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Kuwait inaugurates new Palace of Justice, marking new era for judiciary



Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah during his attendance at the opening ceremony of the new Palace of Justice building.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): Under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah as his representative, Kuwait celebrated the inauguration of the new Palace of Justice in a grand ceremony on Tuesday evening.

Upon arrival, His Highness the Crown Prince was warmly received by Supreme Judicial Council President and Court of Cassation President Dr. Adel Majed Bouresli, Minister of Justice Nasser Yousef Al-Sumait, and other senior judicial officials. He then unveiled a commemorative plaque to mark the occasion, alongside the presence of Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and other dignitaries.

The event featured speeches from senior officials, including Dr. Bouresli, who highlighted the strategic importance of the new judicial complex, describing it as a "beacon of fairness and justice in Kuwait." He emphasized that the state-of-the-art facility reflects

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Kuwait vows zero tolerance for terror funding networks

Artificial intelligence, crypto new battleground

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Development and International Cooperation Ambassador Hamad Al-Mishaan has confirmed that Kuwait is taking measures to combat terrorism and financing it.

Al-Mishaan made the statement on the sidelines of a workshop on developing investigation capabilities, effectively pursue cases of financing terrorism and implementing Security Council sanctions; in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) through video conference at Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Kuwaiti Diplomatic Institute on Tuesday.

He disclosed "this is part of a series of measures we are taking, because Kuwait is currently going through the evaluation phase in the Financial Action Task Force. We are intensifying workshops and awareness on this issue, not only for employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; but also for the concerned parties in banks and investment companies in order to raise awareness on this matter."

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His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah delivers a speech at the World Governments Summit 2025 in Dubai.



PM Diwan photos UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum receives His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

PM shares Kuwait's development vision

DUBAI, Feb 11, (KUNA): The World Governments Summit 2025 is a global platform for a constructive, purposeful dialogue and an opportunity to unify efforts toward a better future, said His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

This came during His Highness the prime minister speech at the World Governments Summit 2025, which kicked off earlier today, in Dubai.

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Kuwait's Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting on Tuesday. — See Page 5

MoH denies misleading claims about cholesterol medications

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Ministry of Health affirmed that the information circulating on social media regarding cholesterol-lowering medications is inaccurate, misleading, and not based on reliable scientific evidence, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry stressed that these medications, available in Kuwait, are used in accordance with the recommendations of international medical references and have a proven role in reducing cardiovascular diseases.

It affirmed that measuring LDL (bad

cholesterol) and total cholesterol is a crucial factor in assessing heart disease risks, contrary to the claims made in the video.

The ministry urged citizens to seek information from medical specialists and cautioned against spreading incorrect medical information that could pose risks to public health.

It also stressed that legal action would be taken against those who promote misleading information, in accordance with established regulations, to ensure the protection of public health and safety.

Stormy symphony of rain, thunder, fog to hit Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Kuwait's Meteorology Department has forecast changes in weather conditions over the coming days, with rain, thunderstorms, and fog expected across the country, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to the department, a weakening high-pressure system will give way to an incoming low-pressure system carrying a humid air mass. This shift will bring increasing low and medium clouds, with scattered light rain starting Tuesday morning. Rainfall is expected to intensify gradually, ranging from light to moderate, and will continue intermittently until Thursday morning, occasionally accompanied by thunderstorms.

The Director of the department Dharar Al-Ali told KUNA that the rains will be accompanied by southeasterly winds, which will be active at times, and there will be a chance of dense fog forming on Wednesday evening. This will cause a reduction in horizontal visibility, which could be completely absent in some areas.

He explained that the weather conditions are expected to improve from Thursday afternoon with the return of the high-pressure system, causing clouds to decrease and the chances of rain to diminish.

The weather on Wednesday will be cold and cloudy, with northeasterly winds shifting to southeasterly. These winds will be light to moderate, ranging from 10 to 40 km/h, with a chance of scattered rain, which may occasionally be accompanied by thunder. The expected maximum temperatures will be between 17 and 19 degrees Celsius.

The sea will be light to moderate, with waves rising to between two and six feet at times. At night, the weather will remain cold and cloudy, gradually becoming partly cloudy. Winds will shift from north easterly to variable directions, light to moderate in speed, sometimes reaching stronger gusts between 8 and 40 km/h. Scattered rain is still possible, with occasional thunderstorms and the potential for fog

in some areas. Minimum temperatures are expected to range between 10 and 12 degrees Celsius. The sea will continue to be light to moderate, with waves rising to between two and six feet.

On Thursday, the weather will improve, becoming moderate and partly cloudy, with horizontal visibility gradually improving. Winds will shift to a northwesterly direction, light to moderate in speed, ranging between 8 and 32 km/h. There may still be light scattered rain in the southern parts of Kuwait. Maximum temperatures are expected to reach between 19 and 21 degrees Celsius, and sea conditions will remain light to moderate, with waves between one and four feet.

Thursday evening will see moderate, partly cloudy weather, with winds shifting to a northwesterly direction, light to moderate in speed (8 to 32 km/h). The minimum temperatures will range from 10 to 12 degrees Celsius, and the sea will continue to be light to moderate, with waves between one and four feet.

NewsWatch



'Canada, Kuwait pursue goals jointly'



9 Bursa Kuwait drives sustainability and social responsibility in 2024

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, will attend and sponsor on Wednesday, the graduation of the 50th batch officers cadets at Ali Al-Sabah Military Academy at 10:00 a.m. local-time. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations Tuesday to the Iranian President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, on the occasion of his country's national day.

His Highness the Amir expressed wishes of long healthy life to the President and further prosperity for his country and people. Similarly, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations Tuesday to Iranian President Pezeshkian on the occasion of his country's national day, wishing him good health and well-being. (KUNA)

AI added to 10th grade curriculum

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): Minister of Education, Jalal Sayed Abdulmuhsin Al-Tabtabaei, to keep up with modern technological developments, announced on Tuesday the inclusion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Computer curriculum for 10th grade students.

In a statement, the Acting General Technical Supervisor of Computers at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education, Mona Salem Awad, highlighted the importance of this decision.

The announcement came during an introductory meeting organized by the department via the Teams platform, attended by

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75% local purchase mandate for co-ops

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: In line with the recommendations of the Council of Ministers to enhance local production, achieve food security, support Kuwaiti farmers, and increase the share of national products in cooperative markets, Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah issued a ministerial decision yesterday to mandate cooperative societies to purchase no less than 75 percent of their agricultural product needs directly from approved marketing outlets by participating in daily auctions. These transactions will be conducted through automated invoices to ensure transparency and improve the efficiency of buying and selling operations, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

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Kuwait's CPI score holds at 46: report

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Kuwait has maintained its score in the Global Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2024 at 46, while its global ranking dropped by two positions from 63rd to 65th. Kuwait's ranking in the Arab world has decreased from 4th to 7th, and in the Gulf region, it ranked 6th.

For the seventh consecutive year, Denmark topped the index with a score of 90, followed by Finland with 88 and Singapore with 84. The global average for the Corruption Perceptions Index is 43 points, and more than half of the countries (56 percent) scored lower than that.

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Prayer Timings

Fajr 05:11 Asr 15:11
 Sunrise .. 06:31 Maghrib .. 17:34
 Zohr 12:02 Isha 18:52

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Rather cold and cloudy with light to moderate northeasterly wind changing to southeasterly wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Weather

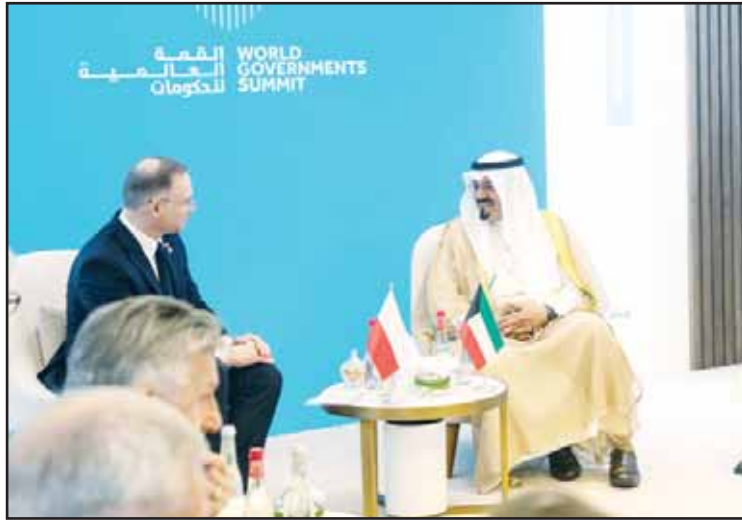
By Night: Cold and cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times northeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery with a chance for fog forming over some areas.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	15	12
Kuwait Airport	19	10
Abdaly	20	06
Bubyan	17	10
Jahra	20	11
Failaka Island	18	11
Salmiyah	16	14

PM receives Pakistani counterpart; Polish president receives Kuwait PM at WGS



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets Pakistani PM Shahbaz Sharif.



Polish President Andrzej Duda receives HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

DUBAI, Feb 11, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received his Pakistani counterpart Mohammad Shehbaz Sharif Tuesday, on the sidelines of the World Governments Summit (WGS) held in Dubai, UAE.

During the meeting, ways to enhance the historical bilateral relations and expand cooperation that better serve the two countries, were discussed, in addition to exchanging views on regional and international issues of common interest.

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya and a host of senior officials attended the meeting.

In another development, Polish President Andrzej Duda received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on the sidelines of the

World Governments Summit (WGS) held in Dubai, UAE.

His Highness the Prime Minister, during the reception, 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, and their affirmation of the good relations between the two countries, wishing them further progress and prosperity.

The meeting also reviewed the progressive bilateral relations and ways to enhance them to better serve the two countries, in addition to exchanging views on regional and international issues of common interest.

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya and a number of senior officials attended the meeting.

'Canada, Kuwait pursue goals jointly'

Ambassadors, diplomats grace Canadian National Flag Day



The Canadian ambassador Alia Mawani with guests.



The Canadian ambassador and Minister of Commerce and Industry cutting the cake at the event.



The Canadian ambassador, Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel viewing the photo gallery.

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait Aliya Mawani said the 60th Canadian National Flag Day and 60th anniversary of Canada and Kuwait relations come at a time of change and transformation in both countries and in the world in general.

Mawani made the statement during the celebration of the Canadian National Flag Day in the presence of Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel and a large number of ambassadors and diplomats.

She pointed out these two occasions also coincide with the two countries assuming major leadership roles -- Canada as the chair of the G7 and Kuwait as the chair of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Arab Capital of Culture and Information for 2025. "These roles provide the two countries with platforms

as partners and members of the international community to pursue their shared commitment to humanitarian work, cooperation and enhancing global security and stability. These priorities are essential for economic development and prosperity, not only of our two countries but also the entire world," she added.

She explained that "an anniversary -- whether in life or diplomacy -- acquires the importance we give to it and can provide opportunities to reflect on what we have built and what we aspire for."

She also asserted that "both Canada and Kuwait support a collective approach to problem solving. We firmly believe that we can achieve more together. This is the essence of our diplomatic relations and has been a hallmark of Canada-Kuwait cooperation since the relationship was formally established on April 27, 1965. This has been reinforced by Canada's role in liberating Kuwait from occupation during the first Gulf War, in which approximately 4,500 Canadian service members participated, and by Kuwait hosting a Canadian Armed Forces base since 2011, which plays a critical role in our security, stability and humanitarian engagement across the region."

She added "our celebration tonight is part of a program of events and activities for the anniversary that will take place throughout 2025 and will revolve around

connectivity, highlighting key aspects of the relationship -- cultural exchange, trade and cooperation in healthcare and education, ICT, oil and gas, defense and security, sports, and food that is always a favorite topic here. If you are a Tim Hortons fan, we are pleased to announce that we will soon be launching our 60th Anniversary Friendship Blend that you will be able to enjoy throughout Ramadan, combining the special flavors of Canada and Kuwait. Also, stay tuned for our social media campaign, which will highlight some of the wonderful people who form a bond between Canada and Kuwait."

She concluded her speech by extending her best wishes to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people on the auspicious occasion of the National Day and Liberation Day. "Long live Kuwait and its people. I would like to thank you for your long-standing friendship, which will continue to extend into the future. In a world where communication and cooperation are more important than ever, we must uphold human dignity and strive for a sustainable future for everyone. Together, we can ensure that the Canada-Kuwait partnership remains strong and enduring, as we collectively work towards peace, security and prosperity for our two countries and a brighter future for generations to come."



Kuwait Zakat House officials during the dispatch of aid to Syria.

Kuwait dispatches 23rd plane to Syria with 10 tons of aid

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): Kuwait dispatched the 23rd relief aircraft to Syria on Tuesday, carrying 10 tons of flour as part of the ongoing relief campaign, organized by the Kuwait Zakat House in coordination with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense.

In a statement to KUNA, before the plane's departure, Projects and Local Organizations Superintendent at the Zakat House, Aayed Al-Mutairi emphasized that the continuation of the air bridge reflects Kuwait's deep-rooted commitment to humanitarian assistance and the historical ties between the two nations.

The aid shipments were requested by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), which assesses urgent needs across provinces, particularly in light of increasing demand for essential food, medicine, and shelter supplies due to instability and a lack of infrastructure, Al-Mutairi explained.

He also noted that Kuwait Zakat House plans to expand relief efforts by organizing ground convoys in the near future, aiming to transport large quantities of essential supplies, and that these efforts are being coordinated with Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant authorities to facilitate cross-border humanitarian assistance.

Acting Manager for Foreign Activities, Abdulrahman Al-Terkeit reaffirmed the organization's commitment to aiding Syrians since the start of the crisis over a decade ago.

SARC has highlighted the urgent need for essential items, particularly flour, and future aid shipments will prioritize medicine and shelter supplies to address urgent humanitarian needs, Al-Terkeit added.

This plane is Kuwait Zakat House's fourth relief flight, bringing its total aid shipments to 122 tons, he cumulative assistance delivered through the Kuwaiti air bridge to Syria now stands at 601 tons.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's 22nd aid-loaded plane arrived at Damascus International Airport on Monday, carrying 10 tons of foodstuff, coordinated by Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense and Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS).

KRCS collaborated with humanitarian and charitable associations, as well as official institutions, in coordination with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, to secure arrival and delivery of the aid.

Overall volume of Kuwaiti aid reached 591 tons so far.

Stray dog shelter on hold

Question on 'Metro Project' deferred at MC panel meet

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Technical Committee at the Municipal Council, led by Munira Al-Amir, convened Tuesday during which it deliberated on eight items in its agenda.

The committee requested detailed studies from the executive body on two matters: amending the Municipal Council's decision on the Egailla Beach development project (No. 7) and adding a fastfood restaurant activity to the main roads.

Three requests were returned to the executive body for updates as follows: allocating land for a stray dog shelter, amending the requirements for residential complex buildings, and addressing the residential construction percentages issue in Abu Al-Hasaniya.

The committee deferred the vice-chairman's question about the Metro Project, the Real Estate Union's observations on building work regulations, and a soft drink company's request to allocate sidewalk space for coolers.

Article 153 of penal code cancellation step in right direction

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The announcement of Justice Minister Nasser Al-Sumait about the government's move to cancel Article 153 of the Penal Code, which includes the legal excuse for the perpetrator of an honor crime, is a step in the right direction towards the victory of Kuwaiti women's rights, considering the demand of women's, liberal and legal movements in the country to amend it have extended for more than 20 years.

The newspaper interviewed female activists and constitutional experts who confirmed they are pleased with this development and emphasized that this article violates Article 29 of the Constitution, which guarantees equality between men and women. They pointed out some have taken advantage of the loophole to commit honor crimes and kill women in order to obtain their inheritance. Some even referred to it as "a black spot in Kuwait's humanitarian, regional and international record.

Head of Women's Cultural and Social Society Lulwa Al-Mullah stated that "we have repeatedly called for the repeal of this article, particularly since it continued to contribute to violence against women, as it lessens the punishment for men who kill their wives for committing adultery and allows them to kill their mothers or sisters, which is unfair. Repealing this article is a victory for women as well as for the Constitution, particularly Article 29."

Constitutional expert and Professor of Law at Kuwait University Dr. Mohammad Al-Filli said the move to cancel Article 153 of the Penal Code is a good development, especially since the text of this article is in favor of men in the event they commit felony when surprise infidelity occurs. "If this text is removed, the general rules in Penal Code will apply to men, so there will be reciprocity between men and women and there will be no discrimination between them," he elaborated.

On the constitutional suspicion over Article 153; he clarified that since the mitigation text

in Article 153 is for men without considering the women, canceling this article is absolutely consistent with Article 29 of the Constitution, which stipulates gender equality.

Legal advisor Anwar Al-Rasheed strongly supports Al-Sumait's announcement regarding the government's move to cancel Article 153 of the Penal Code, stressing that "it is unconstitutional and the cancellation will relieve the country of continuous criticism from international human rights organizations.

Former head of the Kuwaiti Liberal Society and Kuwaiti women's rights activist Iman Hayat confirmed that "this step is wonderful and in the right direction, considering it is unfair for women." She called for the continuation of efforts to address all issues related to Kuwaiti women's rights.

Women's rights activist and cybersecurity expert Huda Al-Kuraibani considers Article 153 of the Penal Code a stain on the forehead of Kuwaiti law; indicating that she participated in several campaigns to combat discrimination against Kuwaiti women in the past, describing Article 153 as "racist."

'Excessive use of social media leads to depression, anxiety'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Acting Director for Educational Activities and Supervisor of the Social and Psychological Services Department at Jahra Educational District Aida Bushehri said the department has conducted a study about the impact of social media on the academic performance of a random sample of around 3,000 students in the intermediate and secondary stages; indicating that the study took two months of continuous work, reports Al-Anba daily.

Bushehri made the statement after attending the 27th forum about the impact of using social media on the academic performance of students at Mohammad Al-Mahini School, with a large number of psychological and social researchers in attendance.

She disclosed that the study showed the negative and positive effects of social media and smart devices, citing the negative effects as distraction, poor concentration and lack of understanding among students who spend a lot of time on social media. She warned that the excessive use of electronic communication tools could lead to depression, anxiety, tension and isolation.

She stated that the study recommended opening a file for a student proven to

be using smartphones and social media sites for more than 10 hours a day, because he needs psychological and social intervention by specialists. She revealed that seven percent of the study sample use their smartphones for around eight to 10 hours a day.

She added the study revealed that 30 percent of the sample use 'Tik Tok', 21 percent use 'Snapchat', 18 percent spend their time on other social media sites, 10 percent are on 'Instagram', 9.5 percent on electronic games, 6.8 percent on 'WhatsApp' and 1.4 percent on 'Twitter'.

She stressed the need to focus on raising the awareness of society in general, and the students in particular, about the dangers of excessive use of the aforementioned applications and the need to use them properly through seminars, media outlets and school administrations.

She also emphasized the importance of regulating the use of distance learning programs in solving assignments and reviews to fully benefit from modern technology, and keep students away from anything that distracts them and wastes their time. She recommended activating the 'Teams' application all the time, not only during crises.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Trump, Arab swing state voters and the Gaza card

“One of the things that irritated me the most and I cannot forget was the justification given by some Arab Americans who supported Trump in the last election, claiming that he would stop the war in Gaza! And I would respond to them that he will, but it is unwise to expect that it would be in favor of the Palestinians and Arabs”, columnist **Dr. Samer Abu Rumman** wrote for *Al-Anba* daily.



Dr. Samer Abu Rumman

“In U.S. presidential elections, it is common to have swing states where both the Democratic and Republican parties enjoy relatively equal levels of support from voters. In the 2024 election, there were seven swing states: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania.

“When voting, some Arab Americans chose to support Trump due to their dissatisfaction with the Biden administration and its unconditional support for Israel in its aggression against Gaza since October 7.

“In contrast, Trump promised to stop the war. This shift in support among Arab American voters played a key role in determining the results in favor of Trump in three of the swing states.

“In Wisconsin, the Arab vote contributed to Trump winning 51.2 percent of the votes, compared to 47.3 percent for Kamala Harris, and 1.5 percent for Jill Stein.

“In Pennsylvania, the Arab American vote narrowed the gap between the candidates in favor of Trump, who received 49.8 percent, compared to 48.7 percent for Kamala Harris, and 1.5 percent for Jill Stein.

“The biggest shock came in Michigan, home to the largest Arab American community in the U.S., particularly in cities like Dearborn and Hamtramck, where Trump received 42 percent of the votes, compared to 36 percent for Kamala Harris, and 18 percent for Jill Stein. This was a striking shift compared to the 2020 presidential election results, when Biden won 69 percent of the votes compared to Trump’s 30 percent.

“Trump’s victories in these states earned him 44 electoral votes, thus easily surpassing the necessary 270 votes to win the election!

“However, the joy of Arab Americans who voted for Trump was short-lived, just as I expected and told them. It wasn’t long before he made his thoughts known about deporting the residents of Gaza to Jordan and Egypt, and having the United States manage and develop the Gaza Strip! This sparked outrage among some Arab Americans and made them regret their decision!

“Trump succeeded in using Gaza to secure Arab votes, even though his recent statements should not be surprising to anyone who paid attention to his positions during his first term. He did whatever he wanted without any regard for anyone, such as moving the U.S. Embassy to occupied Jerusalem and recognizing Israel’s occupation of the Golan Heights. So, it is no surprise now to see him manipulating Gaza’s fate and its people, and arrogantly dealing with Jordan and Egypt, claiming they will respond to his demands!”

Also:

“It is difficult to convince ourselves that we live in a democratic country when freedom of opinion is stifled, the right to express ourselves is restricted, and dozens of individuals who post on social media or show interest in political matters are detained or referred to court for allegedly insulting sister countries. This contradiction raises concerns about the true nature of our democracy”, columnist **Abdul Latif Al-Duaij** wrote for *Al-Jarida* daily.

“Our constitution guarantees freedom of opinion and expression. It clearly states that Kuwait is an Arab country, and its people are part of the Arab nation. If this is the case, then Arab affairs should be considered a local matter that is open to discussion just like any other issue within Kuwait. The people of Kuwait should have the right to engage in these discussions freely, without fear of retribution.

“Arab presidents and officials often visit us, but these visits are rarely about political understanding; they are more about seeking financial support. Meanwhile, officials from these countries discuss our internal issues, impose solutions on our problems, and constantly remind us of our identity as part of the Arab nation.

“Consequently, we are expected to engage with and contribute to Arab issues and crises. Unfortunately, the people around us from the Arab tribes have nothing but crises and problems. It seems as though our involvement is more about addressing these challenges rather than giving solutions for ensuring peace and stability in the region.

“If we are truly part of the Arab nation, as our Constitution suggests,

and if we are obligated and invited to contribute to various Arab efforts, then why don’t our intellectuals and those concerned with public affairs have a say in this matter? Why isn’t it our right to discuss our required contributions and to question the seriousness and honesty of those who are responsible for coordinating or overseeing this involvement?”

“We live in a region that is boiling with problems, and drowning in so-called solutions and remedies. It is difficult, if not impossible, to stand as a mere bystander. As we have shown, we are part of these problems, and we often provide the solutions, especially when they are based on financial support. However, we don’t see prisoners for insulting countries like Japan or criticizing the regime in Argentina. Instead, we have fugitives and prisoners in our country, not for committing crimes, but for simply expressing their opinions about the countries and leaders with whom we share common issues.

“In fact, most of those convicted and imprisoned for their opinions in our country are those who were accused of insulting Arab presidents or officials. Criticizing internal conditions or policies hardly ever results in imprisonment. This stark contrast raises questions about the true nature of freedom of expression.”

□ □ □

“In a press conference a few days ago, US President Donald Trump said in brief: ‘The people of Gaza will leave their country and go abroad, such as Jordan, Egypt, Morocco and Somalia. We will take responsibility for dismantling all unexploded bombs and weapons there. We will level the site to the ground, get rid of the destroyed buildings, and create economic development that provides jobs and housing for the people in the region.’ **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

“He added: We will implement tourism projects, so that the Gaza coast becomes like the French Riviera tourist resorts (end of his speech). This means following the policy of ethnic cleansing.

“We said in a previous article that Trump is applying the idea of the ‘crazy president’ – a theory that by acting in an extremely volatile manner, the head of State can intimidate opponents and push them to make concessions to achieve gains. The heads of states have been practicing it over the past decades.

“This is a negotiating tactic, rather a trick, aimed at imposing concessions from Hamas and the Arab leaders. After Trump’s proposal, Hamas may agree to completely relinquish power, as if it is saying: Enough, I will not remain in Gaza, do not expel the residents from their land” which, as we said, is to intimidate opponents and push them to give up.

“However, Saudi Arabia has taken a tough stance. Years ago, it was heading towards a normalization agreement with Israel on the condition of establishing a Palestinian State; but after Trump’s proposal, it immediately announced that it would not establish official relations with Israel until Palestine is recognized as an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital. Egypt, Jordan and the rest of the Arab countries also rejected Trump’s proposal.

“The writer, Stephen Cook, said in *Foreign Policy Magazine*: Trump’s plan is an absolute madness. Seizing Palestinian lands would lead to American war crimes and absolute regional chaos. The proposal is not just moral bankruptcy, but pure madness.

“He added: If Trump wants to transfer the Palestinian population, he will issue orders to the Army, which the American officers refuse to comply with, on the grounds that it is illegal and a crime against humanity. This will undermine the peace process in the region, re-empower Iran at a time it is weak, and embroil America in a regional conflict.

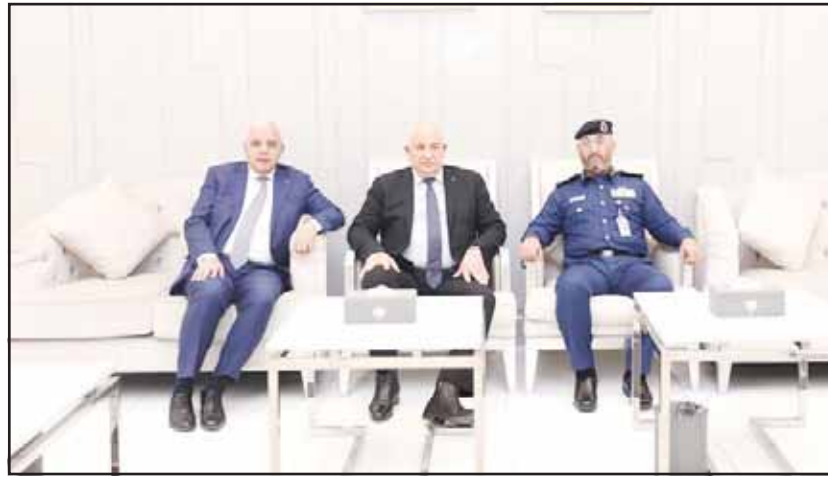
“The writer, Simon Siddall, said in an article published in the British newspaper, ‘The Guardian’: Trump is just another coward, denying the need for a Palestinian State. Harrison Cass wrote in the *National Interest Magazine*: Do not believe what Trump says about Gaza. In the *Foreign Policy Magazine*, writer Alexandra Sharp stated: The proposal provokes shock and global condemnation.

“This proposal did not receive support from European capitals.

“In our opinion, the proposal is excellent, if it is implemented with the presence of the people of Gaza, not by expelling them from their land.

“Some Arab countries will try to persuade President Trump to accept an alternative plan for the recovery of Gaza that includes aid provided by Arabs.”

— Compiled by Saeed Mahmoud/ Mahmoud Attiyeh



KFF photo
Chief of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Major General Talal Mohammad Al-Roumi with guests at the forum.

KFF chief receives forum participants

The Chief of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Major General Talal Mohammad Al-Roumi, along with several senior officials, received the Arab delegations participating in the Sixth Arab Regional Forum for Risk Reduction in the last two days.

According to a press release issued by KFF, the forum titled “Building Resilient Arab Societies: From Understand-

ing to Action” is being hosted by Kuwait from February 9-12 under the patronage of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

The forum aims to unite efforts from competent authorities in Arab countries to enhance the capacity to confront the challenges and risks posed by natural and emergency disasters.

Officer, lawyer, Kuwaiti get jail in drugs lawsuit

Court reopens luxury cars case

By Jaber Al-Hamoud
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Court of Cassation, headed by Judge Abdullah Al-Jassem, sentenced a State Security officer to seven years in prison, a lawyer to four years in prison and a citizen to five years in prison for consuming hashish, while it acquitted an Iranian in the same case and cancelled the life sentence imposed on him, and acquitted all defendants of smuggling and trafficking drugs.

Case files indicate that the Ministry of Interior personnel arrested the defendants while trying to smuggle about 200 kilograms of hashish into the country.

The Public Prosecution charged all defendants with smuggling the hashish with the intent to trade in it under illegal circumstances.

It also charged one of the defendants with smuggling psychotropic substances ‘pregabalin’ and ‘amphetamine’ and the possession of hashish with the intent to sell it under illegal circumstances, as well as driving under the influence of drugs.

Another defendant was charged with possessing hashish with the intent to use it without proving that he is legally authorized to do so. Attorney Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan, the lawyer of this defendant whose 15-year prison sentence was cancelled, argued that the investigations were inconclusive. He demanded for the acquittal of his client.

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Luxury cars case reopens: The Court of Cassation decided to reopen the pleadings in the luxury cars case in which two citizens are accused of defrauding 500 people and postponed the hearing until March 10.

The Court of Appeals had earlier increased the sentence of the owner and manager of the luxury car office by upholding 10-year imprisonment and fining them about KD 34 million, in addition to two years in prison with hard labor for the charges of fraud and deception.

The two defendants, both citizens, faced charges of fraud and money laundering with large sums after they were accused by more than 500 people in and outside Kuwait of defrauding them by supplying various vehicles and laundering their money obtained through fraud. They were accused of transferring the money that they obtained from the victims -- estimated at more than KD 17 million and KD 1.5 million Qatari riyals -- to hide their illegal source, after making the victims believe that they could buy luxury vehicles at a lower price from agencies, and then ship and deliver the vehicles to them.

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Felon lawyer pays price: The Kuwait Lawyers Society has decided to remove a lawyer from its register of practitioners following a final and binding court ruling issued by the Court of Cassation that confirmed his conviction in a drug trafficking case, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

The society stressed that the decision was made after the lawyer’s suspension period, which preceded the final ruling, in accordance with the standards of integrity, professionalism, and the regulations governing the legal profession.



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah with his guests.

Citizens complaints top priority: Farwaniya Gov.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received the Director of the Roads and Networks Maintenance Department Eng. Fawaz Al-Shammari, the Director of the Public Cleanliness and Road Occupancy Department at Farwaniya Municipality Eng. Muhammad Al-Jabaa, and the Cleaning Supervisor Khaled Abdullah Raei Al-Fahma in his office at the governorate on Tuesday morning.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the discussions during the meeting focused on ways to enhance joint cooperation as well as a proposal submitted by citizen Fawaz Al-Harbi.

During the meeting, the governor and officials from various departments discussed the complaints and suggestions submitted via the Sahel app in the presence of the citizen who filed the complaint. They discussed possible solutions and worked towards developing a unified approach among the different sectors.

At the end of the meeting, Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser stressed that the suggestions and concerns of the governorate’s residents are of great importance to him.

He expressed appreciation for the community’s role and the volunteer efforts of citizens who submit feedback on the Sahel app, which allows the governorate to address issues and remove obstacles faced by the people.

The governor also highlighted that the spirit of cooperation and sense of responsibility shown by citizens reflects a valuable human, moral, and national quality inherent in the Kuwaiti character.

‘Inciting debauchery’

Court adjourns appeal filed by artiste Boland

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Court of Cassation adjourned the appeal filed by broadcaster Halima Boland against the ruling of the Court of Appeals to refrain from pronouncing her punishment for the charge of inciting indecency and immorality until the session scheduled for Feb 17 to announce the verdict, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.



Boland

The Criminal Court had earlier charged Boland with inciting debauchery and immorality, and misuse of a telephone due to her pictures and video clips.

The plaintiff filed a complaint against her, claiming that she incited him to indecency and immorality through her pictures and private videos; while the accused claimed that the plaintiff insulted her by cursing her, so she filed a complaint against him on charges of insulting and misusing the phone.

Dog, gun, narcotics left in car as driver escapes

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: An unidentified individual driving a pick-up truck collided with a bus at a roundabout in the Al-Oyoun area of Jahra and fled the scene immediately prior to the arrival of the security personnel, leaving behind the vehicle, a dog, a gun, and a substance suspected to be a narcotic inside the vehicle, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

According to security sources, Jahra emergency patrols, while conducting their daily duties, witnessed the collision between the pick-up truck and the bus at the roundabout in Al-Oyoun, which resulted in the truck overturning. After the accident, the driver exited the vehicle and fled.

Upon searching the truck, officers found a dog, a gun, and a substance suspected to be narcotics.

The source stated that investigations are ongoing, and detectives are working on apprehending the fugitive.

□ □ □

Man acquitted of theft: The Misdemeanor Court acquitted an employee of a men’s accessories company of betrayal of trust and theft of gold jewelry and branded pens, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The Public Prosecution referred the accused to the court after investigating him on charges related to seizing the jewelry and branded pens that the company entrusted to him.

Lawyer for the accused, Attorney Abdulrahman Al-Muqaddam, pointed out the absence of the elements of the crime of betrayal of trust, the inconclusive investigations and lack of incriminating evidence. He explained that for one to be convicted of betrayal of trust, the material and moral elements of the crime must be proven, stressing both of these elements were not seen in the case of his client. He stated that the criminal intent in betrayal of trust is proven if the perpetrator has the intention to add the money he received to his property and embezzle it for himself, indicating there is no evidence to confirm this.

He added that betrayal of trust means the accused committed the act of embezzlement, squandering or misuse, and harm the victim; asserting his client did not commit any of these acts.

On the other hand, a citizen filed a report at a police station in Hawally Governorate; stating that his car was burgled and the suspect stole a bag containing official documents and an undisclosed amount while his car was parked at a cooperative society parking lot.

The citizen stated that he discovered the side window of the car was broken, and that the perpetrator was able to open it and steal the aforementioned items.

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Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

Municipal Council members, led by Abdullah Al-Mahri, gather for a group photo following their 12th regular session.

Dasma parking, water lab expansion approved

Municipal Council pushes for more transparency on Mangaf fire, railway project

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Municipal Council, led by Abdullah Al-Mahri, on Monday held its 12th regular session for the third

session; during which it approved the following:

■ Amendment of a decision issued on June 24, 2024 to adjust the size of the modern water analysis laboratories building in Shuwaikh (Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy) to become

18,824.42 square meters.

■ Dr. Hassan Kamal's proposal to establish longitudinal parking lots for Dasma Cooperative Branch, Block Five -- on both sides of the branch from Hamoud Al-Raqaba Street and Imru Al-Qais Street.

The council acknowledged that

the executive body's responses to inquiries from members Walid Al-Dagher (regarding the Mangaf fire incident investigation) and Alia Al-Farsi (regarding the National Railway Network projects) were insufficient, and returned the questions for updated responses.

The council recommended defer-

ring the letter of the Kuwait Municipality Director General regarding Injaz Al-Rai market auction, following its previous approval of Minister Abdullatif Al-Mishari's objection to the auction. Two letters from the Ministry of Interior regarding Technical Committee meetings were also deferred.

Other proposals were referred to the executive authority for study, including the joint proposal for the establishment of Rumaithiya entrance on Road 30 and a proposal for the Legal Department to review Municipality transactions from the Central Agency for Public Tenders.

Farwaniya Governor hosts Kuwait-Pakistan Friendship Association

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received the Chair of the Kuwait-Pakistan Friendship Association Rana Ijaz Hussain and his accompanying delegation on Monday.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, a friendly conversation about the association's objectives and its role in strengthening social relations took place during the meeting.

The delegation extended their congratulations to Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser on the occasion of Kuwait's Independence and

Liberations days.

The delegation presented a shield to Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser in appreciation of his warm reception and his keenness to maintain communication with all communities in the State of Kuwait.

The governor also presented a shield to the Chair of the Kuwait-Pakistan Friendship Association, and commended the association's efforts to strengthen bilateral relations through visits and their commitment to celebrating national occasions, which hold great significance for Kuwaitis.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah with the Kuwait-Pakistan Friendship Association.

Jahra plot holders urged to finalize contracts by Feb 24

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Public Authority for Industry (PAI) has called on beneficiaries of the expansion plots in the Jahra Industrial Zone, who submitted their data as per the authority's earlier announcement, to visit the PAI headquarters from February 11 to 24 to begin the process of concluding temporary contracts, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to PAI's statement, this procedure follows a previous announcement published in the official gazette Kuwait Alyoum in issue No. 1708 on October 13, 2024. The announcement included the termination of contracts with Agility Public Warehousing Company regarding the lease of a site for industrial and service purposes to expand the Jahra Industrial Zone, as of September 18, 2024, and its decision not to renew the existing contracts.

Writers and scholars open dialogue

Kuwaiti festival seminar thrusts 'cultural heritage' into limelight

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): A seminar focusing on Kuwaiti cultural heritage opened on Monday as part of the annual Al-Qurain festival, bringing together a plethora of academic experts from Kuwait and abroad to delve into the nation's vibrant cultural and arts scene.

The seminar is the latest chapter in the festival's illustrious history of similar initiatives aiming to discuss at length a slew of literary and artistic topics, said Kuwait National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters chief Dr.

Mohammad Al-Jassar, underlining the Council's efforts to keep that annual tradition alive.

On the seminar's objectives, Kuwaiti writer Hussain Al-Mutawa said it looks into a number of intellectual and literary topics, all of which allow participants to create their own arguments in a constructive and critical manner, he underlined.

Over the course of three days, the seminar will examine multiple topics ranging from novel critique methods to content creation on social media, he added.



KUNA photo

Launch of the main symposium sessions of the 30th Al-Qurain Cultural Festival.

Hawally distribution bid closes on March 4

MEW forms team to review tenders

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Adel Al-Zamel has formed a technical working team; led by Director of the Department of Groundwater Studies and Research Huda Al-Mutairi.

The team will review the recommendations of the Purchasing Committee concerning tender study, evaluate committee conclusions, look into the format of letters sent to the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT), and provide feedback in collaboration with the concerned committees.

Meanwhile, the closing date for participation in the tender for the establishment, completion and maintenance of the Hawally water distribution complex and the corresponding works will be on March 4, say sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy.

Sources confirmed that the bids of competing companies will be submitted to the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT), which will open the bidding envelopes and then refer them to the ministry to pave the way for the preparation of the technical study by a committee specialized in studying bids. Sources said the study and bids will be referred to CAPT that will award the tender to the company with the best bid financially and

technically, clarifying the study will be referred to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for review, audit and approval; followed by the signing of the contract with the winning company.

Sources revealed that the ministry allotted KD4 million in its annual budget as the estimated cost of the project, which may increase or decrease depending on the bids submitted to CAPT.

Sources pointed out this is one of the important projects; through which the ministry seeks to increase the storage capacity of fresh water by 66 million gallons per day, the pumping rates to 54.5 million gallons per day, and the pumping of low-salinity water to 23.5 million gallons per day.

Sources added the complex is one of the vital facilities that need continuous development to better serve all those residing in governorate, considering this is one of the densely populated governorates.

Sources stated that the anticipated development process will contribute to addressing the weak water issue, especially during summer when the demand for water increases; in addition to ensuring the availability of water with good pumping power round the clock.



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Continued from Page 1

AI added

288 senior computer science supervisors, department heads, and teachers.

She emphasized the significance of introducing AI to students, stating that this move aims to provide 10th grade students with the necessary knowledge and tools to understand AI, which is significant.

She explained that the inclusion of AI in the curriculum aligns with rapid technological advancements and addresses the students need to understand it.

This initiative is expected to help prepare students for a job market increasingly dependent on technology while also enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

She noted that the Ministry is dedicated to developing an interactive learning environment that supports the use of modern technology across all educational stages.

The inclusion of AI is part of the strategy to enhance educational curricula and strengthen students' skills.

75% local

In a press statement issued yesterday, the Ministry of Social Affairs explained that the decision mandates the appointment of a representative from each cooperative society to attend the daily auctions, with priority given to Kuwaitis.

Cooperative societies must allocate 30 percent of the total area of central markets for displaying local agricultural products for the benefit of the Kuwaiti Farmers Union.

Cooperative societies will bear the cost of daily losses from local products, provided the losses do not exceed five percent of the value of purchases within one week. The person responsible for this will be identified, and necessary measures will be taken to minimize loss percentages.

The decision further set a profit margin of no more than 20 percent on local agricultural products.

The administrative supervisor in each cooperative society will be responsible for reviewing daily purchase invoices, ensuring compliance with the decisions, and submitting monthly reports to the relevant department in the Ministry of Social Affairs. These reports will include violations, actions taken against non-compliant societies, and recommendations to address any regulatory loopholes.

The new decision also mandates the formation of a joint committee comprising representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), and the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies.

The committee will be chaired by the undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs and will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the decision. It will also submit monthly reports on compliance levels and evaluate the decision's impact.

The new decision revokes ministerial Resolution No. 115/2022, which supported the promotion of local agricultural products in cooperative societies, along with any provisions that conflict with the new decision.

The decision will take effect immediately upon its issuance and publication in the official gazette, obligating all relevant parties to begin its implementation.

Kuwait vows

He added that the workshop was held through the coordinated efforts of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UNODC, shedding light on the issue of financing terrorism and the implementation of Security Council resolutions in this regard.

On the upcoming evaluation of Kuwait, he said "we are now in the one-year phase of the review. We are improving the laws and procedures, and amending the regulations in Kuwait to be in line with international requirements. We passed the previous evaluation and we are optimistic about the next one."

On the meeting held with the minister of Social Affairs one day ago, Al-Mishaan disclosed that "it was a coordination meeting with the Ministry of Social Affairs, as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is concerned with the issue of charitable societies outside Kuwait while the Ministry of Social Affairs is in charge of Kuwaiti charitable societies operating inside the country. We are coordinating with the Ministry of Social Affairs. Our work is unified, and we ensure that the work is within the legal and correct frameworks."

He added "we are improving all decisions and procedures for the benefit of Kuwaiti charitable societies and ensure their funds reach the rightful beneficiaries. This step improves the reputation of Kuwait in the international community."

He went on to say that the number of participants in the previous workshop was about 300; while Tuesday's workshop had more than 500 participants. "We made it easy for everyone to participate through the audio-visual communication system, as we are keen to have the largest possible number of participants in this workshop. Both the private and government sectors responded massively," he asserted.

He also underscored the need for everyone to follow the instructions. He said the Central Bank has launched a campaign called, "Be Aware," to educate the public on the subject of donation and participation in any project in which the citizen may not know who the participants are.

With regard to cryptocurrencies, he pointed out "we are currently facing terrorist operations that have developed and entered into financing their operations with cryptocurrencies and artificial intelligence. We must keep pace with this development to combat it, especially in the matter of cryptocurrencies."

He then expressed his "deep appreciation and gratitude to the staff of the UNODC for their relentless efforts to make the workshop a reality. It was launched within the framework of cooperation between the State of Kuwait and the Office to reach new horizons of joint cooperation."

He continued: Our workshop today is one of the outcomes of the High-Level Confer-

ence to Enhance International Cooperation to Combat Terrorism and Secure Borders, which was hosted by the State of Kuwait in November 2024 during which the 'Kuwait Declaration' was issued. We are holding our workshop amid worrying geopolitical developments in the region, which is witnessing an increased pace of operations related to financing terrorism and financing the proliferation of weapons, which threaten the security and stability of societies and hinder efforts to achieve development and sustainable peace. Although these challenges are cross-border and require international coordination to coordinate efforts in this regard, it is the responsibility of countries at the national level to enhance their capabilities to keep pace with developments arising from this scourge. It requires coordinating national efforts with international standards for combating terrorism and the proliferation of weapons, given the threat this phenomenon poses to peace and stability."

He also revealed that terrorist organizations launch attacks, plan operations, recruit individuals, and raise funds in new ways that exploit the financial system and the legal framework to spread their influence and carry out their activities, especially artificial intelligence and digital currencies to avoid monitoring and follow-up procedures.

Kuwait's CPI

The top scorers among the Arab States are the United Arab Emirates with 68, Qatar with 59 and Saudi Arabia with 59. Libya with 13, Yemen with 13 and Syria with 12 scored the lowest.

According to the report issued by Kuwait Transparency Society in collaboration with the Transparency International, Kuwait's score was derived from eight sources such as Bertelsmann Foundation Transformation Index 2024, Economist Intelligence Unit Country Ratings 2024 and Global Insights Country Risk Ratings 2023 among others.

Kuwait's evaluation in four sources by 18 points helped compensate for the decrease in its evaluation in the other four sources by 17 points, resulting in a partial balance in the overall total.

Also, the significant improvement in Kuwait's evaluation in the Country Risk Rating issued by the Economist Intelligence Unit's Economic Intelligence Unit for 2024, by 14 points, from 37 to 51, is the best result achieved in Kuwait's evaluation this year. This improvement significantly contributed to maintaining Kuwait's position without a decline in the overall index score.

Kuwait inaugurates

Kuwait's commitment to modernizing the judiciary, incorporating digital transformation, AI integration, and streamlined litigation processes to ensure efficiency and accessibility.

Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait echoed this sentiment, stating that the new Palace of Justice reinforces Kuwait's vision for judicial reform, focusing on speedy case resolutions, enhanced transparency, and technological advancements.

The Cabinet reaffirmed its unwavering support for the judiciary, recognizing it as a pillar of national security and stability. Officials pledged to uphold justice, integrity, and independence, ensuring that the legal system remains fair, efficient, and responsive to societal needs.

The ceremony concluded with the screening of a documentary on the history of Kuwait's judiciary, followed by a presentation of a commemorative gift to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's representative, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

With the unveiling of this modern judicial landmark, Kuwait takes a significant step forward in enhancing its legal framework and ensuring swift and effective justice for all.

PM shares

His Highness affirmed Kuwait's commitment to achieving a bright future during the coming decade through its development vision, which includes priorities to achieve a qualitative shift in sustainable development paths and enhance economic diversity and financial stability based on ambitious strategic plans aimed at diversifying sources of national income.

His Highness also touched on Kuwait's efforts in international cooperation and its effective participation in a number of global memberships and partnerships in international federations and organizations.

In light of Kuwait's plans for economic development, "we have held discussions with major companies in the global economy in which Kuwait contributes, and urged them to further activate their role in bringing about the desired economic renaissance by opening branches in the country and creating opportunities to employ and train young Kuwaiti cadres," said His Highness.

"We are also working on opening the new Kuwait International Airport according to the best international standards in civil aviation industry, and using the latest technology to facilitate travelers' procedures without the need for human intervention," His Highness added.

Further, His Highness pointed to the railway projects with the city of Riyadh and with the GCC states to enhance the pioneering role of Kuwait at the regional level, in addition to Kuwait's interest in developing the digital system and enhancing the technological infrastructure, which embodies the state's ambitious vision to build a future based on technologies.

His Highness also touched on the strategic agreement between Kuwait and Google Cloud, which represents a serious step towards digital transformation.

"In an era led by scientific research and accelerating technological developments in leading and developing sectors, including the space sciences sector, Kuwait has taken steady steps with a wise vision from His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, by establishing the Kuwait National Center for Space Research at Kuwait University, in cooperation with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, to highlight the potential of science, technology and innovation," said His Highness.

Kuwait reaffirms support for Palestine**Cabinet slams Netanyahu's remarks on Saudi**

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): Kuwait's Cabinet on Tuesday strongly condemned the remarks of the Israeli occupation's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's comments on Saudi Arabia, in which he suggested the establishment of a Palestinian state on Saudi territory, backing Riyadh's unyielding support for the Palestinians.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has always been firm in its support of an

independent Palestinian state based on 1967 borderlines, with East Jerusalem as its capital; the Cabinet emphasized amid its weekly session presided over by Acting Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah.

Fresh off his visits to a number of Arab nations, including Egypt, Jordan, Oman and the UAE, the Kuwaiti Acting Premier briefed the Cabinet on the results of talks he held with political leaders in these

countries, all of which focused on bilateral relations and matters of mutual concern, he said.

Minister of Information and Culture and State Minister for Youth Affairs Abdurrahman Al-Mutairi then addressed the Cabinet over the progress on a plan for a government communications center, informing the state ministers of the details on the initiative.

In his address to the Cabinet, Minister of State for Housing and

Municipal Affairs Abdullatif Al-Meshari updated his fellow ministers on a state program for housing welfare sustainability, outlining the steps and measures that have been taken to bring that plan to fruition.

The primary objective of the aforementioned plan is to ensure that citizens have access to adequate housing, in line with proper solutions and mechanisms that focus on sustainability, the cabinet said.



Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Mahmoud Boushehri during the Innovation and Excellence Award opening ceremony.



Minister Bushehri and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity recognize Innovation and Excellence Award winners.

**Kuwait to expand power stations, boost renewable energy projects**

Bushehri honors innovation winners at awards ceremony

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Mahmoud Bushehri expects the ministry will pass next summer safely; while stressing the need to rationalize electricity consumption during peak hours and to take into account setting the air conditioning indicator to 23 or 24 degrees instead of 18 to 19 degrees.

Bushehri made the statement at the ceremony honoring the winners of the Second Innovation and Excellence Award, which was held Tuesday.

He disclosed "our combined electricity production capacity amounts to 19,377 megawatts, distributed over 110 gas and steam turbines, in addition to the combined cycle production units. The rate of production of electricity production units next summer is expected to reach about 18,000 megawatts; in addition to purchasing 1,000 megawatts from the Gulf interconnection network, which will help us pass the next summer safely."

He urged everyone to rationalize electricity consumption during summer, especially at peak hours -- from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm, considering that the real problem the ministry faces during the summer months is the air conditioning units, which consume the largest amount of electrical energy.

He added "we are not asking consumers to turn

off the air conditioning during summer, but we hope that they set the air conditioning indicator to 23 or 24 degrees instead of setting 18 or 19 degrees to reduce energy consumption, especially during peak hours."

Regarding the ministry's future projects, he revealed "we have future plans to expand the construction of electric power stations according to optimal demand. Some stations have reached the end of their useful life and must be removed; hence, the need to build new stations to replace them."

He affirmed coordination with China to implement a renewable energy project, indicating the ministry collaborating with the Public-Private Partnership Projects Authority to implement another project to produce a total of 5,000 megawatts.

He added "we seek to have our electricity production from renewable energy reach 30 percent of the total electricity produced in Kuwait. We consider



Photos by Mohammad Morsi
Minister Bushehri visits Achievements Exhibition.

this a strategic goal that we want to achieve over the next four years. We have several projects that have been approved and adopted. We will work on implementing them to produce 20,000 megawatts after three years. This will give us more comfort due to the implementation of energy projects."

In a speech he delivered at the Innovation and Excellence Award ceremony, Electricity and Water Conference and Achievements Exhibition held Tuesday at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel, Bushehri stressed the importance of the Innovation and Excellence Award and the Leadership and Creativity Conference in the field of electricity, water and renewable energy in the State of Kuwait.

He pointed out that launching this award under the slogan "Your Excellence Distinguishes You" reflects the ministry's vision of supporting national competencies and encouraging them to innovate and create.

He stressed the importance of discussing all the topics mentioned above in specialized workshops held over two consecutive days by researchers and those interested in them from companies and businessmen, as this event is not limited to being a tribute to creative ideas but a platform to explore the talents and latent capabilities of the ministry's employees. He reviewed a number of main axes regarding the ministry's strategy related to energy and water security, including, for example, direct investment in renewable energy and the shift to clean fuel technologies in electricity generation and water production processes with the aim of reducing gas emissions and achieving carbon neutrality, in addition to localizing modern technology used in the fields of security, smart grid management and energy storage.

Accreditation compliance

PAAET enhances programs to align with industry standards

By Abdurrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Department of Power Mechanics and Refrigeration Technology at the College of Technological Studies in the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) recently organized two meetings with labor market entities.

These meetings aim to align Power Mechanics and Refrigeration Technology programs with current industry needs, while ensuring quality and maintaining academic accreditation from the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET).

The meetings focused on bridging the gap between academic programs and labor market needs by developing the skills of graduates and preparing them for employment. Participants discussed the proposals to improve academic program efficiency and exchanged views on the latest labor market needs.

Dr. Abdurrahman Al-Mutairi, Head of the Scientific Department, revealed that the College of Technological Studies has 15 academically accredited programs, including Power Mechanics and Refrigeration Technology, for the upcoming session.

He affirmed these meetings are essential for staying updated on the latest labor market trends and technological advancements. "By incorporating these insights into the educational program, students can benefit from a curriculum that meets industry standards," he pointed out.

"In addition, the meetings assessed the progress made on objectives set in previous years and gathered feedback from the concerned authorities through questionnaires. This feedback loop ensures continuous improvement of the programs and helps maintain academic accreditation," he added.

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INTERNATIONAL



Firefighters work around the site of a crashed Learjet at Scottsdale Airport after it collided with a parked plane on Feb 10, in Scottsdale, Ariz. (AP)

Private jets collide in Arizona, one dead

One person was killed and others were injured when a private jet owned by Motley Crue singer Vince Neil collided with another jet Monday afternoon at the Scottsdale Airport in Arizona, authorities said.

Neil's jet was landing at the airport when it veered off the runway and collided with another parked

plane, Neil's representative Worrick Robinson, IV, said in a statement. There were two pilots and two passengers on Neil's plane, but he was not among them.

"Mr. Neil's thoughts and prayers go out to everyone involved, and he is grateful for the critical aid of all first responders assisting today," Robinson said.

The arriving jet veered off the runway and collided with the Gulfstream 200 jet that was parked on private property, according to Kelli Kuester, aviation planning and outreach coordinator at the Scottsdale Airport. It appeared that the left main landing gear of the arriving jet failed, resulting in the collision, she said. (AP)

Virginia gov declares storm emergency as snow, ice bear down on mid-Atlantic states

WASHINGTON, Feb 11, (AP): A wintry mess was bearing down on mid-Atlantic states Tuesday with forecasts of significant snow and ice accumulations prompting warnings of potential power outages.

The National Weather Service said travel would become treacherous Tuesday through early Wednesday in much of Virginia and West Virginia.

Virginia Republican Gov Glenn Youngkin on Monday declared a state of emergency ahead of the storm, allowing state agencies to assist local governments. Schools and government offices throughout Virginia were closed Tuesday.

The heaviest snow, up to 10 inches (25.4 centimeters), was forecast in portions of northern and central Virginia and eastern West Virginia. Ice accumulations could range from a glaze in Kentucky and West Virginia to a half-inch (1.3 centimeters) in the Roanoke Valley of southwest Virginia, the weather service said. Power outages and tree damage were likely in places with heavy ice buildups.

"Did you think winter was over? Think again!" the weather service's office in Blacksburg, Virginia, said in a post on the social media platform X.

Appalachian Power, which serves 1 million customers in West Virginia, Virginia and Tennessee, said it has requested 700 additional workers from neighboring utilities to assist with problems by Tuesday morning.



Maryland Department of Transportation employees use a backhoe to load a truck with salt at the State Highway Administration District 6 Office in LaVale, Md on Feb 5. (AP)

In northern Virginia, the National Park Service closed a portion of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, a narrow highway that winds its way through woods along the Potomac River. The parkway connects multiple small national park sites and has historically been a trouble spot during winter storms for abandoned cars that created a slalom course for snowplows and other vehicles.

Winter storm warnings extended from Kentucky to southern New Jer-

sey, and a flood watch was posted for a wide swath of Kentucky, Tennessee, southwest Virginia and northern Georgia. The snow-and-ice mix was expected to become all rain as temperatures climb by Wednesday afternoon.

A separate storm system is set to bring heavy snow from Kansas and Missouri to the Great Lakes on Wednesday, the weather service said.

Dangerous cold was forecast Tuesday from an Arctic air mass stretching from Portland, Oregon, to the Great Lakes.

'The roof is on fire'

US President Trump unleashes chaos by distraction upon int'l community

LONDON, Feb 11, (AP): The Danes are scrambling. Colombia has backed down. Mexico and Canada stand in a purgatory between tariff wars with the US and ... not. China has retaliated, launching a trade war between the economic superpowers. The Brits, long proud of their "special relationship" with the United States, are leaning into their tradition of quiet diplomacy.

It's as if President Donald Trump has flung a bag of marbles across the global stage, under the feet of foreign leaders who have often stepped together through eight decades of postwar global order.

Everyone, it seems, is responding to Trump - even Australia's leader, when asked last week for his thoughts only a few hours after Trump announced the US would "take over" the decimated Gaza Strip and turn it into the "Riviera of the Middle East."

"I'm not going to, as Australia's prime minister, give a daily commentary on statements by the US president," Anthony Albanese told reporters.

Acknowledged publicly or not, world leaders are watching Trump's wood-chipper approach to some American government institutions and wondering about those of the post-Cold War order: What of the US roles in NATO, the United Nations, the World Bank and other pillars of the international order? On US-controlled NATO, Trump has long questioned the value of the pact and threatened not to defend members of the alliance that fail to meet defense-spending goals. On his first day back in the Oval Office, Trump began to pull the United States out of the World Health Organization for the second time, an act that would leave the UN agency without its biggest donor. WHO's leaders huddled over a response and asked diplomats to lean on Washington to reverse Trump's decision. A German envoy worried: "The roof is on fire."

"Trump's actions portend a permanent shift in the landscape - not just a switch that flips back in four years' time," wrote Heather Hurlburt, a political and international affairs expert with Chatham House, a think tank in London.

Outside of leadership circles, anyone who depends on US aid for food and medicine is coming to grips with the life-and-death implications of not having it after Trump's drive to dismantle USAID and its six-decade mission to stabilize countries by providing humanitarian aid. The Vatican charity voiced outrage Monday at what it called "inhuman" US plans to gut USAID.

"We're waiting for the decisions, but we are not very, I would say, optimistic," said Arjana Qosaj Mustafa of the Kosovo Women's Network, an umbrella group of 140 NGOs. "But nevertheless, we are resilient. So we'll try to do our best."



A Spanish flag and a Spanish far-right VOX party flag are waved during the far-right Patriots for Europe summit in Madrid, Spain on Feb 8. (AP)

Emboldened by his reelection and with help from presidential friend Elon Musk, Trump has unleashed his signature chaos by distraction on the world.

Presidential orders and utterances - he's suggested annexing Canada and taking over the Panama Canal - occur at a speed that can atomize opposition. No one person or government can keep track of them all. And that, rather than clarity, is the effect of what Trump's allies call "flooding the zone."

Got a problem with it? Trump has an answer: "Fafo," short for "mess around and find out," except the first word isn't "mess." The president posted the acronym on social media, complete with a photo of him in a fedora and pinstripes.

Ask Colombia what happens when you say no to Trump. Its president briefly resisted plane loads of immigrants during Trump's first week - until the 47th US

president threatened the country with as much as a 50% hike in tariffs. Colombia accepted the immigrants. Boom, example set.

The enforcement technique has long delighted Trump's supporters, who turned out for him during the 2024 election heavily influenced by their anxiety over the economy and their own finances, according to APVotecast. Trump says he's trying to save taxpayer money and spend it on issues that align with American interests.

Take Greenland and the Gaza Strip. The isolationist, "America first" president says the US will do so. He eventually ruled out using the military to move Gaza's 2 million people elsewhere, but his plan to develop the seaside enclave into a luxury resort apparently stands.

Never mind that friends and foes alike, from the volatile Mideast to China and the staid UK, have cast the idea as a nonstarter. Powerful Saudi Arabia issued an "absolute rejection" of it. Or that it could jeopardize the fragile hostages-for-prisoners ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war, Egypt's peace deal with Israel. It could violate international law, too.

Also, Palestinians streaming back to what once were their homes after 15 months of relentless air raids overwhelmingly say they're not leaving. But Trump's plan has found support in Israel, with leaders there taking care to say leaving would be "voluntary" rather than forced expulsion, which would be a war crime.

"We are not a bad ally," Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen found it necessary to tell reporters last week, like other leaders on their heels as they respond to the Trump administration.

In this case, according to the Copenhagen Post, Frederiksen was responding to comments by Vice President JD Vance on Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures," that the EU and NATO member nation was "not being a good ally." He repeated that an American acquisition of Greenland was "possible."

That came after Frederiksen had flown to European capitals last month to urge other countries on the continent to respond with one voice against Trump's vow to make Greenland part of the United States. Denmark also has legislation to crack down on racism toward Greenlanders and has sent \$2 billion to the Arctic island for its security.

Frederiksen also shared a photo on Facebook Jan. 26 of European leaders dining at her home, with the caption: "We have always stood together in the Nordic countries. And with the new and more unpredictable reality in which we are facing, good and close alliances and friendships have only become more important."

European rights chief presses Greece on '23 migrant shipwreck as questions remain

ATHENS, Greece, Feb 11, (AP): A top European human rights official urged Greek authorities Tuesday to address claims of negligence in a 2023 boat disaster that killed hundreds of migrants off the coast of southern Greece.

Michael O'Flaherty, the Council of Europe's human rights commissioner, cited recent findings by Greece's Ombudsman that maintained Greek coast guard officers failed to prevent one of the Mediterranean's deadliest migrant shipwrecks.

Hundreds of migrants died when the Adriana, an overcrowded fishing trawler, sank in international waters off Pylos in southern Greece in June 2023. Survivors claim the Greek coast guard failed to respond to initial distress calls before the vessel capsized - an assertion strongly disputed by the government.

Greek Ombudsman Andreas Pottakis found "clear indications" that senior coast guard officials disregarded imminent danger to the migrants.

"The Commissioner, who liaises closely with the Ombudsman, notes his important findings and encourages the authorities to take resolute action to ensure appropriate criminal and disciplinary ac-



Survivors and other members of the Pakistani community in Greece hold a banner with pictures of victims of one of the worst migrant boat tragedies during a protest by the Movement United Against Racism and the Fascist Threat, or KEERFA, outside the naval court in Piraeus, near Athens, on Feb 6. (AP)

countability," O'Flaherty's office said in a report Tuesday. A copy of the report was provided to The Associated Press.

During his visit to Greece last week,

O'Flaherty met with five government ministers and Cabinet officials as well as shipwreck survivors, their lawyers and advocacy groups.

NATO allies await US defense secretary's visit

BRUSSELS, Feb 11, (AP): US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth will on Wednesday become the first member of the new Trump administration to visit NATO, where the allies are keen to understand how America now plans to influence the course of the war in Ukraine.

Hegseth's trip comes just ahead of the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion. Most U.S. allies fear that Russian President Vladimir Putin will not stop at Ukraine's borders if he wins, and that Europe's biggest land war in decades poses an existential

threat to their security.

President Donald Trump has promised to quickly end the war. He's complained that it is costing the American taxpayer too much money. Some allies worry that a hasty deal might be clinched on terms that are not favorable to Ukraine.

Hegseth will first take part in a meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group at NATO's Brussels headquarters. Former Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin set up the main international forum for drumming up arms and ammunition for Ukraine in 2022.

Over the last three years, around 50 countries have collectively provided Ukraine more than \$126 billion in weapons and military assistance. But this week for the first time, the meeting will be convened by another country; the United Kingdom. No decision has been made on who might chair the next meeting, if one is convened.

Hegseth was not expected to make any announcement on new weapons for Ukraine. He was not set to meet one on one with his Ukraine counterparts, but rather to be in a "listening mode" at the meeting, as well as at Thursday's NATO defense ministerial, one US official said.



US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth gives his opening statement before the start of a meeting with Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Richard Marles at the Pentagon on Feb 7, in Washington. (AP)



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, (at the podium center), speaks during the last parliament session ahead of national elections, at the Bundestag parliament in Berlin, Germany on Feb 11. (AP)

Scholz clashes with Merz over economy and migration at last parliament meet before poll

BERLIN, Feb 11, (AP): German Chancellor Olaf Scholz accused his main challenger in the upcoming election of "constant about turns," while Friedrich Merz, the opposition leader and front-runner, accused Scholz of leaving behind an economic "disaster" as parliament met Tuesday for the last time before the country's Feb. 23 election.

Polls give Merz's center-right Union bloc the lead, with Scholz's center-left Social Democrats well behind and showing little sign so far of narrowing the gap. They put the far-right Alternative for Germany, or AfD,

in second place.

Scholz told lawmakers that his governing coalition, which collapsed in November in a dispute over how to revitalize Germany's struggling economy, faced enormous challenges from Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing energy crisis and inflation.

Pointing to the "irritations" caused by US President Donald Trump's foreign policy announcements and his announcement of tariffs on steel and aluminum, Scholz said that "the wind is blowing in our face at the moment. And the truth is that that won't change fundamentally in the coming years."

"Strong leadership, strong nerves, a clear course - that's what matters in such difficult times," he added. "Not fickleness and a loud mouth."

He accused Merz of "constant about turns," for instance on aspects of policy toward Ukraine and refugees from that country.

Merz said Scholz and Vice Chancellor Robert Habeck of the environmentalist Greens, who also is running for the top job, reminded him of "two managers who have driven the company into the wall, then go to the owners and say they'd like to carry on the same way for four years."

America

'Drop charges against Adams':

The Justice Department on Monday ordered federal prosecutors to drop corruption charges against New York City Mayor Eric Adams, arguing in a remarkable departure from longstanding norms that the case was interfering with the mayor's ability to



Adams

aid the president's crackdown on illegal immigration.

In a two-page memo obtained by The Associated Press, acting Deputy Attorney General Emil Bove told prosecutors in

New York that they were "directed to dismiss" the bribery charges against Adams immediately. (AP)

Mace accuses ex-fiancé of abuse:

US Rep Nancy Mace of South Carolina on Monday used a nearly hour-long speech on the US House floor to accuse her ex-fiancé of physically abusing her and conspiring with business associates in acts of sexual misconduct. (AP)

Marcos thanks Cambodia for pardoning 13 Filipino women

Cambodia's Senate President Hun Sen says drone attack plot on mansion foiled

PHNOM PENH, Feb 11, (Agencies): Cambodia's Senate President Samdech Techo Hun Sen said on Tuesday that security personnel have foiled a plot to launch a drone attack on his mansion in southern Kandal province's Ta Khmou city.

Hun Sen, also president of the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP), said one of the plotters was arrested in southern Takeo province.

"I just want to confirm that in these few weeks, a drone attack has been plotted on my house," he said during the inauguration of a school building in Kandal province and his speech was live televised on the state-run TVK.

"This is an act of terrorism, and I'd like to urge foreigners to be cautious, refraining from supporting terrorist activities," he said. "Foreigners must not interfere in the domestic affairs of Cambodia."

Hun Sen said security forces thwarted the plot after he had received a secret voice message about the plan.

Hun Sen, 72, has become the Senate president since April 2024 after

stepping down as the prime minister of Cambodia in August 2023, handing the reins of power to his eldest son Hun Manet.

Also:

MANILA, Philippines: Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr thanked Cambodia's king on Tuesday for granting a royal pardon last year to 13 Filipino women who were convicted of illegally serving as surrogate mothers in the Southeast Asian kingdom.

Marcos expressed his gratitude in a meeting with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet, who was visiting Manila for talks on expanding trade, agricultural, tourism, cultural and security relations.

The Philippines and Cambodia both belong to the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a regional bloc that promotes economic integration but is divided on other issues, including countries whose security alignments is with the United States or China.

Marcos has strengthened his coun-



Philippines' President Ferdinand Marcos Jr delivers his speech during the 88th anniversary of the Armed Forces of the Philippines at Camp Aguinaldo military headquarters in Quezon city, Philippines on Dec. 21, 2023. (AP)

try's treaty alliance with the United States to boost the Philippines' external defense as it confronts China's increasingly aggressive actions in the

disputed South China Sea. Cambodia has long been known as a key backer of China in the region.

The 13 Filipino women were convict-

ed in December in Cambodia on human trafficking-related charges for acting as surrogates for a criminal syndicate selling babies to foreigners for cash.

The women, who were in various stages of pregnancy, were each sentenced to four years in prison by a Cambodian court, but they avoided imprisonment and were instead flown back to the Philippines under a royal pardon granted by Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni.

"We will never forget this act of magnanimity from His Majesty, a testament to the strong relations between our two countries," Marcos said before a closed-door meeting with the Cambodian premier and his delegation in Manila.

"We will continue to stand with you in the fight against transnational crimes and their adverse effects on our peoples and on our communities," Marcos said.

The Filipino women were charged for violating a Cambodian law against human trafficking and sexual exploitation which was updated in 2016 to ban commercial surrogacy. Cambodia has

become a popular destination for foreigners seeking women to give birth to their children.

It has a bad reputation for human trafficking, especially in connection with online scams in which illegally recruited foreigners work under conditions of virtual slavery and help perpetrate online criminal fraud that victimize citizens in other countries.

Several agreements were signed after Hun Manet's meeting with Marcos, mostly aimed at boosting trade, investment, tourism and agricultural engagements. One agreement aims to prevent looting and illicit trafficking of cultural artifacts.

In another development, the death toll in flash floods caused by unrelenting rain in Palawan province in the southwestern Philippines climbed to five, local authorities said Tuesday.

Jerry Alili, chief of the Palawan Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, said rescuers found two bodies who went missing after floodwaters swept away their van, carrying 12 people, on Sunday night.

S.Korean opp'n parties submit bill to probe corruption of Yoon, wife

SEOUL, Feb 11, (Agencies): South Korea's opposition parties on Tuesday submitted a bill to appoint a special counsel and investigate the alleged political corruption involving the impeached President Yoon Suk-yeol and his wife, Kim Keon-hee.

The main liberal opposition Democratic Party and five other minor parties proposed the bill to let the independent prosecutor look into the allegations that Yoon and Kim were implicated in illegal public opinion manipulation during the 2022 presidential election in which Yoon was elected president.

A self-proclaimed political broker, Myung Tae-kyun, was suspected of providing fake and free opinion polls in return for various interests, such as his in-

terference in the nomination of a lawmaker candidate of the ruling People Power Party.

Yoon and Kim were believed to have illegally intervened in the ruling party's candidate nominations for local elections and by-elections in 2022 and parliamentary elections in 2024.

Also:

SEOUL, South Korea: South Korean police on Tuesday were questioning an elementary-school teacher who allegedly stabbed a pupil to death in the city of Daejeon.

The incident on Monday during after-school care has shocked the nation and prompted the country's acting president to instruct reviews of school safety standards.

The female suspect is receiving hospital treatment for self-inflicted wounds following the death of the young girl in an audio-visual room on the second-floor of the school, said Yuk Jong-myeong, chief of Daejeon's western district police station.



Yoon



An aerial drone photo taken on Feb. 8, 2025, shows the snow-covered Helan Mountains seen from an amusement park in Yinchuan, northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. (Xinhua)



Venezuelan migrants deported from the United States arrive at Simon Bolivar International Airport in Maiquetia, Venezuela on Feb 10. (AP)

Venezuela sends two planes to US to return migrants, signaling improvement in ties

MCALLEN, Texas, Feb 11, (AP): Two Venezuelan planes returned home Monday with about 190 Venezuelans deported from the United States, signaling a possible thaw in relations between two longtime diplomatic adversaries and a victory for President Donald Trump in his efforts to get more countries to take their people back.

Deportation flights from the US to Venezuela have been halted for years except for a brief period in October 2023 during the Biden administration. Venezuelans began showing up at the US border with Mexico in large numbers in 2021 and are currently one of the largest nationalities entering illegally, making Venezuela's refusal to take them back a major challenge for the US.

The breakthrough came after Trump envoy Richard Grennell vis-

ited Caracas earlier this month.

"Flights of Illegal Aliens to Venezuela Resume," the White House said Monday in a post on the social platform X, saying they were overseen by Grennell.

Venezuelan television and radio triumphantly covered the arrival of the Conviasa flights in Caracas from Fort Bliss, a US Army base in El Paso, Texas.

"This is the world we want, a world of peace, understanding, dialogue and cooperation," said Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

The Venezuelan government confirmed the flights earlier in a statement that took issue with an "ill-intentioned" and "false" narrative around the presence of members of the Tren de Aragua gang in the US. It said most Venezuelan immigrants are

decent, hard-working people and that US officials sought to stigmatize the South American country.

Monday's flights came days after the first flights of immigrants to a US military base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio struck agreements with El Salvador and Guatemala for those countries to take people who were not their citizens.

A federal judge in New Mexico on Sunday preemptively blocked the transfer of three Venezuelan men to Guantanamo Bay. In their request for a temporary halt, lawyers for the men said their clients "fit the profile of those the administration has prioritized for detention in Guantanamo, i.e. Venezuelan men detained in the El Paso area with (false) charges of connections with the Tren de Aragua gang."

statement. (AP)

5 killed in suicide bombing: A suicide bomber blew himself up near a bank in northern Afghanistan on Tuesday, killing at least five people and wounding seven others, police said.

The attack happened near a branch of the Kabul Bank in Kunduz province, said Jumuddin Khaksar, a police spokesman. The dead included a guard at the bank.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack and Khaksar said police were working to track down those who orchestrated the attack. Khaksar provided no further details. (AP)

Former Colombian president Uribe denies bribery, witness tampering charges in trial

BOGOTA, Colombia, Feb 11, (AP): Former Colombian president Alvaro Uribe on Monday denied charges of bribery and witness tampering as he made his opening statement in the first criminal trial of a former president in the country's history.

Speaking to a judge in the capital, Bogota, Uribe said that he would prove that the charges against him "are politically motivated."

The charges stem from allegations that Uribe attempted to influence witnesses in a case brought against him by leftist senator Iván Cepeda, who accused the conservative leader of having links to a paramilitary group founded by ranchers in the 1990s to fight rebel groups.

The case dates back to 2012, when Uribe filed a libel suit against Cepeda with the Supreme Court, the entity charged with investigating elected officials. But in a surprising turn of events, the court dismissed charges against Cepeda and launched an investigation against Uribe in 2018.

Proceedings against the former president were transferred to another court after Uribe retired from the Colombian senate.

The probe against Uribe was delayed multiple times by prosecutors who said there was not enough evidence against the former president to file charges, but investigations have proceeded more swiftly under the government of President Gustavo Petro, the leftist leader who was elected into office in 2022.



Former Colombian president Alvaro Uribe leaves court after a hearing of his trial on charges of witness tampering and bribery in Bogota, Colombia on Feb 10. (AP)

Uribe was formally charged last year, and his trial began last week.

The combative conservative governed Colombia from 2002 to 2010 with strong support from the United States.

During Uribe's presidency Colombia's military attained some of its biggest victories against rebel groups and pushed fighters from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia into remote pockets of the country, forcing the group's leadership to enter peace talks with the government that led to the disarmament of more than 13,000

fighters in 2016. Uribe still has legions of followers in Colombia and is one of the most vocal opponents of Petro.

Dozens of supporters gathered outside the courthouse Monday, waving Colombian flags and carrying masks depicting the former president's face.

"It was my patriotic duty to come here and support this great Colombian," said Jesús Vivas, a 67-year-old Uribe supporter. "He saved this country when it was about to collapse."

Sudan paramilitary group preventing life-saving aid from famine-hit Darfur, says UN official

CAIRO, Feb 11, (AP): Paramilitary forces at war with the military in Sudan are preventing life-saving aid from reaching many people in the famine-hit Darfur region, the United Nations' top humanitarian official in the country said Monday.

Clementine Nkweta-Salami, the UN resident and humanitarian coordinator in Sudan, said in a statement that the Rapid Support Forces have imposed "obstruction, undue interference and operational restrictions" on aid supplies to areas under their control, especially in Darfur. The RSF and their allied militias control most of that western region.

"The persistent restrictions and bureaucratic hurdles ... are preventing life-saving assistance from reaching those in desperate need," she said.

There was no immediate comment from the RSF.

The restrictions, implemented by the RSF's affiliate Sudanese Agency for Relief and Humanitarian Operations, include "demands for logistical support or mandatory engagement with selected vendors that risk corruption and aid diversion," Nkweta-Salami said.



Sudanese refugees displaced by the conflict in Sudan gather to receive food staples from aid agencies at the Metche Camp in eastern Chad Tuesday, March 5, 2024. (AP)

On Sunday evening, a performer at the Super Bowl halftime show in the US unfurled a banner including the word "Sudan" in an apparent attempt to draw attention to the often-overlooked war from the event's massive audience.

The conflict in Sudan started in April 2023 when tensions between the leaders of the military and the RSF exploded into open fighting in the capital, Khartoum, and other cities across the African country.

The conflict has killed more than 28,000 people, forced millions to flee their homes and left some families eating grass in an attempt to survive as famine sweeps parts of the country. Aid groups say they struggle to reach the most vulnerable as warring parties limit access, especially in Darfur.

Famine has been detected in at least five areas, including three camps for displaced people in Darfur, according to the Integrated Food Security Classification. In its December report, the IPC warned that famine was spreading, and five other areas in Darfur have been projected to experience famine in coming months.

The war has created the world's largest displacement crisis, driving over 14 million people - about 30% of the population - from their homes, according to the U.N. Of them, an estimated 3.2 million have crossed into neighboring countries including Chad, Egypt and South Sudan.

Subcontinent

PM expresses grief: Pakistan's prime minister on Tuesday expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the deaths of an unspecified number of his countrymen over the weekend when a boat carrying Europe-bound migrants sank near the Libyan coast.

The boat capsized on Saturday in the Marsa Dela port in the western city of Zawiya, leaving dozens of Europe-bound migrants dead or missing, according to local authorities in Libya.

The Libyan Red Crescent said its teams recovered 10 bodies and the coast guard was searching for others. Pakistan says an estimated 65 people were on the boat, and efforts

were underway to ascertain information about affected Pakistanis. In a statement, Shehbaz Sharif ordered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to

complete the process of identifying the victims as soon as possible and to provide all possible assistance to the affected people. He also ordered action against those "involved in heinous acts like human trafficking," according to a

Sharif

statement. (AP)

Kuwaiti oil price rises to \$78.45 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by 14 cents to USD 78.45 per barrel on Monday as opposed to USD 78.31 pb last Friday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday.

At the global level, the price of the Brent crude future contracts went up by USD 1.21 to USD 75.87 pb, the same occurred with the West Texas Intermediate future contracts, which increased by USD 1.32 to USD 72.32 pb.

Business

Honored for NBK Highfliers and MVP Awards, reinforcing commitment to talent development

National Bank of Kuwait wins two Brandon Hall HCM Excellence Awards

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has been recognized with two prestigious accolades from Brandon Hall Group for its excellence in employee development and recognition. The bank secured the Bronze Award in the Best High-Potential Development Program category for its NBK High Fliers Program and earned the Silver Award in the Best Employee Recognition Program category for the Most Valuable Team Player (MVP).

Brandon Hall Group evaluated winners in the Best High-Potential Development Program category based on several key criteria, including the alignment of training with talent management strategy, its responsiveness to business conditions and the needs of high-potential employees, and the effectiveness of mechanisms supporting their transition into new roles.

The evaluation criteria also encompassed the Best Employee Recognition Program, assessing workplace strategies and an organization's approach to workforce rewards and recognition. This included initiatives that enhance performance and drive positive organizational outcomes.

Brandon Hall Group is a leading U.S.-based global research organization that recognizes excellence in education, leadership development, diversity and inclusion, and various other aspects of human resources.

For more than two decades, Brandon Hall HCM Excellence Awards® – Corporate Recognition has remained a pioneering benchmark in the education sector. Companies worldwide – spanning government, private, joint, and nonprofit sectors – compete for these prestigious awards, which are among the most respected and highly regarded in the industry.

The awards reflect NBK's unwavering commitment to fostering a dynamic and supportive work environment, driven by its firm belief in the value of investing in human capital. Recognizing that its employees are its greatest asset, the bank continuously develops innovative programs to empower future leaders and nurture top talent.

Furthermore, the awards underscore NBK's leadership and excellence in human capital management, reinforcing its ability to attract top talent seek-



Head of HR and Administration - NBK NY branch, Dani Taghlobi received the award on behalf of NBK.



Silver Award (Most Valuable Team Player)



Bronze Award (Best High-Potential Development Program)

- The accolades underscore NBK's leadership and excellence in human capital management
- NBK fosters a dynamic workplace culture, leveraging its full capabilities to drive employee development

ing a workplace that fosters growth and innovation. This recognition serves as a source of pride for employees, strengthening their sense of belonging and positively impacting their productivity and performance.

The NBK Highfliers program is designed to develop the next generation of banking leaders, underscoring the bank's steadfast commitment to human capital and talent development. This initiative aligns with NBK's strategic vision of fostering sustainable workforce growth, with a strong emphasis on empowering young leaders who are instrumental in driving the bank's long-term success.

NBK's corporate culture and strategy are rooted in recognizing and valuing employee contributions. In line with this commitment, the MVP program was established to honor outstanding performance, celebrating

both Most Valuable Team Player (MVP) and the Most Collaborative Team (MCT) across all divisions, including branches, international locations, and NBK Wealth. This initiative reflects the bank's dedication to supporting its employees, fostering a culture of excellence, and enhancing workplace engagement. By investing in its human capital, NBK strengthens employee performance, ultimately elevating the quality of its services and products for customers.

NBK cultivates a dynamic workplace culture, harnessing its full potential to empower employees and nurture their creativity. This unwavering commitment to talent development not only drives exceptional performance but also reinforces the bank's position as a leading financial institution on both local and regional fronts.

Boursa Kuwait ends positive

Index up 0.19%

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): **Boursa Kuwait closed Tuesday's trading session on a positive note, with its general index rising 15.23 points, or 0.19 percent, to reach 7,959.41 points.**

Market activity saw the exchange of 575.8 million shares through 24,678 cash transactions, with a total trading value of KD 118.5 million (approximately USD 364.9 million).

The Main Market Index registered a modest increase of 7.80 points, or 0.11 percent, settling at 7,417.62 points. Trading volume in this segment reached 415.3 million

shares, with 16,030 transactions totaling KD 59.15 million (around USD 182.18 million).

Meanwhile, the Premier Market Index climbed 17.85 points, or 0.21 percent, closing at 8,487.60 points. A total of 160.5 million shares changed hands through 8,648 transactions, with a value of KD 59.4 million (approximately USD 182.9 million).

In parallel, the Major 50 Index recorded a more significant gain of 47.35 points, or 0.64 percent, reaching 7,490.65 points. This was backed by the trading of 323.3 million shares through 10,832 cash transactions, amounting to KD 48.7 million (about USD 149.9 million).

Annual oil financing drops 2.1%

Kuwaiti banks boost oil and gas financing by 257.3% in Dec 2024

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Kuwait's local banks significantly increased their financing for the oil and gas sector in December 2024, reaching KD 364.5 million, a sharp rise from KD 102 million in November. This represents a 257.3% monthly increase and a 229.2 million dinar rise from KD 135.3 million in December 2023.

Fluctuations in Oil Sector Financing Throughout 2024

The total financing provided by local banks for the oil and gas sector in 2024 reached KD 2.538 billion. However, funding levels fluctuated throughout the year. In January, financing started at KD 50.6 million, then surged to KD 278.5 million in February and KD 286.3 million in March. The following months saw a decline, with KD 167.4 million in April and a sharp drop to KD 19.4 million in May.

A strong rebound followed in June, with financing climbing to KD 245.8

million, before plunging again to KD 12.3 million in July. In August, financing slightly improved to KD 42.7 million, and in September, it jumped to KD 285.7 million. October marked the highest point of the year, reaching KD 638.4 million, but this was followed by a sharp decline to KD 102 million in November, before recovering to KD 364.5 million in December.

Annual and Monthly Banking Trends

The accumulated balance of oil and gas financing provided by local banks rose by KD 70 million in December, reaching KD 2.459 billion, compared to KD 2.389 billion in November. However, on an annual basis, financing declined by KD 54 million (2.1%), down from KD 2.513 billion in December 2023.

Historical Context: Oil Projects and Banking Support

Oil project financing has experienced volatility in recent years, particularly during the COVID-19 crisis, when falling oil demand and prices forced the

government to cancel key energy projects. The lowest recorded financing level was in July 2021, at just KD 100,000. However, 2022 marked the return of oil project offerings, leading to a gradual recovery in sector financing.

Global Oil Market Trends

Meanwhile, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) reported an increase in crude and gasoline inventories, while distillate stocks declined for the week ending November 15. Oil prices saw mixed movements.

Brent crude settled at \$74.66 per barrel, rising 0.5%, but posting a 1.35% weekly loss. Similarly, U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) rose 0.55% to \$71.00 per barrel, yet recorded a 2.1% weekly decline.

Fresh U.S. sanctions on Iranian crude exports pushed prices higher, but concerns over a renewed U.S.-China trade war kept investors cautious. Additionally, U.S. oil inventories rose for the second consecutive week, with an increase of 8.7 million barrels, surpassing market expectations.

Dr. Alsuwaidan's expertise drives mental health awareness

KIBS hosts workshop on leadership resilience and burnout management

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS) proudly hosted an interactive workshop titled "Invest in Resilient Leaders: From Burnout to Balance," led by the renowned Dr. Mohammad Alsuwaidan from MindWell, Kuwait's leading mental health care center. Held at The Four Seasons Hotel, this transformative event brought together participants from member banks and various organizations across Kuwait, reflecting KIBS' commitment to fostering diverse perspectives and innovation.

Empowering Leaders to Combat Burnout
The KIBS Director General Ms. Rana A. Al Nibari, emphasized the importance of recognizing and addressing burnout in leadership. Ms. Al Nibari highlighted the program's mission to equip participants with actionable strategies to manage stress, foster resilience, and cultivate well-being within their teams and organizations.

A Deep Dive into Resilience and Leadership

The event featured dynamic, interactive sessions that delved into critical topics, including:

- Understanding the unique challenges of burnout in leadership roles.
- Identifying early signs of burnout in oneself and team members.
- Practical tools to manage stress while maintaining effective leadership.
- Proven strategies for building resilient teams and mitigating burnout at the organizational level.

Participants also developed personalized action plans to bolster their resilience and implement practices to protect against and recover from burnout. The hands-on approach ensured attendees left with practical, real-world solutions to enhance workplace well-being and productivity.

About the Speaker: Dr. Mohammad Alsuwaidan

Dr. Mohammad Alsuwaidan is a distinguished psychiatrist, academic, and mental health advocate with a wealth of global experience. He serves as Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto and is the CEO and Clinical Director of MindWell. His extensive credentials include:

- Psychiatry residency and fellowship training at the University of Toronto, with additional specialized training at Stanford and Tufts Universities.
- A Master of Public Health (MPH) from Johns Hopkins University.
- Certification by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, as well as the National Board of Public Health Examiners (USA).
- Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

Beyond his clinical and academic pursuits, Dr. Alsuwaidan is a passionate advocate for mental health aware-



Rana A. Al Nibari with Dr. Mohammad Alsuwaidan.



Dr. Mohammad Alsuwaidan leads transformative session.

ness, engaging global audiences through social media, podcasts, and television appearances.

KIBS: Driving Excellence in Banking and Beyond

With over 50 years of expertise, the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies continues to play a pivotal role in advancing Kuwait's banking and financial sectors. KIBS offers an extensive portfolio of programs, including professional certifications, executive development, and training in diverse fields. Its commitment to knowledge dissemination is evident through its English language courses, e-learning platforms, and finance research publications.

Talabat, OQ, Lulu lead Q4 IPO proceeds in MENA

MENA region records 54 IPOs raising \$12.6 billion during 2024

DUBAI, Feb 11: According to the EY MENA IPO Eye Q4 2024 report, MENA markets saw a total of 54 initial public offerings (IPOs) in 2024, raising \$12.6 bln in total. When compared to 2023, last year recorded a 12.5% increase in the number of IPOs and a 17.6% rise in proceeds.

The year-on-year increase in proceeds for 2024 was impacted by a number of large-value IPOs such as Talabat Holding plc, OQ Exploration & Production and Lulu Retail Holdings PLC that were listed during the last quarter of the year.

Brad Watson, EY MENA Strategy and Transactions Leader, says:

"The year 2024 ended on a strong note with 54 IPOs in total, the highest in MENA over the past seven years. The region has been one of the busiest when compared to the global market. The momentum is expected to continue into 2025, with companies from various sectors announcing their intention to come to market. In addition, regional exchanges are actively working on initiatives to promote family-owned businesses and small to medium enterprises, aiming to strengthen the capital markets infrastructure and boost future liquidity. The market is also anticipating the Arena platform from the DFM, which is expected to launch in 2025."

Boost in listings across MENA during Q4 2024

During Q4 2024, 25 IPOs raised US\$7.9b,

which represents a 32% increase in number and a 59.4% surge in proceeds when compared to Q4 2023.

Talabat Holding plc, which listed on the Dubai Financial Market (DFM), raised the highest proceeds, contributing 25.8% of the overall proceeds for Q4 2024. It was followed by OQ Exploration & Production, which listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) and raised \$2.0 bln - the largest IPO in Oman to date - and accounted for 25.3% of the total quarterly proceeds.

Meanwhile, the Bahrain Bourse witnessed the AlAbraaj Restaurants Group IPO that raised \$23.9 mln.

Outside of the GCC region, there were two IPOs in Q4 2024 - Compagnie Marocaine de goutte a goutte et de pompage (CMGP) in Morocco and The United Bank in Egypt.

Saudi Arabia continues to dominate listings

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) dominated the region's IPO activity with 17 out of the 25 listings in Q4 2024, with total proceeds of \$1.2 bln. Five IPOs took place on the Tadawul Main Market with total proceeds of \$1.1 bln. Arabian Mills for Food Products Company and United International Holding Company marked the highest proceeds at \$0.3 bln each. The remaining 12 IPOs, raising \$ 119 mln in total, were listed on the Nomu-Parallel Market.

In 2024, various sectors contributed to IPO funds raised in KSA, with the largest shares



Gregory Hughes

coming from commercial and professional services at 20.0%, materials at 12.5%, food and beverages (F&B) at 10.0% and healthcare equipment and services at 10.0%.

UAE reports four new listings during Q4 2024

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX) welcomed two IPOs in Q4 2024 with \$2.0 bln in combined proceeds. Lulu Retail Holdings PLC raised \$1.7 bln, and ADNH Catering PLC raised \$235 mln. The ADX also saw a direct listing of Mair Group. In Dubai, the DFM had one new listing in Q4, Talabat Holding

- The MENA markets saw 25 IPOs during Q4 2024, raising \$7.9 bln in proceeds
- Oman reported its largest IPO to date in Q4 with OQ Exploration & Production raising US\$2.0b
- Saudi Arabia continued to dominate listings with 17 IPOs in Q4 2024

plc in the consumer and technology sector, raising \$2.0 bln.

For the UAE, ESG goals remain a priority. The country has introduced a law, effective May 2025, that requires companies to report carbon emissions. Additionally, businesses must adopt decarbonization strategies that include renewable energy and carbon offsetting. Applicable to all sectors, including free zones, the law sets penalties for noncompliance, encourages research and development and promotes carbon trading through a dedicated registry. These measures align with the UAE's 2050 net-zero ambitions and are likely to influence IPO market dynamics as companies prioritize sustainability to attract investors.

Gregory Hughes, EY MENA IPO and Transaction Diligence Leader, says:

"The last quarter of 2024 was a bumper quarter for the MENA region with 25 IPOs, making up 46% of the total IPO activity in that year. Nomu listings accounted for 50%,

indicating robust activity in the junior Saudi market. Talabat and OQ Exploration & Production raised substantial proceeds, showcasing strong demand from regional investors. The region also continues to drive positive developments in areas such as governance and ESG to enhance its attractiveness to local and international investors alike."

The outlook for MENA IPOs in 2025 remains positive, with 38 companies and 22 funds intending to list on the region's exchanges across a variety of sectors. Among the GCC countries, KSA remains the lead in listings with 27 companies in the pipeline, followed by the UAE with three, and Qatar with one. Outside of the GCC, Egypt has announced five IPOs, and Algeria has two businesses intending to list. Notable companies, such as Etihad Airways PJSC and Amanat Holdings from the UAE, as well as Panda Retail Company and Riyad Capital from KSA, are among those considering IPOs in 2025.

Investor relations workshops empower listed companies

Boursa Kuwait drives sustainability and social responsibility in 2024

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Boursa Kuwait continued to support community and environmental initiatives, raise financial awareness, and enhance education and healthcare, as part of its efforts to promote sustainable standards and practices in the Kuwaiti capital market and the goals and objectives of its Corporate Sustainability (CS) strategy and corporate social responsibilities.

Throughout 2024, Boursa Kuwait bolstered its strategic partnerships with local and international organizations, launching 38 programs and initiatives within its CS strategy's pillars of Community and Environment in addition to earning numerous prestigious awards and accolades from globally renowned publications and organizations, further cementing its reputation as a socially and environmentally responsible institution, a model issuer in the Kuwaiti capital market and a key contributor to Kuwait's vision of becoming a leading financial and investment hub in the region.

Commenting on Boursa Kuwait's achievements in corporate social responsibility during 2024, Senior Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications Mr. Naser Mishari Al-Sanousi said, "Boursa Kuwait remains committed to corporate sustainability, actively supporting social and environmental initiatives as part of its broader mission to drive sustainable development and enhance financial awareness. By forging strategic partnerships and adopting impactful programs, the exchange strives to position itself as a model of social and environmental responsibility."

He added, "The recognition we have received through prestigious awards reflects our dedication to transparency, strong governance, and investor empowerment, and we remain focused on furthering these efforts to cement Boursa Kuwait's status as a leading, sustainable financial market on both regional and global fronts."

Engaging with stakeholders

The Kuwaiti capital market: an everlasting legacy and a promising future

Boursa Kuwait celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2024, a momentous occasion that embodies its achievements as a primary driver of the growth and innovation of the Kuwaiti capital market aligned with the State of Kuwait's ambitious vision to transform into a leading financial, investment and cultural hub in the region. The company's establishment in 2014 was a pivotal step in privatizing the Kuwaiti stock market as Boursa Kuwait assumed the responsibility of managing and developing market operations in line with the best-in-class international standards and practices.

To commemorate this milestone, the company produced a documentary titled "The History of the Kuwaiti Capital Market," highlighting the key milestones that have shaped the market since its inception.

Boursa Kuwait gains recognition for its stellar efforts

Boursa Kuwait has continued its impressive track record of accolades and recognition for its outstanding achievements in corporate sustainability and environmental, social and governance endeavors, earning six prestigious awards from globally renowned publications, including the "Best in Sustainability Transparency" Award from Global Finance, the "Best Sustainable Corporate Governance in Kuwait" and "Best Corporate Governance and ESG Strategy 2024" Awards from The European as well as the "Outstanding Contribution to Women's Empowerment in the MENA Region 2023", "Best ESG and Governance Strategy among GCC Financial Markets 2023" and the "Outstanding Contribution to Financial Inclusion in GCC Financial Markets 2023" Award from Capital Finance International (CFI).

In addition, Boursa Kuwait's 2023 Sustainability Report has been recognized as the Best Sustainability and ESG Report at the Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA) Awards, reaffirming its position as a leading institution in corporate sustainability.

Empowering listed companies to adopt best practices

Boursa Kuwait is dedicated to ensuring that all its stakeholders possess the knowledge and skills required to actively contribute to and benefit from the Kuwaiti capital market. The exchange is also committed to promoting financial literacy, raising awareness of the best standards and practices adopted worldwide and encouraging positive behavioral changes through targeted personal training programs and initiatives.

During 2024, Boursa Kuwait hosted workshops on investor relations targeting listed companies in collaboration with Instinctif Partners, a reputation management consultancy, which focused on enhancing awareness and understanding of the latest and best practices in investor relations, a critical area for effective communication with investors.

Additionally, Boursa Kuwait organized a virtual workshop on the latest sustainability reporting standards in collaboration with the United Nations Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative, the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) Foundation, and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank Group.

Boursa Kuwait hosted the "Investment-Ready Impact Data - A Practical Approach to Sustainability in Finance" workshop, organized by Verity and their local partner Meras Consulting, which provided practical insights and solutions to the most prominent capital market challenges of the Energy Transition age.

Raising awareness of financial literacy

Boursa Kuwait joined over 118 stock exchanges around the world to raise awareness of financial literacy as part of World Investor Week (WIW) 2024, a week-long global campaign by the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) and the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE).

To commemorate the campaign, Boursa Kuwait launched the 'The Bell' initiative in collaboration with the Union of Investment Companies, the Kuwait Financial Center (Markaz), the CFA Society, Kuwait University, and the Kuwait Credit Information Network (CINET). This initiative reflects Boursa Kuwait's longstanding commitment to educational programs that empower individuals and strengthen the community, ultimately contributing to Kuwait's economic development. By fostering financial awareness and literacy, Boursa Kuwait aims to solidify its position as a leading regional and international exchange.

The initiative featured a variety of training courses, workshops, awareness sessions, and discussion panels led by a distinguished group of experts in capital markets and the financial sector. Additionally, the initiative included four podcast episodes delving into the transformative impact of artificial intelligence on the world of finance and investment as well as educational material that aimed to raise the skills and awareness of financial literacy in Kuwait's capital market, produced in collaboration with the Union of Investment Companies.

Commemorating global initiatives

Reaffirming its strong commitment to sustainability,



Naser Mishari Al-Sanousi



Boursa Kuwait's prestigious awards.

Boursa Kuwait joined over 30 stock exchanges worldwide in the second edition of the World Federation of Exchanges' "Ring the Bell for Climate" initiative. Held in the lead-up to the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29), this global campaign highlights the critical importance of sustainability and climate issues in the financial sector while showcasing the vital role stock exchanges play in addressing these challenges.

To support the initiative, Boursa Kuwait organized a workshop in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which focused on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Impact Measurement and Management (IMM) cycle and featured an insightful presentation emphasizing the vital role of the private sector in addressing climate change. The workshop brought together senior executives, sustainability officers, compliance managers, and investor relations professionals from listed companies. Participants were introduced to UNDP's SDG IMM Cycle, rooted in the SDG Impact Standards, which advocates for a structured, SDG-aligned approach to measuring, managing, and communicating impact. The session emphasized moving beyond traditional ESG reporting by applying IMM principles to drive measurable progress toward net-zero targets and sustainable development goals.

Supporting national initiatives

As a responsible corporate entity, Boursa Kuwait recognizes its role in supporting both local and international organizations in their efforts related to healthcare, social welfare, and other areas that directly affect various segments of society.

In 2024, Boursa Kuwait lit its building in blue to celebrate the inauguration of the Al-Zour Refinery Project, held under the patronage of His Highness the Emir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. This gesture reflects the bourse's commitment to supporting national projects that highlight Kuwait as a leading nation in sustainability and in addressing the challenges of climate change.

Women Empowerment

At Boursa Kuwait, empowering women is seen as a vital step toward fostering inclusivity and promoting diversity in the workplace, making a significant contribution to economic and social sustainability. By creating opportunities for women to assume leadership roles and actively participate in financial decision-making, the company can make a positive impact toward driving innovation and cultivating diverse perspectives that propel economic growth.

Reaffirming this commitment to women's empowerment, Boursa Kuwait joined over 100 stock exchanges worldwide to ring the bell for women's empowerment for the seventh consecutive year for International Women's Day 2024. This initiative, organized by UN Women in partnership with the World Federation of Exchanges, underscores the pivotal role stock exchanges can play in advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

This year's event, held under the theme "Investing in Women: Accelerating Progress," focused on amplifying women's voices and celebrating their contributions, paving the way for a more inclusive and prosperous future as well as raising awareness about the Women's Empowerment Principles—a set of seven global guidelines that provide practical strategies for businesses to promote gender equality across the workplace, marketplace, and broader community.

In addition to ringing the bell, Boursa Kuwait hosted a fireside chat on women's economic empowerment by Ms. Hewdige Nuyens, the Managing Director of the International Banking Federation and the Chair of the European Women on Boards, a non-profit organization that supports women's empowerment and gender diversity in corporate boards. Her Excellency Ms. Anne Koistinen, the Ambassador of the European Union, also participated, giving a key-

note speech to the crowd which included employees from Boursa Kuwait and Kuwait Clearing Company, as well as representatives from several listed companies.

The bourse also sponsored and hosted the "Women and Prosperity" event organized by Playbook, the region's leading e-learning platform for women in leadership positions, bringing together some of the standout female leaders from Kuwait and across the GCC to highlight the growing role women are playing in shaping the future of the financial services industry and celebrate the achievements of women across this region in the financial services industry.

Continuing collaboration with the Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA)

In line with its mandate to promote Investor Relations (IR), best practices, and international standards in corporate governance in our markets, Boursa Kuwait continued to create value through our ongoing partnership with the Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA)—an independent organization that seeks to enhance the reputation, efficiency and attractiveness of the Middle East capital markets.

In 2024, the two entities partnered to host a pair of workshops designed for listed companies. The first focused on the transformative potential of artificial intelligence in advancing investor relations and creating added value for companies, while the second examined the influence of digital innovation and technological advancements on the evolution of investor relations practices.

Forging a strategic partnership with the Chartered Financial Analysts Society (CFA Society)

Boursa Kuwait sponsored and hosted the CFA Institute's Research Challenge, organized in collaboration with the CFA Society Kuwait, becoming the first-ever strategic partner for this competition in Kuwait.

The CFA Institute's Research Challenge provides a unique opportunity for students from participating colleges to embark on a journey into the world of finance, helping them gain valuable skills in financial analysis and professional conduct.

Educational tours of the Kuwaiti capital market

In 2024, Boursa Kuwait hosted several schools, universities, and companies for educational tours at its iconic building, reaffirming its commitment to fostering a well-versed generation of investment and capital market professionals.

Among the institutions that participated in these educational tours were the Kuwait Investment Authority, the National Investments Company, the German Business Council, Kuwait University, the American University of the Middle East, the American United School, and the Fahheel Al-Wataniyah Indian Private School.

Promoting public health

Public health forms the foundation of strong and sustainable communities, as Boursa Kuwait firmly believes that investing in the health of individuals lays the groundwork for a better and more stable future. A healthy society becomes more resilient, offering future generations the chance to thrive in a vibrant and wholesome environment. Good health is about living a life full of energy and achievement, empowering individuals to contribute meaningfully to building a prosperous and progressive community.

To that end, and in celebration of World Blood Donor Day, Boursa Kuwait organized its fourth annual blood donation campaign in collaboration with the Kuwait Clearing Company and in partnership with the Central Blood Bank, reflecting the company's belief in the importance of supporting social causes and increasing awareness around them.

The 2024 campaign coincided with the 20th anniversary of the official launch of World Blood Donor Day in 2004 and expressed gratitude and appreciation to everyone who has dedicated their time and effort to donate blood, highlighting the profound impact blood donations have on the lives of both patients and donors under the theme of "Cel-

brating 20 Years of Giving: Thank You, Blood Donors!".

Raising awareness of diseases and health issues

Boursa Kuwait is deeply committed to supporting and serving the community, striving to benefit its internal and external stakeholders. The company works to improve its positive impact through various community-focused initiatives, including health-related programs in collaboration with organizations dedicated to physical and mental well-being.

In 2024, the company organized an informative session for the female employees of Boursa Kuwait, the Kuwait Clearing Company, and brokerage firms operating within the Boursa Kuwait building entitled "Foundations of Wellness: Healthy Habits for a Sustainable Life," which highlighted some of the healthy habits women can adopt in their diets to lead healthier and more sustainable lives.

The bourse also demonstrated its support for the annual "Movember" campaign and Men's Health Awareness Month by lighting its building in blue and hosting an awareness session titled "Your Health is a Priority" which focused on promoting health and well-being among participants.

The Environment

Environmental Voluntary Foundation

Boursa Kuwait has reaffirmed its commitment to environmental sustainability through its continued collaboration with the Environmental Voluntary Foundation (EVF) and the Kuwait Dive Team, in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

In 2024, Boursa Kuwait continued its sponsorship of the Kuwait Dive Team's initiative to preserve Kuwait Bay, an essential economic and ecological resource for the country. The team's focused efforts led to the removal of more than 100 tons of waste over 60 missions, including 60 tons of hazardous materials from 45 missions, 9 tons of abandoned fishing nets, and five ships and boats weighing a total of 31 tons.

Plastic awareness and recycling

Boursa Kuwait has reinforced its strategic partnership with Omniya Plastic Collection Company, actively contributing to the nonprofit company's mission of advancing plastic recycling and promoting responsible plastic waste management initiatives.

In 2024, Omniya's efforts led to the recycling of over 420 tons of plastic waste—equivalent to approximately 21 million plastic bottles—representing a remarkable 42% increase from the 295 tons recycled in 2023.

The Green Darb Program for Practical Training in Agriculture

As part of its dedication to supporting environmental sustainability projects and programs, Boursa Kuwait continued its strategic partnership with LOYAC for the second consecutive year, sponsoring the third edition of the "Green Darb" program, which offers participants intensive hands-on training and theoretical lectures to equip trainees with advanced field skills, empowering them to contribute to building a sustainable environment.

Strategic Partnerships

Kuwait Red Crescent Society

As part of its commitment to corporate social responsibility, Boursa Kuwait has strengthened its strategic partnership with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) as a Silver Humanitarian Partner, continuing its collaboration for the fourth consecutive year. The company supported the Society's Basic Education program for low-income families and those facing financial hardship in Kuwait, helping alleviate their burdens, as well as KRCS's University Education program, which seeks to empower financially struggling students to complete their higher education.

This support reflects Boursa Kuwait's belief in the transformative power of education as a cornerstone for building an informed and capable generation ready to face future challenges.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Boursa Kuwait reaffirmed its commitment to humanitarian causes by continuing its strategic partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the fourth consecutive year, coinciding with World Refugee Day 2024. This year's theme, "Hope Away from Home: A World Where Refugees Are Always Included," underscored the importance of fostering solidarity and inclusion for those forced to flee their homes due to conflict or persecution.

Through its partnership with the UNHCR, Boursa Kuwait has played a vital role in providing essential aid—ranging from shelter and healthcare to clean water—for over 1,600 vulnerable families across the Middle East. Over the past four years, the bourse has supported the UNHCR's emergency response efforts in Sudan, Syria, and Lebanon, while consistently contributing to the organization's annual winter assistance program. In 2024, its contributions expanded to address the escalating humanitarian needs in Lebanon, a country grappling with mounting instability caused by geopolitical tensions and recent hostilities in the region.

Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) and Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (BAACH)

As part of its prominent role in supporting humanitarian and societal initiatives, Boursa Kuwait has renewed its longstanding collaboration with the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) and Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (BAACH) for the seventh year in a row, contributing over 34 thousand services to ailing children and their families in nine hospitals all around Kuwait. The company also sponsored the redesign of uniforms for Child's Play specialists across affiliated hospitals, which were inspired by children's drawings and artwork and aimed to support mental well-being and support the specialists with the treatment of children in hospitals.

CODED Academy and UniCODE

Boursa Kuwait entered a strategic partnership with CODED Academy, the first coding bootcamp in the Middle East. As part of this partnership, the Kuwaiti stock exchange sponsored and hosted the academy's UniCODE coding program for college students and recent graduates, providing comprehensive training to 250 university students. The Kuwait Financial Centre (Markaz) also participated in the program as a co-sponsor.

CODED Academy's UniCODE program empowers college students and recent graduates with the coding and programming skills needed to thrive in today's competitive job market. Through training in cybersecurity, mobile, and web development, participants gain valuable expertise and enhance their career prospects.



'Women and Prosperity' event



CODED Academy



Boursa Kuwait sponsored and hosted the CFA Institute's Research Challenge.



Ministry of Finance photos

Left: Al-Fassam with Mohammad bin Rashed Al-Maktoum at the World Governments Summit. Right: Group photo at the World Governments Summit.

Kuwait's Al-Fassam attends World Governments Summit with UAE Vice Pres

DUBAI, Feb 11, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Finance, State Minister for Economic and Investment Affairs Noura Al-Fassam attended a Finance Ministers' meeting with Emirati Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Mohammad bin Rashed Al-Maktoum prior to launch of World Governments Summit.

In a statement to KUNA, the Ministry of Finance mentioned that the meeting affirmed necessity of opening communication channels and extending cooperation between Arab governments, so that it would reap benefits from expertise and reflect positively on achievement of sustainable development goals.

The meeting was attended by Arab Finance Ministers participating at the Arab Fiscal Forum held before the WGS organized with the aim of exchanging ideas on addressing economic challenges and implementing flexible policies that guarantee financial sustainability.

Part of firm's strategic sponsorship of MEW's Innovation & Excellence Award

Zain showcases latest 'solutions' to support public sector's digital needs

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Zain announced its strategic sponsorship of the second edition of the Innovation and Excellence Award, along with the accompanying Conference and Achievements Exhibition organized by the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy. As part of its continuous efforts to contribute to the country's digital transformation journey, the company showcased a range of its latest digital solutions tailored to serve the needs of the public sector.

The event was held under the patronage and in the presence of H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Abdulaziz Boushehri, Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, alongside the Ministry's Undersecretary Dr. Adel Al-Zamel, Al-Assimah Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali, Zain Kuwait's Chief Enterprise Business Officer Hamad Al-Marzouq, and Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, in addition to ministry leaders, officials from both the public and private sectors, and participating entities.

On the sidelines of the event, Zain showcased

at its dedicated booth a selection of key solutions and services from its digital portfolio designed to support the digital transformation needs of government institutions. These included cloud computing solutions, 5G communication services, data center services, and more. The company also showcased its success story with the Ministry of Electricity and Water through the Smart Meters project, which stands as one of the first fruitful partnerships with the public sector to achieve digital transformation since 2017.

The event served as a key platform to highlight the outstanding achievements of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy employees while fostering a culture of innovation and competition. It provided an opportunity for employees to present applicable ideas, products, and services aimed at advancing the ministry's sectors across engineering, information systems, administration, and finance.

The ceremony was also accompanied by a specialized conference and the Achievements Exhibi-

tion, where various local and international companies showcased their major projects and services related to electricity, water, and renewable energy. The conference aimed to enhance discussions on the latest developments in electrical energy and water management, with a focus on challenges and sustainable solutions to ensure resource efficiency and meet growing demand.

Bringing together an elite group of experts, decision-makers, and specialists from both the public and private sectors, the conference facilitated knowledge exchange, experience sharing, and the development of innovative strategies to advance the electricity and water sectors in Kuwait.

As a leading digital services provider, Zain believes in the importance of harnessing technology and artificial intelligence to drive digital transformation and enhance digital innovation in Kuwait. The company remains committed to advancing innovative services powered by these technologies.



Dr. Mahmoud Boushehri honors Hamad Al-Marzouq in recognition of Zain's support.



Boushehri with Al-Marzouq, Al-Khashti, and Zain's team at the company's booth.

Fed holds rates steady despite inflation and strong job market

Morgan Stanley predicts just one rate cut in 2025

WASHINGTON, Feb 11, (AP): The Federal Reserve is prepared to keep its key interest rate unchanged for now as inflation remains elevated and the job market is solid, Chair Jerome Powell said Tuesday on the first day of a two-day appearance before Congress.



Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell walks out after holding a news conference following the Federal Open Market Committee meeting, Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2025, at the Federal Reserve in Washington. (AP)

After cutting its key rate a full percentage point in the final three months of last year, with "the economy remaining strong, we do not need to be in a hurry to adjust our policy stance," Powell said in written remarks to the Senate Banking Committee.

Powell's appearance comes as inflation is still above the Fed's 2% target and the Trump administration is spending many long-time U.S. policies by imposing tariffs on steel and aluminum and seeking to sharply cut government spending. President Donald Trump has also frequently attacked the Fed in the past, raising concerns about the Fed's historic independence from politics.

Powell did not mention those policy changes in his statement, but said that the Fed's interest rate is "well positioned to deal with the risks and uncertainties that we face."

The odds of further interest rate cuts this year by the Federal Reserve dwindled last week as unemployment fell and more officials say they want to see how new policies from the White House affect the economy.

While Fed officials penciled in two rate cuts this year at their December

meeting, economists and Wall Street investors are increasingly skeptical, with some predicting no reductions at all this year. On Friday, economists at Morgan Stanley said they now expect just one rate cut in 2025, and investors also expect just one - in July - according to pricing in futures markets.

Fewer cuts could translate into a longer period of elevated mortgage rates and high costs to borrow money for everything from autos to credit cards. Still, mortgage rates are closely tied to the yield on the 10-year Treasury note, which can move independently of the Fed's actions.

The shifting expectations come as Chair Jerome Powell heads to Capitol Hill for two days of testimony this week, beginning Tuesday, before House and Senate committees that oversee the

central bank and the financial industry. Fed chairs are required by law to appear before Congress twice a year.

Members of Congress may urge that he cut rates more quickly. He will also likely be grilled about issues that are taking a higher profile under the Trump administration, such as crypto regulation, banking regulation, and allegations of "de-banking."

De-banking is the practice of banks shutting down customer accounts because they believe they pose financial, legal or reputational risks to the banks. Some crypto executives have charged that Biden administration regulators pressured financial firms to target their industry for de-banking.

Regarding interest rates, Fed officials have suggested recently that after cutting their key rate three times at the end of last year - to about 4.3%, down from two-decade high of 5.3% - they are likely to be on hold for an extended period, though none will specify how long that might be.

On Friday, Fed governor Adriana Kugler said that the labor market was "stable" and that "gives us a little bit of time to make some decisions." She noted that inflation has "moved sideways" since the fall and is above their 2% target.

She added that potential policy changes from the Trump administration have added uncertainty to their outlook for the economy. Economists have said that widespread tariffs, and the deportation of immigrants that Trump has also promised, could push up inflation. Others argue that Trump's deregulatory policies could, by increasing supply, reduce prices.

"The cautious and the prudent step is to hold the (Fed's key) rate where it is for some time," Kugler said. "Given that the economy is solid, given the fact that we haven't achieved our 2% target, and given the fact that we may have uncertainties and other factors that may be pushing up inflation."

Separately, Austan Goolsbee, president of the Fed's Chicago branch, said in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press Friday that he still expects the central bank's rate will be lower in the next 12 to 18 months than it is now.

But he also said it makes sense for the Fed to take a slower approach as it nears a point where it may stop reducing rates.

He also noted that the prospect of tariffs has muddied the waters a bit for the Fed in the coming months. Tariffs may cause a one-time increase in prices but don't necessarily cause ongoing inflation.

Trump imposes 25 percent tariffs on all steel imports

Canada slams US steel tariffs

WASHINGTON, Feb 11, (AP): President Donald Trump on Monday removed the exceptions and exemptions from his 2018 tariffs on steel, meaning that all steel imports will be taxed at a minimum of 25%. Trump also hiked his 2018 aluminum tariffs to 25% from 10%.

"We were being pummeled by both friend and foe alike," Trump said as he signed two proclamations changing his orders during his first term that go into effect on March 4. "It's time for our great industries to come back to America."

The moves are part of an aggressive push by the president to reset global trade, with Trump saying that tax hikes on the people and companies buying foreign-made products will ultimately strengthen domestic manufacturing. But the tariffs would hit allies as the four biggest sources of steel imports are Canada, Brazil, Mexico and South Korea, according to the American Iron and Steel Institute.

Trump also intends this week to reset U.S. taxes on all imports to match the same levels charged by other countries. All of that comes on top of the 10% tariffs he already put on China, China's retaliatory tariffs that started Monday and the U.S. tariffs planned for Canada and Mexico that have been suspended until March 1.

Monday's tariffs almost immediately drew criticism from Canada, the largest source of steel imports. Candace Laing, president and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, said that Trump was a destabilizing force in the global economy.

"Today's news makes it clear that perpetual uncertainty is here to stay," said Laing.

The tariffs carry inflation risks at a moment when voters are already weary of high prices and fearful that price increases will eclipse any income gains. Trump maintains that the tariffs will level the playing field in international trade and make U.S. factories more competitive, such that any pain felt by consumers and businesses would eventually be worthwhile.

"Fairness" is in the eye of the beholder, but the more fundamental question is whether the U.S. actually benefits from such new tariffs," Benn Steil, director of international economics at the Council on Foreign Relations, a New York-based non-partisan think tank, said in an email. "The costs to the U.S. will include higher prices to U.S. consumers, retaliatory tariffs abroad, and the loss of U.S. jobs and competitiveness in firms hit by higher input costs."

Steil noted that other countries are already adopting Trump's approach from his first term as the president imposes tariffs on the premise that the imports create national security risks. That's because national security-related tariffs are legally unchallengeable at the World Trade Organization, meaning that so far Trump's approach has encouraged other countries to increase trade barriers.

"Not surprisingly, everything from 'door frames' to 'alcoholic beverages' have of late been subject to new import barriers in the developing world on the grounds of national security," Steil said.

Of the roughly 29 million net tons of steel imported into the United States last year, a little under 2% came from China. But the White House maintains that exemptions to the tariffs provided over the previous four years by the Biden administration enabled steel and aluminum from China and Russia to go through other nations to reach the United States.

While the tariffs could help the finances of steel mills and aluminum smelters, they could also increase costs for the manufacturers that use the metals as raw materials to make autos, appliances and other products.

Glenn Stevens Jr., executive director of MichAuto, said that the auto industry would likely need to raise prices in response to the tariffs. In turn, higher prices would decrease sales and hurt company's bottom lines, leading to fewer factory jobs.

"If you look at sudden tariffs to a system, there isn't a lot of good that comes out of that," said Stevens, his remarks challenging Trump's own statements that his policies would stimulate massive gains in auto industry jobs.

The White House has yet to fully counter economic analyses showing that tariffs would hurt growth and intensify inflation, only saying that such analyses are incomplete without including the full extent of Trump's planned income tax cuts and regulatory curbs. But Trump has yet to propose a budget plan that would flesh out his policies so that economists can judge them.

Consumers already appear to be anticipating that inflation will become a bigger problem. On Friday, the preliminary February results from the University of Michigan Survey of Consumers found that year-ahead inflation expectations jumped to 4.3% from 3.3% a month prior.

The government inflation report scheduled to be released on Wednesday is expected by economists to show consumer prices rising at 2.8%, which would suggest that the public sees tariffs as a major risk to their financial wellbeing.

The stock prices of steel companies climbed sharply on Monday as investors assumed the tariffs would increase their profits. Cleveland-Cliffs, which wants to buy Pittsburgh's U.S. Steel, surged upward by nearly 18%. U.S. Steel rose almost 5%. Nucor increased almost 6%, and Steel Dynamics rose about 5%.

But some companies that could pay more for steel and aluminum saw their share prices decrease. For example, shares in automaker General Motors sold off, which could ultimately signal trouble for a manufacturing sector that Trump has promised to revive.

"We have far more steel and aluminum-consuming businesses, think construction, machinery and equipment manufacturing, auto manufacturing, than we do steel and aluminum producers, so the advantage created for the producers comes at a much greater cost to downstream users," said Erica York, vice president of federal tax policy at the right-leaning Tax Foundation.

Trump reiterated as he signed the proclamations that more tariffs would be coming on computer chips, autos and pharmaceutical drugs. But the president said that the import taxes would eventually enable more steel mills and aluminum plants to open in the U.S. to avoid the tariffs.

"You're ultimately going to have a price reduction because they're going to make their steel here," said Trump, adding that there would also be more jobs.

Howard Lutnick, Trump's pick to be commerce secretary, said that the strengthened tariffs would bring 120,000 jobs back to the United States. It wasn't clear how he reached that number. The primary metals industry added roughly 14,000 jobs during the first 12 months the steel and aluminum tariffs were originally imposed, though gains were quickly erased by the coronavirus pandemic in 2020.

Panos Kouvelis, a professor specializing in supply chains at Washington University in St. Louis, co-wrote a research paper last year finding that the 2018 tariffs did not deliver a stronger manufacturing sector as Trump had promised.

"Simple economics will tell you if prices go up then demand will go down," Kouvelis said, stressing that what was needed instead were incentives that were specific to advanced technologies, national security needs and pharmaceutical needs.

"It requires smart, targeted industrial policies," he said, "instead of general tariffs on everything."

What's On

Bank supports Kuwaiti youth businesses

KFH participates in Ya Hala festival's 2nd draw

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the second draw of the Ya Hala Shopping Festival as a strategic partner. This participation reflects its commitment to social responsibility and dedication to supporting key retail sectors and Kuwaiti youth-led businesses.

The second draw announced the winners of the luxury cars and cash prizes. KFH also revealed the winners of the Al-Rabeh and Al-Hassad draws. In addition to the main prizes, KFH awarded gold bars and reward points to customers enrolled in its KFH Rewards program. This initiative reflects the bank's continued leadership in supporting social

initiatives that positively impact the community and contribute to the country's development plans.

KFH is a strategic partner of the inaugural Ya Hala Shopping Festival, demonstrating its commitment to supporting the event. The festival aims to boost key retail sectors, stimulate the economy, and invigorate trade and sales, while also coinciding with Kuwait's national celebrations.

Ya Hala Shopping Festival is a national initiative encompassing economic, commercial, cultural, and entertainment activities, contributing to stimulating the economy. Held from January 21 to March 31, the festival offers 70-day promotional

campaigns featuring discounts and special offers from participating companies and retailers. The festival also includes exciting raffles with prizes exceeding \$8 million, including both cash and in-kind rewards.

KFH remains committed to actively participating in such festivals and diverse events, serving various segments of society while fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors. Through these initiatives, KFH aims to strengthen relationships with key institutions across the country and contribute to the stimulating Kuwait's economy.



Kuwait Finance House team announcing the winners of the second draw in the 'Ya Hala' festival.

4 win iPhone 16 devices

KIB announces winners of 'Youth Account' campaign

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has announced the winners of the campaign for its Youth Account segment customers. Four lucky customers, Bodour Saad Aifan AlEnezi, Ali Khaled Ali AIMutairi, Bandar Mubarak Dinar Jaroub and Fahad Al-Humaidi Maajoun AlHussaini, won the draw for iPhone 16 devices after having transferred their student allowance to the Bank.



Khaled

Congratulating the winners of the campaign, Khaled Al-Hulaibi, Segments Manager at KIB, said: "The Youth Account customers campaign reflects our commitment to providing added value for our customers, particularly the youth segment, which we view as a cornerstone of our society. Through these special campaigns, we aim to strengthen our relationship with Youth Account holders, encouraging them to save and achieve early financial independence by leveraging their account benefits. We are dedicated to collaborating with distinguished partners and delivering innovative campaigns and exclusive rewards that align with young people's interests and aspirations as they pursue their future goals."

Al-Hulaibi highlighted that the KIB Youth Account is specifically

designed to meet the daily needs of young people aged 15 to 25, encouraging them to save, and offering both existing and new customers a variety of benefits. The account requires no minimum initial deposit or balance to maintain. Additionally, it includes a modern-designed prepaid card with benefits such as 1% cashback, usable at over one million ATMs worldwide. The card is also accepted by KNET and at more than 30 million point-of-sale (POS) locations globally, making KIB an ideal choice for young people. Furthermore, new customers opening a Youth Account can receive 5,600 reward points, redeemable through Talabat, Deliveroo, and iTunes gift cards.

Additionally, Youth Account holders can open a Dirwaza Account, giving them access to cash prize draws held throughout the year, along with exclusive discounts at stores participating in the KIB Discount Program when using their Youth debit card. For a list of participating stores and restaurants, please visit www.kib.com.kw.

It is worth noting that KIB, in line with its main slogan 'Bank for Life', continually strives to develop banking services and products that meet the needs of its diverse customer base in line with the demands of their modern lifestyles. The Bank is committed to delivering unique and innovative banking experiences that enhance its customers' daily lives, especially young people, helping them achieve their financial goals.



Photos from the event

School celebrates Class XII's achievements, new journey

ICSK, Senior hosts 'Aashirvaad' ceremony

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: With hearts brimming with prayers and well wishes, The Indian Community School, Senior warmly welcomed dignitaries, parents, teachers, staff and students to the 62nd Aashirvaad Ceremony on Thursday, Feb 5. This significant occasion, dedicated to bestowing blessings upon the 433 outgoing Class XII students, was marked by enthusiasm, reverence and inspiration, encouraging the young pillars to strive for success with humility and determination.

The event was graced by the esteemed presence of the Guest of Honour, Shri Sanjay K. Muluka, Deputy Chief of Mission - Embassy of India, Kuwait. Among the dignitaries were Shaikh Abdul Rahiman, Hon. Chairman to the Board of Trustees, Vinukumar Nair, Hon. Vice Chairman to the Board of Trustees, Azharuddin Amer Muhammed, Hon. Secretary to the Board of Trustees, Dr. V. Binumon, Principal and Senior Administrator of ICSK, K. Gangadhar Shirasath, Principal of ICSK, Khaitan, Rajesh Nair, Principal of ICSK, Amman, Mrs. Sheryl Dennis, Director of The Indian School of Excellence, Mrs. C. Sheeja, Principal of ICSK, Junior and Vice Principals of various branches of ICSK.

The ceremony began with a grand welcome of the dignitaries, marked by mesmerizing musical extravaganza and a scintillating dance performance. As guests entered the auditorium, they were greeted with melodious music, vibrant décor and thunderous applause creating an atmosphere of anticipation and joy.

The day's proceedings commenced with a soulful recitation of verses from the Holy Quran by Ms. Shiza Fathima, followed by Aaradhana, a heartfelt rendition invoking divine blessings, performed by the school choir, Swaranjali. The gathering paid homage to the national anthems of India and Kuwait.

Dr. V. Binumon, Principal and Senior Administrator of ICSK, warmly welcomed all present and offered blessings to the students for a bright and successful future. In his address,

he encouraged the students to embrace change with confidence, pursue lifelong learning, follow their passions, stay resilient, and always believe in themselves.

The esteemed Guest of Honour, Shri Sanjay K. Muluka accompanied by Dr. V. Binumon formally inaugurated the programme by lighting the ceremonial lamp of knowledge, symbolizing both intellectual and spiritual enlightenment. Shri Sanjay K. Muluka, in his address, shared fond memories of his school days and offered valuable advice to the students. He urged them not to abandon their passion, remain dedicated to their goals, specialize in their fields, be humble, show empathy and give back to society.

A proud moment for ICSK was the celebration of its outstanding achievement at the CBSE Gulf Sahodaya Awards, securing 16 awards for excellence in the March 2024 CBSE examinations. It included five highest achievements at the Middle East level and eleven recognitions at the Kuwait level.

Awards

The prestigious CBSE Gulf Sahodaya Excellence Awards were presented by Shri Sanjay K. Muluka to the achievers. The Middle East topper in Class XII for Humanities was Hannah Rael Zachariah. In the Science stream, Rea Sabu Pillai and Gauri Krishnan secured second and third positions, respectively. In the Commerce stream, Shifali Ishwar Nagdev claimed second place, followed by Jumana Mustansir Rampurwala in the third. The notable Kuwait toppers included Hannah Rael Zachariah, Rea Sabu Pillai, Gauri Krishnan, Kanishka Ahujani, Shifali Ishwar Nagdev, Jumana Mustansir Rampurwala, Susan Jobi, Daanya Sajid Baigand Saraah Salim Patel. In Class X, Jenessa Amy Mathews and Reuben George Roy secured second place in Kuwait.

The ceremony also recognized students who exhibited perseverance and excellence in academics, awarding

them with certificates for their outstanding achievements. Aabida Rafik Chikte was awarded with the Honor of Excellence for securing the top position across Science, Commerce and Humanities streams. Certificates of Excellence were awarded to Aabida Rafik Chikte (Science), Mohitha Ganesan (Commerce), Ann Niya Jose (Humanities) and Sarah Mohammad (NIOS).

Recognition

Subject toppers were also acknowledged with Aekas Gupta excelling in Artificial Intelligence, Aiyana Martin Rao in Economics, Alisha Thejes Pathil in Psychology, Burhanuddin Mustafa Kothari in Entrepreneurship, Fida Lahir in Chemistry and Home Science, Jerel Shoey George in Information Technology, Mohammed Atifuddin Amer in Accountancy, Nanditha Madhu Menon for Computer Science, Rida Faisal Khan in Biology, Roshna Bindhu Jeemon in Fashion Studies, Shaikh Anas Sajeed in Marketing, Suchita Venkatesh in Physics, Niketha Patti and Ziniya Afroz in Physical Education, Priyamani Konanki Ravindra and Zainab Kuresh Dola in Mass Media.

A special recognition was given to students who achieved 100% attendance. Hayat Biju Neeyan, Neha Sheju Vadakkedath, Irin Mathew, Dilshan Mannuru, Nishanth Subbu, Hanoch Luther Pitta, Neha Sara Varughese, Noel Thomas Robin, Vikash Murugesan, Aayush Vaibhav Kadam, Jemimah Grace Ajo, Jeremai Colaco, Ethan Mattamana, Jerel Shoey George, Levina Rachel Chacko, Mohammed Anas Younus, Suraj Reddy Nimmakayala, Guneet Kaur, Twinkle Yogesh Chitre, Angel Mariam Sunny, Abraham Rueben Thomas, Gurleen Kaur Nindra, Gwyneth Michelle Dsouza, Kulsum Syed Suhel and Samuel Derriker were honored with certificates for their dedication.

As a token of appreciation, Mr. Shaikh Abdul Rahiman, Hon. Chair-

man to the Board of Trustees presented a memento to the Guest of Honour, Shri Sanjay K. Muluka.

A heartwarming video showcasing the journey of the students was then played, capturing the cherished moments shared by them during their time at ICSK. The vibrant celebration continued with a musical performance by the young talents of the school choir, Swaranjali, instilling hope, determination, confidence and positivity among the students.

Aashirvaad 2025 was a heartwarming occasion filled with nostalgia and emotions. Among the highlights of the evening was a moving medley of memories shared by Abdullah Sabah Thakur, the School President, Aabida Rafik Chikte, the School Topper, Aiyana Martin, representing Commerce stream, Skandhan representing NIOS, Zainab Kuresh representing Humanities stream and Ranjeeta Susan Avinash representing Science stream. In their heartfelt addresses, they took the audience on a reflective journey through the years spent at ICSK, reminiscing about the friendships formed, the challenges overcome and the invaluable lessons learned. Their words resonated deeply, evoking a sense of gratitude and appreciation for the time spent within the school's walls.

The dedicated and passionate teachers of ICSK then, stepped onto the stage to present an array of blessings and heartfelt wishes to the young, eager and accomplished graduating students, as they embark on the next exciting chapter of their lives, ready to conquer the world with the knowledge and wisdom imparted to them during their time at ICSK.

Dressed in graduation caps and gowns, the outgoing students and their families received mementos and captured cherished moments with the dignitaries. Ms. Nigy Jacob, Chief Coordinator of Aashirvaad thanked the ICSK Family for their contribution in making the event successful.



The Center for India Studies delegation presents a book on yoga to Sheikha Shaikha.

Yoga book presented

CIS extends congratulations to Sheikha Shaikha on Padma Shri

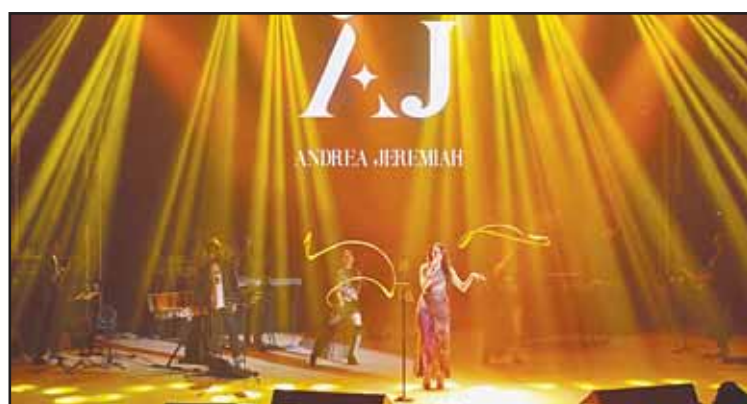
KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Centre for India Studies (CIS) delegation visited Sheikha Shaikha Ali Al Jaber Al Sabah at Daratna in Kuwait City to extend their heartfelt congratulations on her being conferred the prestigious Padma Shri award by the Government of India.

During the visit, Shri T R Sanju Raj, President of CIS and Shri R Roopesh, General Secretary of CIS presented an appreciation letter to Sheikha Shaikha in recognition of her contribution to Yoga. Shri Mani Ashadeep, Advisor to

CIS presented a book on yoga to mark the occasion.

The delegation further handed over a letter of appreciation from SVYASA, India's premier Yoga University, on behalf of its President, Dr. H R Nagen-dra, acknowledging Sheikha Shaikha's efforts in promoting cultural and wellness initiatives.

The visit highlights the growing cultural ties between India and Kuwait, celebrating contributions to global well-being and heritage.



Photos from the event.

TEF presents Andrea's Philharmonic Musical Feast in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The DPS Auditorium in Ahmadi, Kuwait, resonated with the melodies of celebration on Feb 7, 2025, as the Tamil Engineers Forum (TEF) proudly hosted the much-anticipated "Andrea's Philharmonic Musical Feast." This vibrant evening delivered an extraordinary musical experience, offering a delightful treat for music enthusiasts and a refreshing addition to Kuwait's entertainment scene. The event showcased a unique musical style rarely seen in Kuwait, captivating the audience with its distinctive charm and artistry.

The event commenced at 5:30 PM with the rendition of

the Kuwait National Anthem, followed by the Indian National Anthem. The TEF Ladies' Wing then ceremonially lit the lamp, gracefully illuminating the stage and marking an auspicious beginning to the musical evening.

Suresh Anand presented the safety moments, followed by a traditional recitation of couplets of Thirukkural by Raj Narayanan, reminding the audience of the rich heritage of Tamil literature.

The evening's proceedings continued with a Welcome Address by Balan, General Secretary of TEF, who highlighted the events organized by the forum so far this year. The

Presidential Address by Raja followed, where he outlined the upcoming events that TEF has in store for the community in the coming months.

The show began with an energetic and hilarious performance by Kureshi, a popular artist from Vijay TV, who just did not stop chattering and brought the house down with laughter. Next came the enchanting musical session that would captivate the audience with the soulful melodies from Tamil playback singer Ananth Anthaksaran.

The crowning moment of the evening was by the renowned artist Ms. Andrea Jeremiah, who performed with an

electric stage presence and a series of super-hit songs. She enthralled the audience for a shade over two hours making it a memorable musical experience for everyone present.

As a token of appreciation, the TEF committee members presented mementos to all the artists, recognizing their stellar performances at this event.

Gem Prasanna anchored the event, ensuring a smooth flow of the program throughout the evening. The event was concluded with a Vote of Thanks by Subramanian, Vice President of TEF, who thanked the artists, sponsors, and all present for their support to make the evening a grand success.

'Anora' wins at Producers and Directors Guild Awards

'Dog Man' bests 'Heart Eyes,' 'Love Hurts' at box office

NEW YORK, Feb. 11, (AP) — On a quiet winter weekend at the box office, DreamWorks Animation's "Dog Man" chased its own tail, repeating as the top movie in theaters.

The animated Universal Pictures release, adapted from Dav Pilkey's popular graphic novel series, collected \$13.7 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday. Both new releases — the Ke Huy Quan action movie "Love Hurts" and the Valentine's Day-themed slasher "Heart Eyes" — were left nipping at the heels of "Dog Man."

Hollywood often largely punts Super Bowl weekend to the small screen. Last year, Apple's much-derided "Argylle" debuted on the same weekend. Instead, the movie industry spends more energy pitching its blockbusters in trailers for the huge football audience on TV.

It wasn't a banner weekend for "Dog Man." It fell steeply, dropping 62% in its second weekend. But with a production budget of \$40 million, "Dog Man" has already tallied \$54.1 million domestically in two weeks.

Coming in second was Spyglass Media Group's "Heart Eyes," released by Sony. The horror-rom-com mashup earned \$8.5 million from 3,102 locations. Reviews have been good for the film, directed by Josh Ruben and starring Oliva Holt and Mason Gooding, though audiences were less impressed. Moviegoers gave it a "B-" CinemaScore. Spyglass made "Heart Eyes" for \$18 million.

"Love Hurts," the action comedy from 87North Productions ("John Wick," "The Fall Guy"), debuted with a paltry \$5.8 million in 3,055 theaters. In his first big movie role since his Oscar-winning comeback in "Everything All at Once," Ke Huy Quan stars as a mild-mannered realtor with a hitman past. Ariana DeBose co-stars. It, too, was modestly budgeted at \$18 million. Audiences, however, mostly rejected the movie, giving "Love Hurts" a "C+" CinemaScore.

Next weekend should bring Hollywood its biggest box-office weekend of the year with the release of Marvel's "Captain America: Brave New World" and Sony's "Paddington in Peru."

Final domestic figures will be released Monday. Estimated ticket sales for Friday through

Meanwhile, did a wide-open Oscar race just get a frontrunner? Sean Baker's Brooklyn comedy "Anora" took top honors at both the Producers Guild Awards and the Directors Guild Awards on Saturday night, catapulting it to Oscar favorite status with wins from a pair of closely watched Academy Awards precursors.

Hollywood's award season has been uncharacteristically up for grabs with half a dozen films viewed as legitimate best-picture contenders. Some had pegged "Anora" as the frontrunner going into the season after the film, starring Mikey Madison as a Brooklyn exotic dancer who marries the son of a Russian oligarch, won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival.

But after a number of films took turns in the spotlight, including Golden Globe winners "The Brutalist" and "Emilia Pérez," "Anora" reemerged in a big way over the weekend. Baker's film also won best picture at the Critics Choice Awards on Friday.

Both guild ceremonies were held in Beverly Hills, California. The PGA's top prize, the Darryl F. Zanuck Award, has matched the Oscar winner for best picture in 16 of the last 21 years. Since 2009, when the guild and the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences both adopted a preferential ballot to pick a winner from 10 nominees, they've corresponded all but three times.

The DGA is similarly predictive. In the past 74 years, 66 winners have gone on to triumph at the Oscars. That makes Baker the favorite for best director in a field entirely composed of first-time nominees. The guild also named RaMell Ross' "Nickel Boys" best first film. Ross' movie, nominated for best picture by the Oscars, is his narrative film debut.

Oscar voting begins Tuesday. Jacques Audiard's "Emilia Pérez" is the lead nominee with 13 nominations, but the Netflix film has seen its chances crater following multiple waves of backlash and controversy. Another Oscar category also found clarity over the weekend. On Saturday at the Annie Awards, DreamWorks Animation's "The Wild Robot" cleaned up with nine awards including best film. "The Wild Robot" will be the heavy favorite to win best animated film at the March 2 Academy Awards.



This image released by Universal Pictures shows promotional art for DreamWorks Animation's 'Dog Man.' (AP)

Variety

LOS ANGELES: **ASAP Rocky** may take the risk of taking the stand in his own defense on Tuesday at his trial over two felony counts of assault with a semiautomatic firearm.

In discussion with a Los Angeles judge on the last phases of Rocky's trial, his lawyer Joe Tacopina said that either his client would testify early Tuesday or the defense would rest its case. An attorney for the prosecution said his team was going to spend the night preparing for Rocky's testimony.

He is not legally required to testify, and subjecting a defendant to a difficult cross-examination is often a major gamble in criminal cases.

Tacopina said before the trial that Rocky was "eager to tell his story. He would love the opportunity to do so."

The attorneys could not give comment outside court Monday because a judge has forbidden them from speaking to the media. Rocky faces up to 24 years in prison if convicted, after turning down a pre-trial plea deal that could have led to just 180 days in jail.

If Rocky testifies, he'll probably have to face a long and combative cross-examination from Deputy District Attorney John Lewin. In his most famous case, Lewin kept real estate heir Robert Durst on the stand for nine days of relentless questioning before he was convicted of murder.

Rocky is a Grammy-nominated hip-hop star, fashion mogul and the longtime partner of singing superstar Rihanna, with whom he has two toddler sons. She may appear Tuesday to watch his testimony.

She has shown up sporadically — most recently on Friday, when they left the courthouse together for the first time, walking arm-in-arm.

Rocky, whose legal name is Rakim Mayers, would likely testify that a gun he fired twice — in a scuffle with a former friend on a Hollywood street corner in 2021 — was a starter pistol that only fired blanks, and that he carried it for security.

On Monday, his tour manager became the second witness from Rocky's inner circle to testify that he carried the phony gun. (AP)

NEW YORK: A judge dismissed a lawsuit Monday by an acclaimed opera singer who sued the University of Michigan over his firing for what the school deemed sexual misconduct.

David Daniels waited too long to sue the university, US District Judge Sean Cox said.

Daniels, 58, was hired as a voice professor in 2015 and granted tenure three years later in the School of Music, Theatre & Dance. He was fired in 2020 after an investigation found that he had solicited at least three students and shared a sexually explicit video with one, officials said.

Separately, Daniels and his husband, Scott Walters, pleaded guilty in 2023 to sexual assault and were placed on probation in Texas. A Rice University graduate student said the couple drugged and sexually assaulted him years earlier after they met at a Houston Grand Opera reception. (AP)

NEW YORK: Testimony is set to continue Tuesday in the trial of the man charged with stabbing famed author Salman Rushdie in a frenzied knife attack on a western New York stage.

Jurors in the trial of Hadi Matar, 27, on Monday heard from staffers at the arts institution where Rushdie was set to give a speech in August 2022, when authorities say the Fairview, New Jersey man attacked the author on stage and stabbed him more than a dozen times.

Rushdie himself is expected to testify during the trial.

Matar has been in custody since he was subdued by spectators after the attack. He has pleaded not guilty to attempted murder and assault. The 77-year-old author was blinded in one eye in the attack and spent months recovering, a process he detailed in a memoir released last year. A speaker who was to appear with Rushdie also was wounded. (AP)

Fashion



Models walk the runway during the Carolina Herrera Fall/Winter 2025 fashion show as part of New York Fashion Week on Monday, Feb. 10, 2025, in New York. (AP)



Herrera debuts 66 new looks from fall collection

Burch puts her own twist on sportswear at NYFW

NEW YORK, Feb. 11, (AP) — Tory Burch not only put her own twist on American sportswear in her new fall/winter collection at New York Fashion Week — she made it "twist-ed," with exaggerated shapes and details, a splashy backdrop and memorable music.

Known for her classic lines and splashes of color against neutral tones, Burch says her inspiration for Monday's show was "twisted American sportswear," her way of taking expected pieces and adding unconventional details and pairings.

"It was sort of a literal and figurative take on the word 'twisting.' I loved the idea that sportswear was created in America," Burch told The Associated Press after the show.

"I ... wanted it to give people the ability to have a second glance when you look at something. It has more depth than when you first perceived what it would be. And whether that's in the luxurious yarn that you use or the sophistication of an interesting cut line and drape ... It was an exploration of that — of how do you twist things that make it more desirable?"

The collection featured layers

galore, with sweaters draped on top of coats and button downs peeking from underneath sweaters, with an oversized blazer on top. Other standout looks included reimagined track pants, made in brushed wool and cotton, paired with blazers and sweaters.

Several utilitarian short jackets had multiple pockets, which Burch called "handbag jackets," in black leather, denim, and one in fire engine red, paired with a brown skirt.

Some jackets and button-down shirts had exaggerated sleeves and cuffs, that hung loosely on the models like dad's sportcoat. A series of textured velvet and jersey dresses with draping in muted colors could be dressed up or down.

Burch loves a little drama in her shows and always chooses venues that make a statement. She said she felt "very fortunate" to be showing at New York's Museum of Modern Art.

"I've come here for my whole life and I've always loved MoMA and it's just a miracle to me. It's like the quintessential perfect space in New York."

The runway was in two separate spaces connected by a giant stair-

case the models descended during the show. Some guests were seated on metal benches on the top of the two-story space and others were below in a stark white room with one wall of windows facing the street, and another a giant video screen showing skewed camera angles of the models walking and guests watching the show, giving off very big brother vibes.

The eerie soundtrack added to the experience — starting out with a booming techno beat. There were few if any lyrics, and instead a woman was heard giggling — sometimes maniacally. "It's a bit twisted," Burch said of the music with a smile. "You didn't know if she was laughing or crying."

Amanda Seyfried, Jodie Turner-Smith, and Alexandra Daddario shared a bench with singer-songwriter Ciara and media icon Martha Stewart.

"Industry" star Myha'la said of Burch's collection: "It really exuded female strength, which I love."

Singer-songwriter-actor Charlotte

Lawrence said she loved all the details in the show. "You can tell when a designer loves women, and obviously Tory does and knows how to dress women in a very elegant way that I believe ... sets a kind of blueprint of how to carry yourself with strength and confidence."

Carolina Herrera

Atop a skyscraper, Wes Gordon unveiled his latest Carolina Herrera collection to an eager crowd at New York Fashion Week.

Models strutted down the runway adorned with 3,000 burgundy wine-colored ranunculus flowers while Gordon's "personal assortment of songs" played in the background, including Fleetwood Mac's, "Dreams." The backdrop was a gorgeous, 360-degree view of blue sky and New York City delivered by floor-to-ceiling windows on the 48th floor.

Gordon, 38, took over as creative director of the company from namesake Herrera when she retired in 2018. For his fall 2025 collection, Gordon pushed the envelope with 66 bold looks. He included just about everything from tweed ultrafeminine mini dresses to more masculine, tai-

lored trousers, and blazers.

There were delicate floral lace sets followed by a series of embroidered nearly sheer gowns. Many looks were accessorized with gold buttons, earrings or rose appliques.

Gordon said his favorite was the final of the show, described in the show notes as "a dramatic cape with rosette in black silk faille and black jewel macrame sleeveless dress."

After the show, Gordon explained the inspiration for the collection: "The starting point was my favorite book of all time, which is also my favorite movie, a film called 'Being There.' The book's by Jerzy Kosinski and the film stars Peter Sellers and Shirley MacLaine. It's from 1979, which is around the same time that Herrera was founded," he told The Associated Press. "The atmosphere of it, this poetic, romantic atmosphere, really kind of set the tone for me in the beginning."

Dove Cameron, Chloe Fineman, Emmy Rossum and Nicole Scherzinger were among the VIP guests. Herrera also attended with her family and after seeing the collection for the first time told Gordon, "It was beautiful."



Models walk the runway during the Tory Burch Fall/Winter 2025 fashion show as part of New York Fashion Week on Monday, Feb. 10, 2025, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. (AP)

Experts say bird flu remains low risk for public health

New strain of bird flu detected in US dairy worker: CDC

NEW YORK, Feb 11, (AP): A dairy worker in Nevada was infected with a new type of bird flu that's different from the version that has been spreading in US herds since last year, federal health officials said Monday.

The illness was considered mild. The person's main symptom was eye redness and irritation, similar to most bird flu cases associated with dairy cows. The person wasn't hospitalized and has recovered, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The newer strain had been seen before in more than a dozen people exposed to poultry, but this is the first time an infection was traced to a cow. The Nevada dairy worker was exposed at a farm in Churchill County, in the west central

part of the state, state health officials said.

CDC officials said there is no evidence the virus has spread from this person to any other people. The agency continues to say the virus poses a low risk to the general public.

The bird flu currently spreading through animals, and some people, is known to scientists as Type A H5N1 influenza. But there are different strains.

A version known as B3.13 was confirmed in March after spreading to cattle in late 2023, scientists said. It has infected 962 cattle herds in 16 states, the vast majority of them in California.

The newer version, known as D1.1, was confirmed in Nevada cattle on Jan. 31. It was found in milk collected as part

of a monitoring program started in December.

That discovery meant distinct forms of the virus spread from wild birds into cattle at least twice. Experts said it raises questions about wider spread and the difficulty of controlling infections in animals and the people who work with them.

At least 68 people in the U.S. have been reported infected with bird flu in the last year, according to CDC data. All but a small handful worked closely with cows or poultry.

Most caught the B3.13 version. The CDC previously said the D1.1 version had been seen only in cases in Louisiana and Washington state. But on Monday, the agency revealed that available data indicates D1.1 last year likely infected a

total of 15 people in five states - Iowa, Louisiana, Oregon, Washington and Wisconsin - all related to poultry.

The D1.1 version of the virus was linked to the first U.S. death tied to bird flu and to a severe illness in Canada. A person in Louisiana died in January after developing severe respiratory symptoms following contact with wild and backyard birds. In British Columbia, a teen girl was hospitalized for months with a virus traced to poultry.

While the risk to the general public is low, the CDC says bird flu poses a greater threat to people with close or prolonged contact with infected cows, birds or other animals. Those people are encouraged to wear protective equipment and take other precautions.

UN says take your time to do it right

Most countries miss deadline for plans to combat climate change

NEW YORK, Feb 11, (AP): Nearly 200 nations faced a Monday deadline to file what the United Nations' climate chief calls "among the most important policy documents governments will produce this century" - their plans on how they will cut emissions of heat-trapping gases.

Most won't make the deadline. The UN says that's OK as long as they are working on them.

So far only a dozen of the 195 nations that signed the 2015 Paris climate agreement have filed their national plans for cutting emissions by 2035. Those nations account for only 16.2% of the world's carbon dioxide emissions - the chief human-caused heat-trapping gas - and almost all of that is from the United States, where President Donald Trump has already discarded the plan submitted by President Joe Biden's administration.

Aside from the US, the only major emitters to submit 2035 targets are Brazil, the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates. The Marshall Islands, Singapore, Ecuador, Saint Lucia, Andorra, New Zealand, Switzerland and Uruguay have filed their plans, but they all produce less than 0.2% of the world's carbon dioxide.

UN Climate Secretary Simon Stiell said that more than 170 countries have told his office they are working on their national plans, so he's not worried. He emphasized quality over timeliness.

"Taking a bit more time to ensure these plans are first-rate makes sense," Stiell said last week in a policy speech in Brazil. "These will be the most comprehensive climate plans ever developed."

Champa Patel, policy director of the nonprofit Climate Group, wasn't as forgiving.

"It's worrying that countries are failing to meet the urgency of the moment," Patel said. "The world cannot afford inaction."



The Jeffrey Energy Center coal-fired power plant operates near Emmett, Kan., Jan. 25, 2025. (AP)

These plans - officially called Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs - are the main mechanism of the landmark international agreement. Every five years, nations are supposed to come up with new and stronger five-year plans that outline their voluntary plans to limit or reduce emissions of greenhouse gases from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas.

The latest versions are supposed to be compatible with the Paris agreement's goal of limiting long-term warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial times. The world is now at 1.3 degrees Celsius (2.3 degrees Fahrenheit) since the late 1800s and on pace to warm another 1.8 degrees Celsius (3.2 degrees Fahrenheit), according to the U.N.

Scientists say the warming atmosphere is driving ever more extreme weather events, including flooding, droughts, hurricanes, heat waves and wildfires that are killing people and causing billions of dollars in damage every year.

The new targets are also supposed to be for all greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride. They should cover the entire economy not just the energy sector, according to a 2023 agreement.

Climate Action Tracker - a group of scientists and other experts who

analyze nations' climate plans for domestic emissions - found that four of the six NDC targets they looked at so far got an "almost sufficient" for their target of holding warming to 2 degrees Celsius. Switzerland got an insufficient, with the group saying its plan was more compatible with 3 degrees of warming. The UK's plan was rated compatible for 1.5 degrees of warming.

Britain's plan aims to cut emissions by at least 81% by 2035 when compared to 1990 emissions, mentioning efforts to phase out new internal combustion cars - which only use gasoline and diesel - by 2030. Brazil in its plan gave a range of emission cuts of 59% to 67% by 2035 when compared to 2005 emissions, talking heavily about an emphasis on climate justice, repeatedly mentioning efforts to combat deforestation.

Most of those countries were rated insufficient when it compared what they plan to do with what they are actually doing and what their "fair share" is considering their resources and history. That included the US, where one of Trump's first actions last month was pulling out of the Paris agreement.

"We know already right now that whatever (other) countries put out, it is not enough," Climate Action Tracker co-founder Niklas Höhne told The Associated Press Monday. "They all need to do more."

The deadline - set in the Paris agreement to be nine months before the next international climate negotiations, this year in Belem, Brazil - is 11:59 p.m. in Germany, where the U.N. climate office is.

But Stiell said the real deadline is in September. That's when the United Nations will tally up all the plans and figure out how much emissions will be cut and how much future warming will be prevented if countries do what they promise.

'Back to plastic'

Trump signs order for plastic straws

WASHINGTON, Feb 11, (AP): President Donald Trump said Monday he is banning federal use of paper straws, saying they "don't work" and don't last very long. Instead he wants the government to exclusively move to plastic.

"It's a ridiculous situation. We're going back to plastic straws," Trump said as he signed an executive order to reverse federal purchasing policies that encourage paper straws and restrict plastic ones. The order directs federal agencies to stop buying paper straws "and otherwise ensure that paper straws are no longer provided within agency buildings."

The move by Trump - who has long railed against paper straws, and whose 2019 reelection campaign sold Trump-

branded reusable plastic straws for \$15 per pack of 10 - targets a Biden administration policy to phase out federal purchases of single-use plastics, including straws, from food service operations, events and packaging by 2027, and from all federal operations by 2035.

Trump declared President Joe Biden's policy "DEAD!" in a social media post over the weekend.

While plastic straws have been blamed for polluting oceans and harming marine life, Trump said Monday that he thinks "it's OK" to continue using them. "I don't think that plastic is going to affect the shark very much as they're eating, as they're munching their way through the ocean," he said at a White House announcement.

Several U.S. states and cities have banned plastic straws, and some restaurants no longer automatically give them to customers. But plastic straws are only a small part of the problem. The environment is littered with single-use plastic food and beverage containers - water bottles, takeout containers, coffee lids, shopping bags and more.

Around the world, the equivalent of one garbage truck of plastic enters the ocean every minute from a range of sources, including plastic bags, toothbrushes, bottles, food packaging and more, experts say. As those materials break down in the environment, microplastics are turning up in the stomachs of fish, birds and other animals, as well as in human blood and tissue.

Vaccine opt-outs

Measles cases increase in US

NEW YORK, Feb 11, (AP): Fifteen measles cases - mostly in school-aged children - have been confirmed in a small county in West Texas with one of the highest rates of vaccine exemptions in the state.

South Plains Public Health District Director Zach Holbrooks said Monday that his department was first notified in late January about the first two cases in Gaines County, which he said were "two children who had seen a physician in Lubbock."

Some of the cases appear to be connected to private religious schools in the district, said Holbrooks, who cautioned that the investigation is ongoing.

"I wouldn't say they're all connected, but our teams are looking into exposure sites and the background of those cases," he said.

Local health officials set up a drive-through vaccination clinic last week and are offering screening services to residents.

The U.S. saw a rise in measles cases in 2024, including an outbreak in Chicago that sickened more than 60. This month, health officials in metro Atlanta are working to contain a measles case that spread to two unvaccinated family members.

Texas law allows children to get an exemption from school vaccines for reasons of conscience, including religious beliefs. The percentage of kids with exemptions has risen over the last decade from .76% in 2014 to 2.32% last year, according to Texas Department of State Health Services data.

Gaines County has one of the highest rates in Texas of school-aged children who opt out of at least one required vaccine: Nearly 14% of children from kindergarten through grade 12 had an exemption in the 2023-24 school year, which is more than five times the state average of 2.32% and beyond the national rate of 3.3%.

But the number of unvaccinated kids in the county is likely significantly higher, DSHS spokeswoman Lara Anton said, because Gaines County has many children who are home-schooled and whose data would not be reported.

The measles, mumps and rubella vaccines is a two-shot series: The first is recommended at 12 to 15 months old and second between 4 to 6 years old. The vaccine is required to attend most public schools in the U.S.



This photo provided by the European Space Agency shows a ring of light surrounding the center of the galaxy NGC 6505, captured by European Space Agency's Euclid telescope, an example of an Einstein ring. (AP)

Space telescope spots rare 'Einstein ring' near Earth

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Feb 11, (AP): Europe's Euclid space telescope has detected a rare halo of bright light around a nearby galaxy, astronomers reported Monday.

The halo, known as an Einstein ring, encircles a galaxy 590 million light-years away, considered close by cosmic standards. A light-year is 5.8 trillion miles.

Astronomers have known about this galaxy for more than a century and so were surprised when Euclid revealed the bright glowing ring, reported in the journal Astronomy and Astrophysics.

An Einstein ring is light from a much more distant galaxy that bends in such a way as to perfectly encircle a closer object, in this case a well-known

galaxy in the constellation Draco. The faraway galaxy creating the ring is more than 4 billion light-years away.

Gravity distorted the light from this more distant galaxy, thus the name honoring Albert Einstein. The process is known as gravitational lensing.

"All strong lenses are special, because they're so rare, and they're incredibly useful scientifically. This one is particularly special, because it's so close to Earth and the alignment makes it very beautiful," lead author Conor O'Riordan of Germany's Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics said in a statement.

Euclid rocketed from Florida in 2023. NASA is taking part in its mission to detect dark energy and dark matter in the universe.

Detect rare diseases

GeneDx CEO wants genetic testing for every newborn

NEW YORK, Feb 11, (AP): GeneDx has a big market in mind for its genetic testing: every newborn baby.

The 24-year-old company wants to make the testing common at birth. The goal: Identify potential diseases or conditions so doctors can begin treating them before symptoms appear in some cases.

GeneDx specializes in whole genome sequencing. That involves looking at about 20,000 genes that make up a genome, the instructions to build and sustain a human.

More common multi-gene panels, in contrast, may look at a couple hundred genes to identify a specific issue like cancer risk.

GeneDx CEO Katherine Stueland likes the potential of newborn testing, but she says her Stamford, Connecticut, company is still studying the idea.

A potential challenge: Insurers would have to embrace the idea of covering the roughly \$2,000 tests routinely.

Stueland spoke recently with The Associated Press. The conversation

has been edited for clarity and length. **Question:** Your testing focuses on diagnosing rare diseases. Will patients eventually see it used in everyday care?

Answer: What is really misunderstood about rare diseases is that they're actually not that rare. One in 10 Americans has a rare disease. Half of them are children.

Epilepsy is actually a constellation of 768 different genes that are associated with (it). It's really important when you're seeing a child with a seizure to look at the entirety of the genome to pinpoint whether one of those many genes is causing the disease.

Q: What are some other examples of diseases your testing would detect?

A: Hearing loss, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis. Ultimately, we want to be sequencing every baby at birth and figuring out whether there is a genetic condition that can be diagnosed right away. For some of these conditions, there may be something clinically actionable that can be done that would prevent a symptom from ever arising.

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SPORTS

Doncic makes winning debut for Lakers

Cavs sink slow-starting Timberwolves

LOS ANGELES, Feb 11, (AP): Luka Doncic had 14 points, five rebounds and four assists in his Lakers debut as Los Angeles beat the Utah Jazz 132-113 on Monday night.

LeBron James had 24 points, seven rebounds and eight assists, Austin Reaves scored 22 and the Lakers got their sixth straight win.

Doncic, acquired in a shocking trade from the Dallas Mavericks on Feb. 2, played for the first time since sustaining a calf strain on Christmas. He was limited to just under 24 minutes as a precaution and was able to sit out the fourth quarter with his new team in complete control, but still had several standout moments to help the surging Lakers get their 12 victory in 14 games.

Buoyed by its new superstar, Los Angeles had seven players reach double figures, shot a blistering 54.3% from the floor and led by as many as 34.

Lauri Markkanen and John Collins each had 17 points for the Jazz, who have dropped nine in a row on the road.

Jazz head coach Will Hardy said before the game that he hoped his young team would embrace the unusual circumstances, but Utah struggled in the spotlight.

Doncic's debut was a star-studded affair, even by Los Angeles standards. Adele, Will Ferrell, Flea and Chad Smith of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and Mavericks great Dirk Nowitzki, were among those in attendance.

Doncic made a series of impressive passes in his first game wearing the purple and gold, including setting up Jaxson Hayes for an alley-oop dunk 50 seconds into the game and finding a streaking James with a full-court heave for a layup in the final minute of the opening half.

Doncic looked heavy-legged after the long layoff, shooting 5 of 14 from the field and making only one of his seven attempts from 3-point range (14.3%).

Cavaliers 128, Timberwolves 107

In Cleveland, Evan Mobley scored 28 points, fellow All-Star Donovan Mitchell added 23 and the Cleveland Cavaliers broke out to a big early lead and had little trouble against Minnesota, beating the Timberwolves.



Cleveland Cavaliers guard Sam Merrill, left, dives for the ball next to Minnesota Timberwolves guard Jaylen Clark, right, in the second half of an NBA basketball game in Cleveland. (AP)

The East-leading Cavs scored the game's first 16 points. They welcomed new addition De'Andre Hunter and improved to 25-4 at home.

Warriors 125, Bucks 111
In Milwaukee, Stephen Curry scored a season-high 38 points and Golden State pulled away in the fourth quarter to beat Milwaukee.

Jimmy Butler had 20 points, nine rebounds and six assists in his second game with the Warriors. Buddy Hield added 16 points, while Quinten Post and Moses Moody added 13 each.

The Bucks were playing for a second straight day after beating the Philadelphia 76ers 135-127 at home on Sunday.

Celtics 103, Heat 85

In Miami, Jayson Tatum scored 33 points, Kristaps Porzingis added 17 and Boston rolled past Miami.

Al Horford scored 16 points, Sam



Los Angeles Lakers guard Luka Doncic (77) shoots as Utah Jazz guard Jordan Clarkson (00) and guard Johnny Juzang defend during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles. (AP)

Hauser had 15 and Derrick White added 13 for the Celtics. Boston took 53 3-pointers in the game and only 32 2-pointers.

Bam Adebayo scored 22 points and grabbed 12 rebounds for Miami.

Andrew Wiggins had 11 points in his Heat debut. Miami shot 33.7% and has been held under 90 points in each of its last five matchups with Boston.

Kings 129, Mavericks 128, OT

In Dallas, DeMar DeRozan scored a season-high 42 points, including a baseline floater with 2 seconds left in overtime, and Sacramento beat depleted Dallas.

Zach LaVine and Malik Monk each scored 17 points for the Kings in the opener of a three-game trip. Domantas Sabonis had 16 points and 15 rebounds.

Nuggets 146, Trail Blazers 117

In Denver, Nikola Jokic scored 40 points, Christian Braun had 26

points, and surging Denver beat Portland for their seventh straight win.

Jamal Murray added 17 points and eight assists before picking up his second technical foul and Julian Strawther finished with 18 for Denver.

The seven-game winning streak is the longest of the season for the Nuggets, who played without Michael Porter Jr. for the second straight game due to hamstring tightness.

Thunder 137, Pelicans 101
In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 31 points in three quarters as Oklahoma City routed New Orleans.

Oklahoma City hit a franchise-record 27 3-pointers, despite no individual making more than four. Eleven players drained at least one for a team that made 49% of its 55 3-point tries.

Aaron Wiggins scored 24 points and Jalen Williams added 16 for the Thunder, who won their sixth straight game.

Hawks 112, Magic 106
In Orlando, Trae Young scored 11 of his 19 points in the fourth quarter and Atlanta beat Orlando.

Young was 6 for 17 from the field and committed nine turnovers. But he also had eight assists and five rebounds on the same day he was added to the All-Star roster as an injury replacement for Milwaukee forward Giannis Antetokounmpo.

Spurs 131, Wizards 121

In Washington, Victor Wembanyama had 31 points and 15 rebounds to help San Antonio hold off Washington.

Wembanyama scored a career-high 50 points against Washington in November, and it looked like the All-Star might be on his way to another game like that Monday when he made his first four 3-point attempts within the first eight minutes.

De'Aaron Fox contributed 30 points for the Spurs, and Chris Paul had 10 assists. Rookie Stephon Castle added 16 points.

Nets 97, Hornets 89
In New York, Nic Claxton scored 16 points and Brooklyn pulled away after LaMelo Ball was lost to another ankle injury and beat Charlotte.

Cam Johnson and Day'Ron Sharpe each added 14 points for the Nets, who won for the fifth time in six games in the best stretch of their first season under Jordi Fernandez. This was their second easy victory over Charlotte during that span.

\$1 million prize added in quest to get singles stars to play

US Open revamps mixed doubles format

NEW YORK, Feb 11, (AP): The U.S. Open is moving its mixed doubles championship to the week before the tournament begins, hoping a revamped format and \$1 million prize will persuade top singles players to chase a Grand Slam doubles title.

This year's event will feature 16 teams competing over two days in shorter matches. Tournament organizers believe that can attract the sport's biggest stars, many of whom have long passed on doubles to keep themselves fresh for singles.

"What I would say is the reason behind this is to appeal to more fans and grow the fan base around the world," said Lew Sherr, executive director and CEO of the U.S. Tennis Association. "But the way to do that is to have the biggest names in the sport participating in doubles, and to showcase them teaming up and playing in a different format, we think is exciting. In fact, we know it's exciting."

The plan announced Tuesday calls for mixed doubles to be contested on Aug. 19 and 20, during the week when the qualifying rounds for men's and women's singles are being held. Main draw play in singles begins on Aug. 24.

The early round matches will be best-of-three sets played to just four games, with a deciding point played at deuce. Tiebreakers would be at 4-all - rather than 6-6 in a regular match - and a 10-point match tiebreaker would be played if the teams split sets, rather than a third set.

Only the final will closely resemble a Grand Slam match, a best-of-three sets played to six games with no-ad scoring, tiebreakers at 6-all and a 10-point match tiebreaker.



In this file photo, Sara Errani, of Italy, and Andrea Vavassori, of Italy, hold up the championship trophy after defeating Taylor Townsend, of the United States, and Donald Young, of the United States, in the mixed doubles final of the U.S. Open tennis championships in New York. (AP)

Sherr said the USTA had discussed a format change in previous years but the idea truly picked up steam after last year, when a "Mixed Madness" event during the qualifying week drew singles superstars such as Coco Gauff, Naomi Osaka, Nick Kyrgios and Ben Shelton, and was won by Stefanos Tsitsipas and Paula Badosa. "We've known and we've had conversations over the years, like, why don't they participate and we understand the scheduling challenges," Sherr said. "I think last year's task with that mixed madness event really informed our thinking, that if we could unlock that week and free up the top singles players to participate, because it didn't compromise their fitness or their health going into the

singles, there was a huge opportunity to attract them and that's what we saw."

There was a \$500,000 prize for that event, which had just four teams. By doubling the prize money and expanding the field, Sherr believes it will create a competition worthy of a Grand Slam title, rather than keeping it as an exhibition.

"The athletes played hard," Sherr said. "It was not an exhibition, it was not a hit-and-giggle, no kids got brought onto the court. It was a competition and that to me was the test. Would the athletes compete, and the answer to that was yes. Now we have an opportunity for a legitimate world championship, a Grand Slam championship, and we think the stakes

only go up by making it the actual event."

Eight teams will earn direct entry by their combined singles rankings, with eight other teams given wild cards into the field. Sherr declined to name any players who had committed, but said enough have expressed interest that some teams may be announced in the coming weeks, long before the field is set in the summer.

The tournament will be played in Arthur Ashe and Louis Armstrong, the two biggest stadiums, and be televised by ESPN in primetime, exposure that is rarely given to doubles.

But it will squeeze out doubles specialists who count on Grand Slam paychecks and now lose access to one of them. To compensate for that, Sherr said the prize money that was allocated to the 32-team mixed doubles tournament at last year's U.S. Open would be redirected toward men's and women's doubles.

"Yes, there's some that will be disappointed that they won't have the opportunity to compete in this event," Sherr said. "On the other side, we know that there's a huge opportunity to create more interest globally in doubles and there may be a cascading effect here, that the mixed creates a bigger spotlight on the men's and women's doubles when we get into that portion of the tournament."

"We'll have to see how that plays out, but we do know that our mixed competition historically has been competing with the men's and women's singles, and so the fields have suffered and the attention has suffered. This is a chance to give it a massive spotlight over two nights."

Barca defender Araujo suffers injury

Feyenoord fires coach Priske ahead of crucial game against AC Milan

THE HAGUE, Feb 11, (Xinhua): Feyenoord has dismissed head coach Brian Priske with immediate effect, citing inconsistent results and a lack of chemistry as the primary reasons.

The decision comes a day before the team's crucial home match against AC Milan in the Champions League knockout phase playoffs. The return leg is set for February 18 in Milan.

General and technical director Dennis te Kloese acknowledged the difficulty of the decision but emphasized the club's need for stability and progress.

"While Brian achieved some impressive results, particularly in the Champions League, the team's performances have been too inconsistent in recent months. Unfortunately, we have not seen the structural progress we expected," he stated in a press release.

Feyenoord currently sits fifth in the Dutch Eredivisie, and was last week knocked out of the KNVB Cup by PSV.

In addition to Priske, Feyenoord has also parted ways with assistant coaches Lukas Babalola Andersson and Bjorn Hamberg. Youth coach Pascal Bosschaert will take over on an interim basis until a permanent replacement is appointed.

FC Barcelona has suffered an injury setback with central defender Ronald Araujo likely to be out for around three weeks after suffering an ankle injury in Sunday's 4-1 win away to Sevilla.

Araujo had to limp out of the game early in the first half after a bad challenge from Sevilla midfielder, Saul Niguez, and he was replaced by Pau Cubarsi.

The injury is another setback to the Uruguayan, who only returned to action in January after missing the start of the season with a bad muscle injury that needed an operation.

Since returning, the powerful defender has turned in some solid displays, but has also struggled at times to adapt to the offside trap used by Hansi Flick's side and was at fault when Ruben Vargas was able to cancel out Robert Lewandowski's opening goal for Barcelona on Sunday night.

Araujo's injury leaves Cubarsi and Inigo Martinez (who has just recovered from a hamstring injury) as Barca's first-choice central defensive pairing, although Flick has also shown more confidence in Eric Garcia in recent games, with Garcia scoring on Sunday night and playing 90 minutes in Barca's Copa del Rey win in Valencia on Thursday.

Flick also has the advantage of his side's direct qualification for the last 16 of the Champions League, meaning Barcelona doesn't have a midweek match until the semifinal of the cup in the last week of February.



Barcelona's Ronald Araujo grimaces after getting injured during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Sevilla and FC Barcelona at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan stadium in Seville, Spain. (AP)

Adams scores 10 goals

US crushes Virgin Islands 22-0 in Under-17 World Cup qualifier

SAN JOSE, Feb 11, (AP): The United States opened expanded CONCACAF qualifying for the FIFA Under-17 World Cup with a record victory for the country at any level, crushing the U.S. Virgin Islands 22-0 as Chase Adams scored 10 goals.

Captain Maximo Carrizo registered four goals in the game at San Jose, Costa Rica while Chance Cowell and Jude Terry netted two each. Pedro Guimaraes, Ramiz Hamouda, Jamir Johnson and Kellan LeBlanc claimed one goal apiece.

Adams scored in the eighth, ninth, 13th, 19th, 31st, 33rd, 38th, 55th, 75th and 77th minutes.

A native of Naperville, Illinois, Cowell joined the Columbus Crew Academy in January 2023

as an under-15 player, started last season as an amateur with Crew 2 of MLS Next and signed a professional contract last August. He scored nine goals in 19 matches in the third tier MLS Next Pro, including 13 starts.

Adams assisted on the first U.S. goal in the second minute by Cowell, a San Jose Earthquakes forward who made his MLS Next Pro debut last year. Cowell is a younger brother of 21-year-old Chivas forward Cade Cowell, who has made 11 appearances for the U.S. senior national team.

The previous record for a U.S. team was a 20-0 win over Grenada at the 2022 CONCACAF

Women's U-17 Championship. The previous high for the men was a 13-0 victory over the U.S. Virgin Islands at the 2018 CONCACAF Under-20 Championship.

Cuba beat St. Kitts and Nevis 3-1 in the first Group A game. The eight group winners qualify for the expanded 48-nation Under-17 World Cup, to be played in Qatar from Nov. 5-27, and there is no knockout stage in CONCACAF qualifying. The FIFA tournament had 16 teams from 1985-2005 and 24 from 2007-23.

The U.S. Virgin Islands was outscored 33-0 while going 0-4 in 2022 CONCACAF Under-17 qualifying.



Crowning of winners at the end of the tournament.

Successful conclusion of the Kuwait International Tennis Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The second Kuwait International Tennis Championship for Men concluded after an exciting second week on the main court of the Kuwait Tennis Federation at Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Tennis Complex. The tournament featured a distinguished lineup of professional players from 16 countries,

including Kuwait, Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, New Zealand, Japan, Slovenia, Belgium, Ireland, Russia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Algeria, and Senegal.

In the singles competition, Cem Ilkel of Turkey claimed the championship title, while Johan Nickels of Switzerland secured second place. In the doubles event, Germany's Lu-

cas Giersch and Kai Wenlet emerged victorious, with Belgium's Daniel Sargsyan and Martin Van der Meerschen finishing as runners-up.

Notably, several players from the Kuwaiti national team participated in the tournament. Among them, Abdul Hamid Mahboob Juma Mubarak earned international ranking points

in the singles category, while Bader Abdul Aziz Abdullah Al-Qahtani and Issa Salman Mahmoud Qabazard secured ranking points in the doubles competition. The matches were officiated by International Tennis Federation representative and chief referee Abdul Raouf Mohammed Al-Abd Al-Salam.

Kuwait Club hits six past Yarmouk to take control of Zain Premier League



Kuwait Club's Mohammed Daham vies for the ball with Al-Yarmouk player during the Zain Premier League.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Kuwait Club secured the top spot in the Zain Premier League, extending its dominant form with a resounding 6-0 victory over Al-Yarmouk in the fourteenth round. This win propelled Kuwait to 39 points, giving it a clear lead in the standings.

This result broke its tie with Al-Arabi, who had shared the top spot with Kuwait Club in recent rounds. However, a goalless draw between Al-Arabi and Khaitan allowed Al-Arabi to slip to second place, two points behind Kuwait Club.

Al-Qadsiya climbs to third

Kuwait Club's victory marked its second consecutive 6-0 win, having previously defeated Al-Nasr with the same score. This back-to-back dominance sent a strong message to its rivals that defeating it in the remaining matches would be a formidable challenge.

Al-Arabi, who is now second with 37 points, gave up the lead it held over Kuwait Club in the previous rounds after a lackluster performance against Khaitan, currently eighth with 8 points.

In third place, Al-Qadsiya continued its progress, earning 26 points after a hard-fought victory over Kazma, who played for over 75 minutes with only 10 players. Despite the win, Al-Qadsiya struggled, needing great effort to secure the points.

Kazma, despite losing, showed resilience and

climbed to seventh place with 14 points, causing trouble for Al-Qadsiya. Meanwhile, Al-Salmiya (24 points) and Al-Fahaheel (21 points) drew 2-2, with both teams feeling comfortable for now, having distanced them from the relegation zone.

Al-Tadamon emerged as the round's biggest beneficiary, securing a 2-0 victory over Al-Nasr, lifting it to sixth place with 17 points, and ending its recent losing streak.

The trio of Khaitan (8 points), Al-Nasr (6 points), and Yarmouk (5 points) continued to struggle and are now all but certain to compete in the relegation avoidance league. Khaitan, however, still has a slim chance, needing to win its next four matches and hope for losses from Al-Tadamon.

Liverpool conqueror Plymouth draws Man City

Crystal Palace moves into FA Cup fifth round

DONCASTER, England, Feb 11, (AP): Crystal Palace beat League 2 side Doncaster Rovers 2-0 in the FA Cup on Monday to set up a fifth-round tie at home to Millwall.

The London side plays three divisions above Doncaster but it took 31 minutes to get the opener thanks to a neat training ground play.

Daichi Kamada's free kick was passed along the ground to Jean-Philippe Mateta and although his attempt hit the post, Daniel Muñoz was on hand to tap in the rebound.

Doncaster showed signs it might launch a comeback at the start of the second half but those hopes were dealt a blow in the 55th when Northern Ireland international Justin Devenny ran on to a superbly fought pass from Will Hughes and deftly lobbed the goalkeeper.

Although Doncaster kept plug-

ging away, the gulf in the divisions was evident and Palace controlled

the game to its conclusion. Palace will face Championship



Doncaster Rovers' Billy Sharp, left, and Crystal Palace's Chris Richards, right, challenge for the ball during the FA Cup fourth round match between Doncaster Rovers and Crystal Palace in Doncaster, England. (AP)

Gut-Behrami, Holdener take silver

Shiffrin & Johnson win gold in team combined at worlds

SAALBACH-HINTERGLEMM, Austria, Feb 11, (AP): Mikaela Shiffrin won a record-equaling 15th world championship medal and Breezy Johnson became double world champion on Tuesday when the American pair took gold in the new team combined event.

Shiffrin was third-fastest in the slalom at the Alpine skiing worlds, just over three hours after Johnson had clocked the fourth-best time in the downhill, as together they beat silver medalists Lara Gut-Behrami and Wendy Holdener of Switzerland by 0.39 seconds.

Stephanie Venier and Katharina Truppe of Austria took bronze.

The gold was Shiffrin's 15th career medal from world championships and she matches the record set in the 1930s by German skier Christl Cranz.

It's the second gold medal for Johnson, who won the downhill last Saturday, two months after she returned from a 14-month ban for three violations of the "whereabout" anti-doping rules.

"It's pretty crazy. I think if you would have told us when we met that we would team up to win a world championship medal, I think neither of us would have believed it," said Johnson, who has been friends, and skied, with Shiffrin since their youth.

Shiffrin said: "So many things had to happen in the last ... how long it's been since we were 11. In order for this to happen we needed a new event entirely. This was an amazing day for me up there, nerve-racking because Breezy did her job just spectacularly this morning. It was so much fun to watch all these days, day in day out, she has been executing ... So, really, really unbelievable."

Reacting to Shiffrin's 15th career medal in the worlds, Johnson quipped, "If we keep adding team events, maybe we can get 32 for her or something," before adding, "she is a legend, it's super cool to be hitting my stride and she's obviously been on hers for a decade."

The team combined entails one racer competing in a downhill run and another in a slalom, with their two times added up to determine the final results.

The team combined will make its debut at next year's Milan-Cortina Olympics.

Lauren Macuga had posted the fastest time in the downhill, but her American team dropped to fourth and missed a medal by 0.11 seconds after Paula Moltzen raced in the slalom.

Lindsey Vonn finished the downhill 2.51 seconds off the lead in 21st position out of 26 starters and ended up in 16th with teammate AJ Hurt. Recovered from an abdominal inju-



United States' Breezy Johnson, left, and teammate United States' Mikaela Shiffrin celebrate winning the gold medal in a women's team combined event, at the Alpine Ski World Championships, in Saalbach-Hinterglemm, Austria. (AP)

ry that required surgery in December, Shiffrin competed in her first event at the worlds.

She initially planned to race in the giant slalom, as defending champion, and the slalom but skip the team combined, then changed her mind Monday when she felt not ready yet to compete in Thursday's GS.

With GS training off her schedule, she then decided to enter the team combined.

Vonn had campaigned to race with Shiffrin on an American team that would have united the two most successful skiers in World Cup history, but the coaching staff decided to form the teams based on "season-best results" in both downhill and slalom.

"It would have been a cool thing if those two greats would have raced together, but at the moment others are stronger in their performance," American speed coach Alex Hoedlmoser said. "We had to make sure to bring the fastest pairings together, and it was very obvious that Breezy was the fastest in the downhill and therefore would race with Mikaela."

After her downhill display, American star Vonn said: "I had no speed at all ... I tried to give my best, as always. Unfortunately it was not my world championships. The skis are fast, but for me something is wrong with my boots and in the turns I don't get any speed. I stayed in my tuck but I was a turtle the whole way down."

Vonn came out of retirement, after nearly six years, at age 40 this season with a new titanium knee. She scored two top-10 finishes on the World Cup circuit in January but did not finish the super-G and placed 15th in the downhill at the worlds.

Best of the Rest

Inter moves into second: Marko Arnautovic's first league goal of the season gave Inter Milan a 2-1 win over Fiorentina and lifted it back into second place in Serie A on Monday.

The win was revenge for Fiorentina's 3-0 win in last week's rescheduled league game and moved Inter to within one point of leader Napoli. More than 67,000 fans at the San Siro saw Arnautovic glance home the winner with his head, seven minutes into the second half. (AP)

Trabelsi appointed Tunisia coach: Sami Trabelsi has been appointed as Tunisia's coach, his second spell with the Carthage Eagles.

Trabelsi, a former Tunisia defender who featured at the 1998 World Cup, previously coached the national team from 2011-13. He quit after the country failed to progress past the Africa Cup of Nations group stage. The Tunisian federation announced Trabelsi's appointment late Monday. He is replacing Faouzi Benzarti, who was fired in October. Trabelsi's main goal will be to guide the team to the 2026 World Cup. Tunisia currently tops its qualifying group. (AP)

Frankowski joins Galatasaray on loan: The 29-year-old Polish winger Przemyslaw Frankowski joined Galatasaray on loan from RC Lens, the Turkish club announced on Tuesday.

Frankowski will play in Galatasaray until the end of the season with an option to buy. (Xinhua)



India's Chanra Mouli Danda, center, Amitesh Mishra, left, and Vishwaraj Rajendrashinh Jadeja, right, compete during the men's team pursuit speed skating final at the 9th Asian Winter Games in Harbin, China. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait's Al-Kandari breaks new ground

China sets new medal record, Thailand wins first-ever medal at Asian Winter Games

HARBIN, Feb 11, (Agencies): Kuwaiti skier Salman Al-Kandari secured 10th place in the freeski slope-style competition at the 9th Asian Winter Games in Harbin 2025, successfully completing the three rounds of the event.

Al-Kandari, who made history as the first Kuwaiti athlete to compete in this event, described the competition at Yabuli Heights, located northwest of Harbin, as extremely challenging, with freezing temperatures adding to the difficulty. Despite the tough conditions, Al-Kandari completed all three rounds with strong times.

Reflecting on his performance, he noted that competing alongside the Asian champions in this discipline was an invaluable experience. He believes that the insights and experiences gained during the competition will significantly contribute to his growth as an athlete and help him achieve better results in future tournaments.

Al-Kandari expressed his gratitude for the support from the Kuwait Winter Games Club and the Kuwait Olympic Committee, who provided crucial assistance and organized strong training camps. The

latest of these camps was held in Switzerland before the tournament.

China set a new record for the most medals won by the country's delegation in a single Asian Winter Games, while Thailand secured its first-ever medal on Tuesday.

Ten gold medals were awarded at the Games on Tuesday, with China claiming six golds, five silvers, and five bronzes, bringing its total medal count to 70. This surpassed the previous record of 61, set at the 2007 Asian Winter Games in Changchun.

China's record-breaking moment came in the women's freeski slopestyle final, where Liu Mengting won gold and Yang Ruiyi and Han Linshan took silver and bronze, respectively.

China added gold in freestyle skiing, as Feng Junxi and Wang Xue, along with Chen Meiting and Xu Mengtao, secured a 1-2 finish in the women's aerials synchro. Kazakhstan's Ardana Makhanova and Ayana Zholdas claimed bronze.

In the men's aerials synchro final, Kazakhstan's Roman Ivanov and Sherzod Khashirbayev won the country's first snow event gold at the Harbin Games, while China's Geng Hu and Yang Yuheng took silver, and Li Xinpeng and Qi Guangpu earned bronze.

Japan's Rai Kasamura won the men's freeski slopestyle title, with his teammate Ruka Ito taking silver. Thailand's Paul Henri Vieuxtemps claimed

bronze, marking the country's first-ever Asian Winter Games medal.

China's speed skating team wrapped up its competition with a dominant performance, winning all four gold medals awarded on the day. Ning Zhongyan set a new Games record in the men's 1,000 meters with a time of one minute, 8.81 seconds. South Korea's Cha Min-kyu took silver, and China's Lian Ziwen won bronze.

In the women's 1,000-meter final, China's Han Mei and Yin Qi finished one-two, with South Korea's Lee Na-hyun taking bronze. China also triumphed in both the men's and women's team pursuit events. South Korea and Japan took silver and bronze in the men's pursuit, while Japan and South Korea finished second and third in the women's event.

Elsewhere, South Korea's Ekaterina Avvakumova won the biathlon women's 7.5-kilometer sprint, with China's Meng Fanqi and Tang Jialin finishing second and third. In the men's 7.5-kilometer sprint, Kazakhstan's Vladislav Kireyev and Vadim Kurales took gold and silver, while China's Gu Cang earned bronze.

After Tuesday's events, China leads the medal tally with 27 golds, 13 silvers, and 20 bronzes. South Korea follows with 12 golds, 12 silvers, and 11 bronzes, while Japan sits third with five golds, six silvers, and 10 bronzes.



Salman Al-Kandari celebrates with Kuwait flag after finishing the race.

Kuwait Sports Day set for Feb 22 with exciting events



The Supreme Organizing Committee meeting in progress.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Public Authority for Sports announced that the Supreme Organizing Committee for Kuwait Sports Day has set February 22 as the official date for the event. The day will feature a diverse program of sports activities catering to all age groups and segments of society.

In a press statement following a meeting chaired by Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, the Sports Authority highlighted that one of the main events will be a large-scale sports marathon on Jaber Bridge, which is expected to attract widespread participation.

The statement also noted that the event will include the opening ceremony of the Gulf Football Legends Championship, featuring eight teams, as well as the Youth

Football League, aimed at supporting youth sports. Additionally, the Kuwait Olympic Committee will organize various activities across multiple locations.

The committee discussed the Jaber Bridge Marathon, approving its implementation plan to ensure a well-organized and successful event. Registration for the marathon opens today via the "Hayakom" platform.

Regarding the Gulf Football Legends Championship, the Authority stated that the Kuwait Football Association, the event organizer, provided an overview of the tournament scheduled from February 20 to 24. The championship will bring together former Gulf football stars, reflecting the spirit of unity and sportsmanship among Gulf nations.

Mukafeh claims Sheikh Nasser Sabah Cup



Winning jockey receives trophy.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The horse "Mukafeh" from Al Nawader Stable, trained by Saad Al Zaman and ridden by jockey Igor, claimed victory in the Late Sheikh Nasser Sabah Fahad Al Nasser Cup, part of the Triple Crown of Champions. Mukafeh triumphed in the second leg of the fourth round for local production horses, covering 1,600 meters in 1:44.30 minutes during the 15th horse racing meeting at the Hunting and Equestrian Club.

In the third round, the horse "Warrior Rock" from Al Abyad Stable, trained by Saud Al Mutairi and ridden by jockey Tawfiq, secured the Sheikh Abdullah Al Mubarak

Cup for mixed horses, completing the 2,600-meter race in 2:56.40 minutes.

Meanwhile, "Thameen" from Bin Najem Stable, under the guidance of trainer Sultan Al Adhab and jockey Alex, won the Sheikh Abdullah Al Mubarak Al Sabah Cup in the second round for all-class horses, finishing the 1,200-meter race in 1:13.07 minutes.

In the first round, the horse "Chapman" from Al Ansari Stable, trained by Sultan Al Adhab and ridden by jockey Faisal Al Farmawi, clinched victory in the Masterpiece of the Hunting and Equestrian Club over a 1,200-meter distance.

Inaugural Olympic Esports Games in Saudi Arabia postponed to 2027

BEIJING, Feb 11, (Xinhua): The first edition of the Olympic Esports Games has been rescheduled to be held in Saudi Arabia's Riyadh in 2027, while the road to the Games has been set to start this year, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced on Tuesday.

During the 142nd IOC Session in July last year, the IOC executive board made a unanimous decision to create the Olympic Esports Games, originally to be held in 2025.

The IOC has partnered with the Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee in organizing the event. The Esports World Cup Foundation (EWCF) will also become a founding partner of the Games with expertise in game selection and tournament structures to bridge the gap between emerging esports and traditional sports.

In order to ensure the integrity, sustainability and growth of esports, the IOC and EWCF will collaborate closely with key stakeholders to establish qualification pathways with broader global standards.

"There is now a very clear roadmap to the historic first-ever Olympic Esports Games. With the road to the Olympic Esports Games starting this year, the Games are becoming a reality," said IOC President Thomas Bach.

A joint committee chaired by IOC Member Ser Miang Ng and co-chaired by HRH Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Faisal has been set up to steer the Games, working to define the games that will be part of the inaugural Olympic Esports Games. Saudi Arabia is also looking forward to welcoming the world and playing its part to help the dreams of so many esports athletes come true, adding the esports to the popular events in the country, which includes football, motorsports, tennis, equestrian and golf.



IOC and Saudi Olympic Committees logo.

Free entry suggested to attract fans

\$200,000 for Gulf Legends Championship winner

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Mohsen Musabah, member of the Old Players Committee of the Arabian Gulf Cup Football Federation and former UAE national team goalkeeper, revealed the financial rewards for the upcoming "Gulf Legends" Championship, set to take place at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium from February 22-26.

Musabah confirmed that the champion of the tournament will receive a prize of \$200,000, while the runner-up will earn \$150,000. In addition, all participating teams will be rewarded with a financial incentive for each match played.

This announcement came during a press conference, where Musabah also explained a change in the tournament's name. He noted that some retired players from recent years had not been referred to as "legends," thus providing an opportunity for all former players to participate in this competitive event, which will be held for the first time.

The championship is set to



Part of the press conference for the Gulf Legends Championship.

continue in the future, with plans for it to accompany all Gulf championships. The inaugural event will coincide with the 27th Gulf Championship, set to take place in Saudi Arabia.

Musabah also emphasized that financial rewards are not limited to the participating teams. The tournament will honor the best player, top scorer, and best goalkeeper with a prize of 150,000 Qatari riyals each. Additionally, he re-

sponded to a question regarding ticket pricing, stating that the decision lies with the Kuwait Football Association. From his personal perspective, he believes that offering free entry would allow more fans to enjoy the event, especially those celebrating Kuwait's national holidays, which could further boost attendance at the Gulf Cup for veteran players.

Hassan Matar Al-Suwaidi, head of the Old Players Com-

mittee, expressed gratitude to the State of Kuwait for hosting the event, which will take place from February 22-26 at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium in Al-Sulaibikhat Club. He also thanked Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa, the Qatari Minister of Sports and Youth and President of the Gulf Federation, for initiating the idea of holding the tournament.

Al-Suwaidi further explained that the tournament was initially scheduled to coincide with the 26th Gulf Cup hosted by Kuwait from December 21 to January 4, but it was postponed to align with Kuwait's national holidays. He announced that the tournament will feature four matches per day, with each match lasting 40 minutes, divided into two 20-minute halves. Teams will also be permitted substitutions to avoid injuries during play.

Finally, Al-Suwaidi confirmed that the tournament's name had been changed from the Gulf Legends Championship to the Gulf Cup for Veterans to reflect its inclusive nature for all former players who participated in previous Gulf competitions. Therefore, the event is open to more than just "legends."