setting up an eagle putt from just outside 25 feet.

Shane Lowry fell out of a share for the lead when he sent his second shot over a cliff to the right of the par-5 sixth. But he shot 31 on the back nine, including a birdie on the final hole for a 68 that gave him second place alone.

Lucas Glover (67) and Justin Rose (68) were another shot behind. Sepp Straka, who started the final round with a one-shot lead, had a 72 and tied for seventh. Scottie Scheffler, the world's No. 1 player whose season was delayed by minor hand surgery from punctured glass while making ravioli, closed with a 67 and tied for ninth.

McIlroy won his second signature event - he won at Quail Hollow last year - to earn \$3.6 million. He finished at 21-under 267, one shot to par away from the tournament record. McIlroy won for the 27th time on the tour and is 21st on the career victory list.

A Lim Kim responded to a late charge by Nelly Korda with three birdies on her final four holes for a 5-under 67 and a two-shot victory in the LPGA Tour season opener at the Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions.

Korda, coming off her seven-win season, holed a 3-foot birdie putt on the par-5 15th to tie for the lead. Kim was in the final group behind her and matched the birdie to regain the lead, and she added birdies at the 16th and 18th holes.

Korda closed with a 65 at Lake



Rory McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, celebrates at Pebble Beach Golf Links after winning the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am golf tournament in Pebble Beach, Calif. (AP)

Nona to start her season with a runner-up finish.

Kim, a 29-year-old South Korean best known for her 2020 U.S. Women's Open title at Champions Golf Club in Houston during the COVID-19 pandemic, now has three LPGA titles. This was her second straight win in which she never trailed after any round, having done the same in Hawaii last year.

She finished at 20-under 268 and won \$300,000.

English golfer Laurie Canter captured a second title on the European tour by beating Pablo Larrazabal and Daniel Brown in a playoff to win the Bahrain Championship.

The No. 89-ranked Canter made birdie at No. 18 - the first playoff hole - while both Larrazabal and Brown failed to even make par.

Canter, who is back on the European tour after a spell on the breakaway LIV Golf circuit, also won the European Open in June last year.

Canter shot 69 in the final round while Larrazabal, who three-putted the 18th hole for bogey, and Brown each closed with a 70.

Ollie Schniederjans won for the first time in nearly 10 years when the American closed with a 3-under 69 for a four-shot victory over U.S. Open champion Bryson DeChambeau in the



A Lim Kim reacts after sinking her putt on the 18th hole and winning the Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions LPGA golf tournament in Orlando, Fla. (AP)

International Series India on the Asian Tour. Schniederjans, a former No. 1 amateur, had surgery on both hips in 2022. He narrowly missed out on joining LIV Golf when he finished fourth in its qualifying tournament. That at least earned him a spot in the International Series.

Players went to a shotgun start to complete the third round and play the entire fourth round Sunday because of fog delays at DLF Golf and Country

Club.

DeChambeau closed with a 65 to finish second ahead of his 2025 LIV debut next week in Saudi Arabia. Joaquin Niemann, the 36-hole leader, finished with three straight bogeys to close out his third round and closed with a 71. He tied for third with Abraham Ancer (72).

Josh Teater won The Panama Championship for his second career Korn Ferry Tour title, overcoming a six-stroke deficit with a 5-under 65 in breezy conditions in a two-stroke victory.

The 45-year-old Teater finished at 9-under 271 at Panama Golf Course. He also won the 2009 Utah Championship, with the gap between victories the second-longest in tour history.

Third-round lead Johnny Keefe had a 73 to tie for second with Dylan Wu and Nick Gabrelcik. Wu and Gabrelcik each shot 70.

Blake Proverbs closed with a 7-under 64 and defeated Jason Norris (63) in a playoff to win the Webex Players Series Murray River on the PGA Tour of Australasia.

Daniel von Tonder finished off a wire-to-wire victory with a 5-under 67 for a two-shot victory in the MyGolfLife Open on the Sunshine Tour in South Africa.

Dorival backs Neymar to reignite career

Flamengo secures 3rd Super Cup

RIO DE JANEIRO, Feb 3, (Xinhua): Bruno Henrique scored twice as Flamengo secured their third Brazilian Super Cup on Sunday with a 3-1 victory over Botafogo.

Henrique opened the scoring from the penalty spot at the Mangueirão stadium after he was brought down by Alexander Barboza.

With 15 minutes gone, referee Ramon Abatti halted the match due to heavy rain that left large sections of the pitch under water.

Play resumed more than an hour later and Henrique doubled the lead almost immediately with a sublime first-time effort from the edge of the 18-yard box after Michael Oliveira's pass on the counterattack.

Luiz Araujo made it 3-0 when he pounced on a defensive error and dribbled into the box before deftly lifting his shot over the onrushing goalkeeper John Furtado.

Patrick de Paula reduced the deficit with an 87th-minute strike but it proved little more than a consolation as Flamengo secured Brazilian football's first major trophy of the year.

Botafogo qualified for the match as the reigning Brazilian Serie A champions while Flamengo earned a place by winning last year's Copa do Brasil. Flamengo also won the Super Cup in 2020 and 2021.

Brazil manager Dorival Junior said Sunday that he expects Neymar to recapture his best form as the forward seeks to jumpstart his stalled career with Santos.

Last week, Neymar signed a six-month contract with the club, where he began his career after ending an injury-hit spell on the Saudi Pro League side Al-Hilal with mutual consent.

"Right now, this is what he needs: to play in a place where he feels the affection of his fans, the place where he was born and introduced himself to the world," Dorival told TV Globo.

"Now he is returning, still in a position to be a dominant player in world football. I have no doubt that is going to happen. Little by little he is recovering and he'll be an important player again." Neymar made just seven appearances for Al-Hilal following his August 2023 move from Paris Saint-Germain.

The 32-year-old sustained a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament while playing for Brazil in a World Cup qualifier against Uruguay in October 2023. He returned to action in October last year but has since struggled for form and fitness.

Despite praising the former Barcelona star, Dorival did not say whether Neymar - who played for Santos from 2009 to 2013 - was in his plans for Brazil's World Cup qualifiers against Colombia and Argentina in March.

The Brazilian national team's all-time leading scorer is expected to be available for Santos' home clash against Botafogo-SP on Wednesday.

Shinhama edges Stolz for men's 500m gold at Speed Skating WC



Japan's Shinhama Tatsuya competes during the men's 1000m Division A race at the ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Beijing, capital of China. (Xinhua)

WASHINGTON, Feb 3, (Xinhua): Japan's Tatsuya Shinhama clinched the men's 500-meter gold in 34.14 seconds, just 0.05 seconds ahead of American prodigy Jordan Stolz at the ISU Speed Skating World Cup in Milwaukee, United States.

Stolz had pocketed three golds in the tournament before adding a silver in the men's 500m. The 20-year-old American talent remains top of this season's World Cup standings in the men's 500m, 1,000m, and 1,500m.

Femke Kok of the Netherlands set a new track record of 37.02 seconds to win the women's 500m gold, followed by the runner-up Erin Jackson of the United States, while Poland's Andzelika Wojcik finished third.

In team pursuit events, American skaters took the men's title, and the Netherlands seized the women's gold.

Dutch skaters also dominated mass start events, as Jorrit Bergsma and Marijke Groenewoud won men's and women's titles respectively. The Netherlands secured the mixed relay gold as well.

The three-day tournament in Milwaukee concluded on Sunday, and the next World Cup is scheduled to be held in Tomaszow Mazowiecki in Poland from February 21 to 23.

Switzerland 11, Austria 0

Rival powerhouses enter worlds with contrasting win rates

VIENNA, Feb 3, (AP): Switzerland 11, Austria 0.

The contrast between the two rival powerhouses of ski racing could hardly be bigger heading into the Alpine world championships in Saalbach-Hinterglemm, which start Tuesday.

The men's team of host nation Austria has failed to win any of the 25 races so far this World Cup season.

The Swiss men, though, have celebrated 11 victories and added 14 more podium results.

Of course, they have serial winner Marco Odermatt. The Olympic giant slalom champion has raised his career tally of World Cup victories to 44 by racking up seven this season - just as many as the entire Austrian men's team has podium results.

Odermatt, the dominator of men's ski racing for over three seasons now, arrives at the worlds as the downhill and GS titleholder from 2023 and is in the prime of his career at 27.

But the Swiss team is so much more than just Odermatt.

It saw four other racers climb onto the top of a World Cup podium this season, and all were first-time winners: Justin Murisier and Alexis Monney in downhill, Franjo von Allmen in super-G, and Thomas Tumler in giant slalom.

So, Switzerland has a fresh generation of youngsters coming through after Odermatt?

Not quite. While that holds true for the 25-year-old Monney and 23-year-old von Allmen, Murisier at 32 and Tumler at 35 are well into their thirties.



Austria's Manuel Feller speeds down the course during an alpine ski, men's World Cup slalom, in Kitzbuehel, Austria. (AP)

And don't forget Loic Meillard, the runner-up to Odermatt in the overall standings last season. The all-event skier is yet to win a race this campaign but had five podium results.

When Saalbach-Hinterglemm hosted the World Cup finals last March, Meillard won the GS and placed second in the super-G, which was won by his Swiss teammate Stefan Rogentin.

They all blossom in a tightly knit team of friends, on and off the slopes.

"To live and share all these emotions with good friends is so much more (fun)," Odermatt wrote on Instagram last week, posting a video and photos from celebrations with his teammates after he

won the super-G in Kitzbuehel.

"We certainly have a super team with a lot of talent, and a training staff which always goes all in," Odermatt said. "Each success pushes the others on the team. In the end, we all want to be the fastest of the Swiss team. Those dynamics are great."

Leading the downhill, super-G and GS standings again, after winning those titles last season, Odermatt is the Swiss men's main gold medal hope at the worlds. It's hard to single out a racer carrying similar expectations within the Austrian team, which lacks a stand-out performer.

Marco Schwarz had that role when

he went past Odermatt to briefly top the overall standings two months into the 2023-24 season. But a severe knee injury following a downhill crash in Bormio on the course to be used at the 2026 Milan-Cortina Olympics ended the Austrian's campaign prematurely.

Schwarz returned a year later, in December 2024, and has been gradually working his way back, with a sixth place the best result in his 10 starts prior to the worlds.

The closest to a victory for the Austrian team this season came when Vincent Kriechmayr finished runner-up in the super-G races in Bormio and Wengen. However, he hasn't raced since hurting his right knee in the Jan. 18 Lauberhorn downhill.

Kriechmayr won gold in both downhill and super-G at the 2021 worlds in Italy and bronze and silver, respectively, two years earlier in Sweden.

Patrick Feurstein also had a second-place finish in a giant slalom, but Austria has no top-three result in downhill so far.

The same applied to slalom as well until Manuel Feller, last year's discipline champion, and Fabio Gstrein finally made the podium in Schladming last week in the ninth and final race before the worlds.

"We are highly motivated, we will finally show what we can do," said two-time Olympic champion and slalom silver medalist Johannes Strolz. "The entire team has been undervalued this season. We will do everything we can to have a say at the world championships."

'The best birthday gift is to achieve victory against Al-Wasl'

Ronaldo ready for ACL action before milestone birthday

RIYADH, Feb 3, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo turns 40 on Wednesday but is showing few signs of slowing down as he prepares to lead Saudi club Al-Nassr against Al-Wasl in the Asian Football Confederation's Champions League Elite.

The Portuguese star, who signed for the Riyadh club in Dec. 2022, leads the Saudi Pro League scoring charts with 15 goals in 17 games.

If Ronaldo can reproduce that form in the continental tournament -- there are two games remaining in the group stage, from which his team has already qualified -- then Al-Nassr has a chance to become Asian champion for the first time.

"The best birthday gift for Ronaldo is to achieve victory against Al-Wasl," Al-Nassr coach Stefano Pioli said ahead of the Monday meeting. "It is an important match for us and we want the three points."

After winning the UEFA Champions League five times with Manchester United and Real Madrid, Ronaldo's chances of winning a first Asian title have been bolstered with Al-Nassr's signing of Jhon Duran from English Premier League club Aston Villa for a reported fee of around \$79 million last week.

According to reports in Saudi Arabia, Duran has already been registered in time to play against Al-Wasl of the United Arab Emirates.

"Duran is in good shape," Pioli said. "We will decide how best to use him."

The team will certainly be without former Manchester City defender Aymeric Laporte, who is absent for per-



In this file photo, Al Nassr's Cristiano Ronaldo kicks the ball during Riyadh Season Cup 2024 final match against Al Hilal at Kingdom Arena Stadium in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

sonal reasons. There are also injury issues for another defender, Ali Lajami, as well as Portuguese midfielder Otavio.

Al-Nassr is in third place in the 12-team group, behind Saudi rivals Al-Hilal and Al-Ahli, both unbeaten after six games.

Al-Hilal has won four continental titles, more than any other Asian club. The Blues have lost Neymar ahead of their match against Persepolis of Iran. Brazil's record scorer returned to South America last week after an injury-hit spell of just seven appearances in 18 months for Al-Hilal.

"We are looking forward to the

game," coach Jorge Jesus said. "Our ambitions are always to win at home and in Asia."

Al-Ahli, with former English Premier League stars such as Riyad Mahrez and Ivan Toney, has the offensive strength to win the Champions League for the first time. The Jeddah club, currently second, heads to Qatar to take on Al-Sadd.

All 12 teams in the western zone - the tournament is split into two geographic halves until the quarterfinals - are in with a chance of finishing in the top eight and progressing to the knockout stage. The eastern zone resumes next week.

UAE announces participation in 9th Asian Winter Games

Harbin Games to promote the growth of winter sports in Asia: IOC member

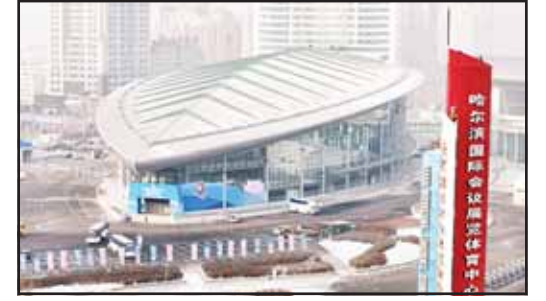
HARBIN, Feb 3, (Xinhua): As the torch relay of the 9th Asian Winter Games in Harbin started on Monday, torchbearer Yu Zaiqing, an International Olympic Committee (IOC) member, noted that the Games will promote the growth of the winter sports population in Asia.

"Torch relay carries forward the Olympic spirit, leading more people to have a deeper understanding of sports," Yu said. "This is the second time for Harbin to host the Asian Winter Games after the 3rd edition in 1996. The Games is much-anticipated with improved venue facilities and even more excellent performance of athletes." According to organizers, the 9th edition of the Asian Winter Games is the largest in terms of participating delegations and athletes.

Yu said, "I am delighted to see more athletes competing in the Asian Winter Games. Southeast Asian and West Asian countries and regions tried their best to cultivate winter sports athletes despite unfavorable climate factors, showing their passion for winter sports." The 2025 Harbin Asian Winter Games represents the latest international comprehensive winter sports event held in China since the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics.

"The Beijing 2022 was a driving force to expand the winter sports population in China," Yu remarked. "The Harbin Asian Winter Games will also be conducive to promoting winter sports and cultivating talents, leaving lasting cultural, social and sports legacies." The first event of the Games began on Monday with ice hockey, before the opening ceremony on Friday. The Games will conclude on February 14.

Meanwhile, the UAE National Olympic Committee on Sunday announced the country's participation in the 9th Asian Winter Games, which will be held in



This aerial photo taken on Jan. 21, 2025, shows the Main Press Center of the 9th Asian Winter Games in Harbin, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province. (Xinhua)

Harbin, China, from February 7 to 14.

This marks the UAE's third participation in the Asian Winter Games and the largest delegation to date. Athletes will compete in three disciplines: alpine skiing, freestyle skiing and snowboarding.

The UAE first participated in the Asian Winter Games in 2011, competing in ice hockey in Almaty and Astana, Kazakhstan. Its second appearance came in 2017 in Sapporo, Japan, where it expanded its involvement to include both ice hockey and figure skating.

This year, the UAE will be represented by seven athletes - six males and one female. The delegation will showcase the UAE's growing presence in winter sports on the Asian stage.

The UAE National Olympic Committee expressed confidence in the athletes' preparation, emphasizing their dedication to enhancing the nation's profile in international winter sports events.

Cavs score franchise-record 91 in first half to rout Mavericks



Detroit Pistons forward Ronald Holland II, left, and Chicago Bulls forward Matas Buzelis (14) chase the ball during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Detroit. (AP)

Raptors end bad run against Clippers

CLEVELAND, Feb 3, (AP): Evan Mobley scored 22 points and Cleveland set a franchise record with 91 in the first half as the Cavaliers romped to a 144-101 win on Sunday over Dallas just hours after the Mavericks traded superstar Luka Doncic to the Lakers for Anthony Davis.

Darius Garland added 17 points and 10 assists as the Cavs improved the league's best record to 40-9.

Sam Merrill made nine 3-pointers and Cleveland set a franchise record with 26 3s.

Hoping to return to the Finals, the Mavericks dealt the 25-year-old Doncic, a five-time All-Star and the face of their franchise to Los Angeles for Davis, one of the league's most talented two-way players.

Davis will join forces in Dallas with All-Star guard Kyrie Irving, who has plenty of experience playing with other superstars after stints alongside LeBron James, Kevin Durant, James Harden and Doncic.

Unfortunately, Irving wasn't available because of injury and the Cavs blitzed the Mavericks from the start. Cleveland scored a franchise record 50 points in the first quarter and opened a 45-point halftime lead.

Their 91 points tied for the third-most in a first half in league history.

Jaden Hardy paced Dallas with 21 points.

Pistons 127, Bulls 119
In Buffalo, Cade Cunningham had 22 points and 15 assists as Detroit defeated Chicago.

The Pistons overcame a triple-double from Nikola Vucevic, who finished with 20 points, 10 rebounds and 10 as-

sists. Cunningham, named to his first All-Star team earlier this week, didn't have his best shooting night, going 10 for 23 from the floor and 2 for 6 on 3-pointers, but created easy baskets for his teammates all game.

Jalen Duren added 21 points and 13 rebounds for Detroit, while sixth-man Malik Beasley scored 19. The Pistons finished with seven players in double figures.

Coby White led Chicago with 22 points, while Josh Giddey added 20 points and 11 rebounds.

A 3-pointer by Vucevic pulled the Bulls within 111-104 with 6:13 to play, but Chicago couldn't string together enough stops to make a serious run. Cunningham set up dunks for Auser Thompson and Duren followed by Tim Hardaway Jr. and Beasley hitting 3-pointers.

Raptors 115, Clippers 108
In Toronto, RJ Barrett scored 20 points, Jakob Poeltl had 10 points and

10 rebounds and Toronto beat Los Angeles for their eighth win in the past 10 games.

Grady Dick scored 18 points and Scottie Barnes had 15 as the Raptors snapped a five-game losing streak against the Clippers.

Ochai Agbaji had 12 points, Immanuel Quickley scored 11 and Ja'Kobe Walter scored 10 as seven Toronto players reached double digits.

James Harden had 25 points and Ivica Zubac scored 18 for the Clippers, who lost for the first time in three games.

Kevin Porter Jr. had 17 points for Los Angeles while Kawhi Leonard scored 14.

Harden shot 7 for 20 and made 2 of 9 from 3-point range. He went 9 for 9 at the free-throw line.

Before tipoff, some fans booed during the playing of the American national anthem. Similar reactions broke out Saturday night at NHL games in Canada.

Celtics 118, 76ers 110

In Philadelphia, Jayson Tatum scored 13 of his 35 points in the fourth quarter and Boston rallied from a 26-point deficit to beat Philadelphia.

Tatum added 11 assists and seven rebounds. Jaylen Brown scored 21 points and had 10 rebounds and six assists. Kristaps Porzingis scored 18 points and Derrick White added 17.

Tyrese Maxey scored 23 points in the first half to help put the 76ers up by 23 at the break. Maxey finished with 34 points, his fifth straight 30-point game and 14th consecutive game of 28 or more.

Kelly Oubre had 18 points and 13 rebounds for Philadelphia, Guerschon Yabusele scored 21 points and Ricky Council IV added 11 points, eight assists and seven rebounds.

Grizzlies 132, Bucks 119
In Milwaukee, Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 37 points and Memphis continued their recent mastery of Milwaukee with a victory.

Memphis has won its last seven meetings with the Bucks, who last beat the Grizzlies 126-114 in Milwaukee on Jan. 19, 2022. The Grizzlies won this one without star guard Ja Morant, who missed a second straight game due to a sore right shoulder.

Jackson briefly went to the locker room late in the first quarter after taking an inadvertent elbow to the face from Ryan Rollins on the Bucks guard's drive attempt. Jackson returned at the start of the second period and shot 7 of 13 from 3-point range.

Milwaukee lost for the fourth time in five games despite getting 30 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists from Giannis Antetokounmpo. Khris Middleton added 20 points.

Santi Aldama scored 23 points and Desmond Bane added 22 for the Grizzlies, who have won eight of nine. Zach Edey had 14 points and 11 rebounds. Scotty Pippen Jr. had 9 points, 10 assists and five rebounds.

Kuwait Club faces Jeddah Union in a crucial Super League clash

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Kuwait Club is set to face Jeddah Union of Saudi Arabia in a highly anticipated semi-final clash of the Asian League Championship for West Asia - Gulf Region "Super League" at 7:00 pm at Union Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex, marking the first of a best-of-three playoff series.

The second leg will be held on February 11 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. If both teams secure one win each, a decisive third match will take place on March 4 in Kuwait.

Kuwait Club, the defending Gulf champion of the Asian League, qualified after finishing second in Group 1. Meanwhile, Jeddah Union secured its spot by placing third in Group 2, which also saw Al-Qadisiya - the second Kuwaiti representative - advance as the group leader. After a surprising 83-90 loss to UAE's Shabab Al-Ahli in the final group stage match, Al-Abyad aims to bounce back in the playoffs. German coach Peter Schommers will rely on key players, including Hamad Adnan, Hussein Al-Khabbaz, Turki Ham-



Kuwait Club player goes for a solo dunk during the League Championship.

oud, Imran Jawhar, Abdulrahman Al-Juma, Yousef Al-Hamdan, and Musaed Al-Otaibi, alongside the American trio of Jakar Sampson, Brianti Weber, and Augustine Robit.

In domestic basketball action, Al-Qurain defeated Al-Arabi 87-77, while Yarmouk edged past Al-Tadamon 91-86.

Napoli also draws

Inter avoids yet another loss to Milan

MILAN, Feb 3, (AP): Stefan de Vrij scored a last-gasp goal to secure what could prove to be a precious point for Inter Milan in the title race as he helped his team avoid a third straight derby defeat to AC Milan with a 1-1 draw.

Inter had three goals ruled out and hit the post as many times before De Vrij's stoppage-time equalizer canceled out Tijjani Reijnders' first-half opener. The whole of the Inter bench ran onto the field to celebrate with the defender at the corner flag.

Second-placed Inter remained three points behind Napoli - and with a game in hand - after the Serie A leader conceded a stoppage-time goal to draw 1-1 at Roma.

Inter also had strong claims for a penalty turned down for a foul on Marcus Thuram in the second half.

Kyle Walker, who arrived recently on loan from Manchester City, was thrown straight into the starting lineup and he appeared to have a calming influence on the Milan defense - which had let in four goals in its past two matches.

Inter nevertheless had two goals disallowed for offside in the first half and also wasted several chances before being made to pay for its profligacy right on the stroke of halftime.

Theo Hernandez sprinted downfield and sent a ball through to Rafael Leao, whose angled drive was parried by Yann Sommer but only as far as Reijnders to blast in the rebound from close range.

Inter had a third goal disallowed in the 64th minute for a foul on Hernandez by Denzel Dumfries, who then crossed it for Lautaro Martinez to bundle in.

Yann Bissecq, Thuram and Dumfries hit the woodwork before Inter's siege finally paid off deep in added time as Nicola Zalewski chested down Bissecq's cross for De Vrij to sidefoot into the back of the net.

Just as Napoli thought it was about to go five points clear of Inter, Angelino volleyed in a cross for the equalizer.

Napoli had led from the 29th minute following a rare goal from former Roma defender Leonardo Spinazzola.

It was only his sixth goal in Serie A but the 31-year-old, who joined Napoli from Roma on a free transfer in July, didn't celebrate after chipping goalkeeper Mile Svilar, his former teammate, New signing Randal Kolo Muani is rescuing Juventus - and perhaps saving coach Thiago Motta's job.

Kolo Muani, who was signed on loan from Paris Saint-Germain last month, scored twice in three second-half minutes on Sunday to set Juventus on its way to a 4-1 comeback win at home to lowly Empoli. That took his tally to three goals in the two matches since the France forward arrived in Italy.

Mattia De Sciglio - who is on loan from Juventus - had got Empoli off to a great start when he headed in a corner in the fourth minute.

Empoli had to play the final six minutes with 10 men after Youssef Maleh was sent off following a second booking. Dusan Vlahovic netted a highlight solo goal in the final minute and Francisco Conceicao added a fourth in stoppage-time to seal the result.



Inter Milan's Benjamin Pavard, right, tries to tackle AC Milan's Rafael Leao during the Serie A soccer match between AC Milan and Inter Milan at the San Siro stadium, in Milan, Italy. (AP)



Manchester City's Manuel Akanji, left, and Arsenal's Kai Havertz vie for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Arsenal and Manchester City at the Emirates stadium in London. Arsenal maintained its title chase with a resounding 5-1 victory over Manchester City at home on Sunday to stay six points behind Liverpool. The result further exposed City's struggles, coming just 10 days after its clash with Real Madrid in the Champions League. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait Club, Al-Arabi neck-and-neck for title

Relegation battle intensifies

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The intense battle between Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi for the Zain Premier League title continues, as both teams secured victories in the latest round, each reaching 36 points in the standings. Kuwait Club delivered a dominant 6-0 win over Al-Nasr, while Al-Arabi overcame Al-Fahaheel with a 3-1 victory.

With just five rounds remaining in both the second division and the Big Six league, Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi emerged as the strongest title contenders, holding a 13-point lead over their nearest competitor, Al-Qadisiya. Kuwait Club showcased its attacking prowess against Al-Nasr capitalizing on its opponent's poor performance. The scoreline could have been even higher if not for missed opportunities and bad luck in front of goal.

Meanwhile, Al-Arabi had a more challenging match, only breaking the deadlock early in the second half before securing its victory. With this win, Al-Arabi equaled Kuwait Club in league victories, with both teams now boasting 12 wins each.

Al-Qadisiya bounced back from a recent dip in form, securing a 2-1 comeback win over Al-Salmiya after suffering a draw and a loss in previous rounds. This victory was crucial for Al-Qadisiya, as it avenged its 0-1 defeat in the first leg and boosted morale ahead of its Gulf Clubs Championship clash against Al-Arabi (Qatar).

On the other hand, Al-Salmiya slipped to fourth place, now facing the risk of further decline if it fails to defeat Al-Fahaheel (5th, 17 points) in the next round. With Kazma and Al-Tadamon lurking close behind, the Sky Blues could find themselves in an even more precarious position.

Similar to Al-Qadisiya, Kazma also returned to winning ways, securing an emphatic 4-0 victory over Al-Tadamon. This marked its first win under Bosnian coach Rosmir Sveko, ending a rough patch of two losses and a draw in the last three rounds. However, Al-Tadamon's struggles continue, as it now sits level on 14 points with Kazma, both battling for a spot in the Big Six.

At the bottom of the table, Khaitan (7 points), Al-Nasr (6 points), and Al-Yarmouk (5 points) are in a dire situation, needing a miracle to secure a place in the Big Six League. Their performances so far have been underwhelming, leaving them clinging to a slim hope of catching up with Kazma and Al-Tadamon. However, their current form suggests they are more likely to battle among themselves for survival in the Premier League next season.



Kuwait Club player controls the ball as an opponent looks on during the Zain Premier League game between Kuwait Club and Al-Nasr.

Olympic Council of Asia official hails upcoming Games

Kuwait ice hockey team falls to Kyrgyzstan in overtime thriller at Asian Winter Games

HARBIN, China, Feb 3, (Agencies): The Kuwaiti ice hockey team suffered a hard-fought 9-8 defeat against Kyrgyzstan after extra time in their opening match at the ninth Asian Winter Games "Harbin 2025," held in Heilongjiang province, northeastern China. The game ended in a draw in regular time before Kyrgyzstan secured the victory in overtime.

Fahid Al-Ajmi, director of Kuwait's delegation at the tournament, commended the team's strong performance against one of the toughest opponents in their group. "The victory was within reach, just seconds away from the end of regular time," he noted.

Looking ahead, Al-Ajmi emphasized the importance of Kuwait's upcoming matches against Singapore, scheduled for today, and Bahrain on Thursday, as the team aims for crucial wins. He also extended his gratitude to the Kuwait Olympic Committee and the Public Authority for Sports for their continuous support of Kuwaiti athletes in this prestigious continental event.

Kuwait's curling team will kick off its campaign today in the mixed doubles competition, facing Mongolia and Thailand in Group B, which also features Japan, Hong Kong, and Chinese Taipei.

Meanwhile, Vinod Kumar Tiwari, deputy director general of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), participated in the torch relay of the 9th Asian Winter Games in Harbin and praised China's preparation efforts ahead of the event.



Kuwait and Kyrgyzstan players battle for the puck during the Asian Winter Games in Harbin, China.

"We are very happy and very pleased. Because the organizing committee had only one year to prepare for the games and they've done a marvelous job," said Tiwari. "For me, this is one of the finest ones that we have seen in the Asian Winter Games," he added.

In Harbin, many infrastructures and venues, especially the Yabuli ski resort, impressed the OCA officials a lot. "The infrastructure and the facilities are up to the Olympic standards. The organizers are providing the best environment for the athletes to participate," said the OCA official.

The opening day of the Asian Winter Games was the tenth day of the 2025 Chinese New Year.

Upon hearing that there are 20 million visitors in the capital city of northeast China's Heilongjiang province every day during the vacation, Tiwari told Xinhua that the world would see Harbin in a new value and new shape through not only the Asian Winter Games but also the ongoing ice and snow festival.

"Actually, we have some of the events starting today, especially the ice hockey. We'd like to request the citizens to come forward and support their teams, not only the Chinese team but also the other teams as well," Tiwari said.

"Harbin has the capability of also hosting the Olympic Winter Games if they decide to do it," he added.

Kuwait's Al-Dhaferi secures second at Hail Rally



KUNA photo

Kuwaiti rally driver Meshari Al-Dhaferi poses with officials on the podium.

RIYADH, Feb 3, (KUNA): Kuwaiti rally driver Meshari Al-Dhaferi claimed second place in the SSV Rally category at the 2025 Hail Toyota International Rally in Saudi Arabia.

Speaking to KUNA, Al-Dhaferi expressed his determination throughout the competition, despite facing mechanical issues on the first day. "This is my fourth time participating in the Hail Rally. I encountered rear-end mechanical difficulties on the first day, which put me six minutes behind the first-place contender," he said.

However, he made a strong comeback on the second day. "I pushed harder and managed to finish in second place," Al-Dhaferi added, emphasizing his eagerness to

make up for it in the next event, set to take place in Jordan this April.

Al-Dhaferi also highlighted the importance of competing in the full tournament series, which consists of four events across Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar, and the UAE. "I made sure to participate from the start to secure crucial points for the overall championship," he noted.

The Hail Toyota International Rally is a key event in the Middle Eastern rally circuit, attracting top drivers from the region. Al-Dhaferi's performance reinforces Kuwait's strong presence in the sport as he continues his quest for victory in upcoming rounds.

Morata moves to Galatasaray

Rashford takes 'easy decision' to join Villa on loan

LONDON, Feb 3, (AP): Marcus Rashford will look to reignite his career at Aston Villa after joining on loan for the rest of the season from Manchester United, where he has fallen out with recently hired manager Ruben Amorim.

The move was completed late Sunday, with neither Premier League club disclosing any more terms surrounding the deal. Rashford was reportedly joining Villa with a view to a permanent transfer for 40 million pounds (\$50 million), with Villa paying a loan fee as well as covering the majority of Rashford's salary - reportedly worth nearly \$400,000 a week.

The 27-year-old forward, one of the most famous players in the Premier League, had not played for United, his hometown club, since Dec. 12 amid concerns from Amorim about Rashford's commitment to training. He has also been overlooked for recent England squads and didn't play at the European Championship last year, after a season when he was dropped by United on one occasion for disciplinary reasons.

There was speculation about a move to Italy or Saudi Arabia, but Rashford is staying in England and now needs to prove to Villa manager Unai Emery he deserves playing time.

"I was lucky to have a few clubs approach me but Aston Villa was an easy decision," Rashford posted on Instagram. "I really admire the way that Aston Villa have been playing

this season, and the manager's ambitions. I just want to play football and am excited to get started." Villa sold Colombia striker Jhon Duran to Saudi club Al-Nasr for a reported fee of 64 million pounds (\$80 million) on Friday so needed an attacking player to provide competition for Ollie Watkins.

Rashford scored 30 goals in the 2022-23 season, the most prolific of his career after bursting onto the scene early in 2016 at the age of 18, but hasn't approached that level since. He has seven goals in all competitions this season.

Amorim recently said he would rather put United's 63-year-old goal-

keeping coach in the squad ahead of someone who isn't fully committed in training, as he perceives Rashford.

"The reason is the training, what I think a footballer should do in training, in life and every day. If things don't change, I will not change," he said. "It's the same situation for every player. If you do the maximum and the right things then we can use every player." At one point, Rashford even acknowledged he was "ready for a new challenge." Rashford has made 426 appearances for United, scoring 138 goals, and made a name for himself for his off-the-field work during the pandemic when his lobbying led to the British government agreeing to keep funding meals for poor students after initial restriction.

Spain striker Alvaro Morata has joined Galatasaray from AC Milan on loan with an option to make the deal permanent, both teams said.

The agreement was announced late Sunday.

Galatasaray said it will pay six million euros (\$6.1 million) to Milan to keep Morata on loan until Jan. 20, 2026.

The Turkish side added that the transfer can be made permanent for a fee of eight million euros. Morata will be paid six million euros per season if the purchase option is activated.

The much-traveled Morata - a former Chelsea, Juventus, Real Madrid and Atletico player - scored six goals and delivered two assists in 25 matches across all competitions this season.



In this file photo, Manchester United's Marcus Rashford celebrates after his team won the English FA Cup final soccer match between Manchester City and Manchester United at Wembley Stadium in London. (AP)