



Opinion

Is a four-year term enough for President Trump to achieve all this?

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE US President Donald Trump began his second term with several ambitious goals, the most important of which are:

1. Denmark should cede Greenland to the United States.
2. Canada should become the 51st state of the United States.
3. Panama should relinquish control of its canal to the United States.
4. Saudi Arabia should invest one trillion US dollars in the United States.

5. Jordan and Egypt should take in and manage the people of Gaza.
6. Israel should expand its territory.
7. NATO members should increase their military budgets by two percent of their national income.
8. OPEC should increase oil production to weaken Russia.
9. Germany and Japan should pay billions of US dollars to support US military presence on their soil.
10. China should boost its imports from the United States.

It is true that this is a common approach for any US president, or even any leader or monarch, upon assuming power. However, there is a political rule that suggests if a new president or government is able to implement 25 percent of its proposed agenda, it is considered successful, provided the circumstances are in their favor.

In the case of the United States, there are many challenges facing the president returning to the White House. President Trump understands that this

will be his final term. International conditions have shifted to a great extent, and as a result, the United States is no longer in the position to impose its will as it once did.

This is why the calculations are completely different, which makes Trump's ambitions incredibly difficult to achieve.

At the start of his first term, President Trump overturned many of the decisions of Barack Obama, particularly those related to Iran. He also greatly disrupted the internal political situation in the US and burdened the country's economy with new debts which further exacerbated the economic crisis.

As a result, the White House's plans appear more like a midsummer night's dream, as Washington no longer holds the authority to impose its will on others, at least not in the same way it once did.

On the other hand, speaking from over half a century of experience in following international affairs, whenever any head of state, no matter

how powerful or influential his country is globally, demands the expulsion of a group of people from their land, it is like dipping a bare hand into a hornet's nest.

The situation becomes even more complicated if Trump's goals involve pursuing a corrupt or misguided theory like the so-called "Greater Israel", and directing Jordan and Egypt to take in the residents of Gaza and the West Bank. By pursuing this path, President Trump is causing major harm to the long-standing relationships between the US and its natural allies in the Middle East. This would be a fatal error for the United States.

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Diplomatic missions in Kuwait come together for a group photo at the Sports and Environmental Day, highlighting their commitment to environmental awareness and global collaboration.

UN-Habitat hosts Sports and Environmental Day

Kuwait's green vision gains diplomatic backing

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15, (KUNA): The United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) for the Arabian Gulf and Kuwait organized the Sports and Environmental Day for the diplomatic corps Kuwait on Saturday.

The event "Kuwait Tazra" was held under the patronage of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and with the attendance of Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Hayat, Tajikistan Ambassador Zubaydullo Zubaydzoda, and Dr. Ameera Al-Hassan, Head of the UN-Habitat Mission in Kuwait, join efforts in planting a seedling during the Sports and Environmental Day.



KUNA photos

Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Hayat, Tajikistan Ambassador Zubaydullo Zubaydzoda, and Dr. Ameera Al-Hassan, Head of the UN-Habitat Mission in Kuwait, join efforts in planting a seedling during the Sports and Environmental Day.

contributing to the expansion of green spaces and the fight against desertification, as this initiative aligns with commitment to support environmental efforts and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, in line with UN-Habitat's vision to activate the role of open public spaces.

The Ambassador of Tajikistan said he was so proud to see the diplomatic

society join such national environment initiative, and underlined the significance of partnership between diplomatic missions and local bodies.

For his part, Mohammad Al-Basri, Manager of Public Relations and Information Group at Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), praised the company's leading role in supporting environmental activities.

He stressed that the selection of the "Ahmadi Oasis" to host the event reflects a genuine commitment to sustainability issues.

Al-Basri added, "We succeeded today in hosting an environmental and sports event at one of the most significant oases in Kuwait. The Ahmadi Oasis is home to more than 155,000 plants and trees, making it a promising model for reforestation projects in desert areas."

He hoped that these efforts would help raise environmental awareness and promote a culture of tree planting in the community.

Kuwait Tazra is one of the most prominent national initiatives focused on expanding green spaces and protecting the environment.

Mol mutes loud cars with 60-day impound

Companies behind noisy exhausts face closure

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: The Ministry of Interior has unveiled a plan to immediately shut down companies that supply vehicles with annoying exhausts, while confirming the launching of intensive traffic campaigns to arrest those who committed violations as per the directive of acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

The ministry disclosed that as part of ongoing efforts to combat negative phenomena which disturb public comfort and affect road safety; the General Traffic Department (GTD), in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, affirmed the continuation of intensive traffic campaigns through the establishment of fixed and mobile checkpoints in order to impound vehicles whose exhausts were modified illegally and emit annoying sounds, in addition to the immediate closure of garages that supply vehicles with illegal exhausts.

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Over 60 heads of state and government convene at summit

PM takes part in Munich Security Conference



PM Diwan photo

His Highness the Prime Minister meets with President of Iraq's Kurdistan Region Nechirvan Barzani on the sidelines of the 61st Munich Security Conference.

MUNICH, Feb 15, (KUNA): The 61st session of the Munich Security Conference, the world's largest and most important event of its kind, kicked off on Friday with the participation of over 60 heads of state and government, including His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Among the high profile participants are German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, European Parliament President Roberta Metsola, European Council President Antonio Costa, European Union Foreign Affairs Commissioner Kaja Kallas, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

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Health ministry updates drug lists to strengthen regulations

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi has issued a ministerial decision to update the list of drugs and psychotropic substances and their legal classifications to regulate the pharmaceutical market and protect society from the risks of misusing these products.

The decision stipulated the following:

- Add Butonitazene to List No. 1 of Law No. 74/1983 on combating drugs and regulating their use and trade.
- Add four substances, their

salts, derivatives and decomposers to List No. 2 of Law No. 45/1987 on combating psychotropic substances and regulating their use and trade. These substances include Chloromethcathinone, Dipentylone, Fluorodischloroketamine and Gamma-Butyrolactone.

■ Add Bromazolam to List No. 4 of the same law based on the latest scientific and legislative recommendations.

The ministry affirmed that it is keen on updating and reviewing the laws and regulations on drug control to achieve the highest standard of public health and safety.

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Six Kuwaiti businesswomen among Forbes Mideast elite



Top row from left: Shaikha Al-Bahar, Wadha Al-Khateeb, Dana Nasser Al-Sabah. Bottom row from left: Nadia Al-Hajji, Henadi Al-Saleh, Donna Sultan

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Forbes Middle East has revealed its much-anticipated 2025 list of the region's top businesswomen, showcasing powerful leaders who are transforming industries and driving impactful change. The rankings were determined by evaluating business scale, personal achievements, leadership influence, and contributions to corporate social responsibility, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The list includes six Kuwaiti women, who are:

- Shaikha Khaled Al-Bahar, Deputy CEO of the National Bank of Kuwait Group, in 2nd place

- Wadha Ahmad Al-Khateeb, CEO of Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), in 4th place

- Dana Nasser Al-Sabah, CEO of Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - KIPCO, in 5th place

- Nadia Bader Al-Hajji, CEO of Petrochemical Industries Company, in 17th place

- Henadi Al-Saleh, Chair of Agility, in 22nd place

- Donna Sultan, President and CEO of KEO International Consultants, in 58th place

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News watch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Friday a cable of congratulations to Bahraini King Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa on the occasion of the 24th anniversary of the Kingdom's National Action Charter.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir commended Bahrain's prominent development achievements covering various domains under the King's leadership, wishing the King good health and wellness, and further progress and prosperity for his country. (KUNA)

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KUWAIT CITY: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs voiced on Thursday Kuwait's strong condemnation of Germany's Munich car ramming that wounded some people.

In a statement, the ministry expressed Kuwait's solidarity with the German government and people, wishing a rapid recovery to those wounded. (KUNA)

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KUWAIT CITY: Deputy Secretary-General of the Kuwait Banking Association Sheikh Al-Essa announced that local banks will be closed on Tuesday Feb 25, Wednesday Feb 26, and Thursday Feb 27 on the occasion of the National Day and Liberation Day of Kuwait, in coordination with the Central Bank of Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

She revealed that official working hours will resume on Sunday, March 2, in accordance with the circular issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait.



5 Sheikh Mubarak welcomes delegations in honor of 'Capital Culture' leadership



7 NBK-Egypt reports EGP 7.3 billion in net profit in FY 2024

10 Kuwait Finance House extends strategic partnership with CODED Academy

Kuwait powers innovation with \$340m data center investment

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: A specialized research report released by ArizOn has stated that Kuwait is steadily advancing toward regional leadership in innovation, technology, and data centers, despite challenges such as privacy concerns and expansion issues, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The report highlighted Kuwait's commitment to innovation, as well as its flexible and adaptable approach to shaping a smarter future.

It anticipates investment in the data center market to reach \$340 million over the next four years, particularly

with the ongoing expansion of data centers, as well as technological and green energy investments.

The report explained that six data centers have been allocated, along with the construction of seven state-of-the-art technology facilities throughout Kuwait.

The annual growth rate of the data center market in Kuwait has reached approximately 11.19 percent in the past two years and is projected to continue at the same pace until 2029.

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Prayer Timings

| | | | |
|------------|-------|------------|-------|
| Fajr | 05:08 | Asr | 15:13 |
| Sunrise .. | 06:28 | Maghrib .. | 17:37 |
| Zohr | 12:02 | Isha | 18:55 |

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

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

Weather

By Night: Cold and partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-38 km/h with a chance for scattered rain and a chance for fog forming over some areas.

| Station | Max Exp | Min Rec | | |
|-----------------|---------|---------|----|----|
| Kuwait City | 21 | 13 | | |
| Kuwait Airport | | | 19 | 13 |
| Abdaly | | | 20 | 09 |
| Bubyan | | | 21 | 11 |
| Jahra | | | 21 | 13 |
| Faiilaka Island | | | 21 | 14 |
| Salmiyah | | | 21 | 14 |
| Ahmadi | | | 22 | 10 |
| Jal Aliyah | | | 21 | 09 |
| Nuwaisib | | | 21 | 14 |



His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with President Alexander Stubb, of Finland.



His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets Dr. Rashad Mohammad Al-Alimi, President of Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council.



PM Diwan photos
His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets President of the Global Affairs of Goldman Sachs.

HH PM meets Finnish, Yemeni presidents and reps of multinational corporations

MUNICH, Germany, Feb 15, (KUNA) : His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met with President Alexander Stubb, of Finland, on the sidelines of the 61st Munich Security Conference (MSC 2025) which opened earlier Friday.

During the meeting, His Highness the Prime Minister conveyed to the Finnish leader the 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.

Expressing his best wishes for Finland, he affirmed Kuwait's desire to enhance the bilateral ties in all areas with a view to serving the common interests of both nations.

Both sides exchanged views on a range of regional and international issues of mutual concern.

The meeting gathered Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, Undersecretary of His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan for Financial, Ad-

ministrative and Communications Affairs Sheikh Khaled Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, and assistants to the foreign minister Bader Saleh Al-Tenib and Sadeq Mohammad Maarafi, as well as Ambassador to Germany Reem Mohammad Al-Khaled.

His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met with President of the Global Affairs of Goldman Sachs. He also met, on the sidelines of the 61st Munich Security Conference (MSC 2025) which opened earlier Friday, with Chief Executive Officer of Airbus Defence and Space Michael Schoellhorn and Vice President of Boeing Corp. Dr. Brendan Nelson.

The meetings focused on ways to strengthen cooperation between the State of Kuwait and the three multinational corporations in such areas as financing, banking, industry and technology in the framework of the Kuwait Vision 2035 and the planned economic reforms.

His Highness the Prime Minister also met with Dr. Rashad Mohammad Al-

Alimi, President of Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council, on the sidelines of the 61st Munich Security Conference (MSC 2025) which opened in Germany's southern city earlier Friday.

During the meeting, His Highness the Prime Minister conveyed to President Al-Alimi the 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.

Expressing his best wishes for sisterly Yemen, His Highness the Prime Minister reaffirmed Kuwait's desire to strengthen the bilateral ties in all areas with a view to serving the common interests of both nations.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also met with President of Iraq's Kurdistan Region Nechirvan Barzani, on the sidelines of the 61st Munich Security Conference (MSC 2025).

Both sides exchanged views on ways to promote the bilateral ties and discussed a range of regional issues of mutual interest.

KSE-IEA join hands to train Kuwaitis in space knowhow

'Expertise exchange vital to upgrade education quality'

By **Mohammad Ghanem/Abdulrahman Al-Shammari**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Kuwait Society of Engineers (KSE), in cooperation with the Indian Engineers Association (IEA) branch in Kuwait, organized the fourth international conference 2025 entitled, "Modern Trends in Manufacturing Technology and the Role of Engineers in Reducing the Global Warming Phenomenon," on Thursday.

In a speech she delivered on behalf of IEA Chairman Eng. Faisal Al-Otol, Chairperson of the Public Relations Committee of the association Eng Amira Al-Shadookhi confirmed the depth of relations between KSE and IEA-Kuwait Chapter, which is an integral part of the association. She said the association fully supports all professional associations

and unions in Kuwait.

She revealed the conference is the fruit of the coordinated efforts of KSE and IEA, while affirming the signing of two agreements at the conference -- one is on Space Science, through which 50 Kuwaiti students will be trained on this important field by Dr. Sivathanu Pillai, an Indian trainer known for his competence and extensive scientific experience.

She added that the second agreement is on the accredited professional certificate course in project management for Kuwaiti engineers to hone their administrative and functional expertise and skills, and it will be conducted by Pillai as well.

She stated that these agreements are under the umbrella of KSE; as part of the efforts it is exerting to develop the skills of Kuwaitis in all fields. She also appreciated the role played by IEA-Kuwait Chapter in this regard.

Meanwhile, the 'Good Practices and Future Challenges for Education Quality' Forum held under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has concluded.

The forum was in partnership with Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) and in cooperation with the Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

During the closing ceremony, Director of the National Authority for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance Dr. Jassim Al-Ali emphasized the importance of cooperation and knowledge exchange between educational institutions to improve the quality of higher education.

He affirmed that the forum facilitated productive dialogue, allowing participants to share their successful experience in higher education development; while discussing key challenges and strategies to overcome them.

He stressed that ensuring educational quality is a collective responsibility, calling for a culture of educational excellence to meet labor market demands. He also underscored the need for continuous collaboration to further improve the quality of higher education, stating that implementing the forum's recommendations will lead to tangible advancements in the Arab world's academic sector.

He expressed his gratitude to all contributors for making the event successful and fruitful, confirming that the discussions and ideas shared will guide continuous improvement in the educational journey. He also underscored the importance of continuous collaboration to enhance positive trends and ensure the necessary quality for the benefit of institutions, students and the Arab world.

No to normalization talk

Court clarifies grounds for sending Al-Saeed to prison

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: The Criminal Court, headed by Justice Al-Dhuwaih Al-Dhuwaih, confirmed the grounds of the ruling to imprison media personality Fajer Al-Saeed for broadcasting false news and calling for normalization with the Zionist entity that any talk about Kuwait's move towards normalization with the Zionist entity or reviewing its position on the Palestinian issue is nothing but a flimsy proposal.

The court said such talks clash with the mandatory legislative rules that outline the State's sovereign approach and prohibit any dealings with the Zionist entity; stressing that promotion of the possibility of normalization or an attempt to portray it as a possible option is nothing more than legal futility and a distortion of legislative facts.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the grounds of the ruling, in which the court pointed out that the defendant's statements were clear in terms of content and political significance. It added these statements included imply that Kuwait did not absolutely reject normalization, but may proceed with it later, which contradicts the fixed and declared position of the country; hence, the distortion of facts in public.

The court said the accused made the statements at a sensitive time, in light of regional and international conditions that require caution against broadcasting any information which could be interpreted as a change in Kuwait's firm position towards the Palestinian issue, making the act in question extremely dan-

gerous on both the political and social levels.

It went on to say that investigations proved the accused did not limit herself to expressing an abstract opinion or presenting a theoretical idea, as she participated consciously and willingly in a dialogue with a media figure belonging to the Zionist entity, which means granting her implicit media legitimacy to this entity that is legally rejected in Kuwait.

It also asserted that when a legislator issued Law No. 21/1964, he used the term 'Israel' to refer to the entity established by the Zionist movement on the occupied Palestinian territories, which is the same entity that the decree issued on June 5, 1967 addressed; describing it as a Zionist gang -- an accurate description which reflects the political and legal reality then. The international community viewed the Zionist military formations like 'Haganah', 'Irgun' and 'Stern' as terrorist groups engage in occupation by force, which led to the emergence the so-called State of 'Israel' later.

□ □ □

Kuwaiti hurt in mishap: A citizen was injured and transported to Jahra Hospital following a two-car collision on Jahra Road, which led to traffic congestion, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to the Ministry of Interior, its Operations Unit received a report about the accident. Emergency workers and police officers were immediately dispatched to the accident site, confirming that the crash involved two vehicles and resulted in one injury.

An ambulance took the injured citizen to Jahra Hospital, and then the authorities worked hard to clear the vehicles and restore normal traffic flow.

Ports play huge role in boosting economy

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Director General of Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) Sheikh Khaled Salem Abdulaziz Al-Sabah affirmed the authority's commitment to improving the operational system in the ports with the aim of fulfilling the ambitious vision of the political leadership, supporting the national economy and maritime trade, and achieving integration among the stakeholders in this vital sector, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He issued this statement in his speech at the opening of the "Ports Carnival" activities, held on Thursday as part of the country's celebrations for the 2025 National Days.

Sheikh Khaled Al-Sabah stressed that ports are not merely commercial gateways, but economic arteries that play a major role in strengthening Kuwait's position on the global economic map, and supporting its aspirations to become a regional and international logistics hub.

He said, "The month of February holds special significance, with the 64th anniversary of Kuwait's Independence Day and the 34th anniversary of Kuwait's Liberation Day, which are two pivotal milestones in Kuwait's history. These anniversaries serve as a source of inspiration, reminding us of the values of sacrifice, hard work, national unity, and the deep appreciation for the immense efforts and sacrifices made by our forefathers through which they laid the foundation for our progress and prosperity."

The people of Kuwait today are continuing this journey with unwavering sincerity and determination to further the nation's progress and build a bright future, under the wise leadership 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 (May God protect them). Together, they are advancing with steady steps toward achieving a comprehensive national vision centered on enhancing stability, prosperity, and development."

Amir, Crown Prince, and Premier congratulate Serbia on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Saturday a cable of congratulations to President of the Republic of Serbia Aleksandar Vucic on the occasion of his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the Serbian president good health and the Republic of Serbia and its friendly people further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent Saturday a cable of congratulations to President of the Republic of Serbia Aleksandar Vucic on the occasion of his country's National Day, wishing him long life and good health.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to President of the Republic of Serbia Aleksandar Vucic.

Greece

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Me-

shal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Friday a cable to new Greek President Konstantinos Tasoulas, congratulating him on assuming the post.

His Highness the Amir commended outstanding relations between Kuwait and Greece, wishing Greece more progress and prosperity, and the new president everlasting wellbeing.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a similar cable to new Greek President Konstantinos Tasoulas.

His Highness the Crown Prince commended outstanding relations between Kuwait and Greece, wishing Greece more progress and prosperity, and the new president everlasting wellbeing.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah then sent a cable to new Greek President Konstantinos Tasoulas, congratulating him on assuming the post.



Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal, Director of Kuwait University Prof. Dr. Dina Al-Mailam, and Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi at the event.

KU hosts forum on state's cultural plan for year 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: The Cultural Committee of the Department of Arabic Language and Literature in Kuwait University, led by Rapporteur of the committee Prof. Dr. Nouria Al-Roumi, hosted the Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Badah Al-Mutairi for a symposium titled "The State's Cultural Plan in light of Kuwait as the Capital of Arab Culture and Arab Media for 2025" recently at the Faculty of Arts Theater in Sabah Al-Salem University City.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait University, the symposium was attended by the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal, Director of Kuwait University Prof. Dr. Dina Al-Mailam, Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Dr. Muhammad Al-Jassar, Chair of the Founding Council of Abdullah Al-Salem University Prof. Dr. Moudi Al-Hamoud and several leaders from Kuwait University. At the beginning of the event, Dr. Al-Roumi welcomed the attendees and expressed her happiness at Kuwait being named the Capital of Arab Culture and Arab Media for the year 2025, especially in coincidence with the Al-Qurain Cultural Festival and national celebrations.

Meanwhile, Minister of Information and

Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi expressed his pride in this international recognition of Kuwait.

He stressed that Kuwait University is a cultural and educational pillar that has contributed to the emergence of pioneering cultural figures in various fields, which serve as a foundation for culture in Kuwait.

Al-Mutairi highlighted that the media strategy was shaped using a combination of the vision of experienced individuals and the aspirations of youth for reflecting the culture of Kuwait and representing its society as a whole.

He affirmed that Kuwait's selection as the Capital of Arab Culture and Media for 2025 was based on specific criteria that evaluate the country's infrastructure, its readiness to host events, and the quality of these events, and it emerged at the forefront in all these aspects.

In addition, Director of Kuwait University Prof. Dina Al-Mailam delivered a welcoming speech in which she expressed her happiness at Kuwait receiving the prestigious title. She affirmed that this event is a source of pride for everyone due to Kuwait's pioneering role and the contribution of Kuwait University in graduating qualified media professionals who work in various state institutions and sectors.

Behind each smiling face is pain, sighs known to none

"LET US move away from politics for a while, and talk about life and people's affairs. One day, a wife had a fight with her husband due to their living conditions. She decided to leave the house to escape from such conditions. When everyone was asleep, she went out of the house, sneaked along the walls, and passed by the windows of other houses in the neighborhood. Thus, she heard a mother praying to Allah, asking Him to heal her paralyzed son, so that he could live and play like the rest of the children. In another house, she heard a woman praying to Allah to bless her with a child to decorate her life. She also heard a wife praying to Allah to guide her husband towards the right path." **Ahmad Al-Dawass** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.



Ahmad Al-Dawass

"She narrated: I heard a girl crying and saying, 'Oh Allah, I miss my mother, but I know that she is with you in Heaven.' I heard another woman say to her husband about the owner of the house: He will evict us. Tell him to give us a grace period until Allah provides for us and we will pay him the rent.

"The wandering woman realized that most people who pretend to be happy and smile are hiding their pain and suffering that no one knows about except Allah. This prompted her to quickly return to her house and thanked Allah for her blessings -- a home, children and a husband.

"The moral of the story: Every home has problems and shortcomings, so do not think that everyone who appears happy in front of you is living a perfect life, because behind a cheerful face are sighs and frustrations that you do not know about. Therefore, do not compare your life with that of others, because life is not clear for anyone. Thank Allah always and forever.

"One of the virtuous stories in terms of teaching children is that of a thief's repentance at the hands of a boy. About 950 years ago, there was a boy whose mother was preparing his belongings for him to travel with a caravan and complete his studies in another country. She gave him KD42, but before he traveled, his mother asked him to promise her not to lie throughout his life, and he promised to do so.

"During the journey, the caravan was intercepted by a group of thieves who took all the belongings and money that everyone in the caravan was carrying. When they asked the boy what he had, he said: 'I have KD42.' They were surprised and thought that he was lying, so they took him to their elder to ask him, and the boy replied: I promised my mother not to lie, and I am afraid to break that promise."

"At this point, the leader of the thieves was surprised by the child's principle, and said to him: You are afraid to break your promise to your mother, yet we broke our promise to Allah Almighty.' He then ordered the men to return whatever they took. This man repented at the hands of the child who later became one of the most famous Arab clerics. He is Sheikh Abdul Qadir Al-Jilani, a virtuous cleric who lived in Baghdad during the Abbasid era.

"There is a big difference between someone who takes care of his children and someone who raises them -- the first provides food, drink and clothing; while the second builds values, beliefs and standards of right and wrong. At present, we are in dire need of instilling values and standards of right and wrong in the souls of our children. I wish the schools will focus on this.

"Let us eliminate bad student behavior and build a virtuous society that loves the country."

Also:

"Director of the Nigerian Center for Arabic Research in Nigeria Dr. Al-Khadr Abd al-Baqi Muhammad said multiple identities and their relationship with national identity are controversial and debated topics due to the impact this has on national stability and social harmony", columnist **Kamal Al-Kharras** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"In an article he wrote nearly two years ago, Professor Dr. Al-Khadr Abd al-Baqi highlighted the importance of national identity and its role in creating a state based on law, freedom, equality, respect for human rights, and inclusive citizenship. These issues are central to national identity, in contrast to the current global trend of emphasizing identities based on ethnic, sectarian, or religious affiliations. As such, there is a pressing need worldwide to shift toward a unifying identity, which is national identity, as highlighted in the aforementioned study.

"Indeed, national identity is intended to be a unifying force that can bring together various races and sects under a common national identity that transcends divisions. This noble goal should not be lost, as has been the case in some countries.

"Until the late 19th century, Germany was fragmented and divided. It wasn't until the Second Reich under Chancellor Otto von Bismarck that

Germany was unified into a strong nation, which boosted the German economy and brought peace to Europe for two decades.

"However, Bismarck was later sidelined by Wilhelm II, and Germany's ethnic and colonial ambitions grew. Bismarck had warned of future wars, which eventually led to World War I. This was followed by a period of extreme nationalism, where the noble goals of national identity were distorted into a tool of destruction, leading to the devastation of Europe and many countries worldwide under the banner of Aryan racial superiority.

"There is a thought-provoking post by media and economic expert Qais Ibrahim Al-Shatti, in which he states, 'Nationalism means loyalty to the homeland in a unifying entity that brings its people together through values of justice and solidarity. True strength lies in cooperation among the various components of society.'

"Yes, identity - especially national identity - is reinforced through the construction, achievements, and progress of a country. When a country becomes a prominent financial and investment hub both regionally and globally, its national identity is strengthened. This is especially true when there is a focus on sports, where the talents of the nation's youth are nurtured by supporting sports clubs, moving them beyond factionalism, guiding them, and encouraging them to win medals in regional, continental, and international competitions, with the country's flag raised in celebration of victories. In these moments, national identity is solidified.

"When national industries are promoted, goods are exported, and the workforce and innovative minds are employed in production, the national spirit flourishes.

"When airports become hubs for global flight routes, connected to railway and metro systems that, in turn, link to commercial ports, transforming the country into a maritime, aerial, and land-based center that takes full advantage of its strategic geographical position, national identity thrives.

"When a country becomes a cultural and intellectual beacon in print, visual, and audio media, as well as an advanced artistic center with a distinguished educational system and prestigious academic institutions, its national identity shines both within the country and in the hearts of its people, as well as on the global stage.

"Indeed, through achievements, love, and national unity, nations flourish, and their national identity sparkles."

"May Allah have mercy on Uncle Yousef Al-Nisf and grant him a spacious place in Heaven. He left us after spending his life in the service of Kuwait and its people. May Allah have mercy on him. He was a man of courageous stances. He was known for his national career of achievement, so those who knew him loved him, and those who worked with him respected and appreciated him." **Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"I am satisfied with this generous position, because I am certain that many of the people of Kuwait will talk and write about the exploits of the deceased. One of the many courageous positions that I knew about him was the position he shared with me. He supported my efforts to relocate the College of Basic Education from Shamiya to another place due to the crowding and traffic congestion caused by its presence in Shamiya, and the accompanying heavy presence of securitymen in a residential area.

"Relocating the college was not an easy or simple matter, as it faced many obstacles, which forced me to ask for the support and assistance of Uncle Yousef Al-Nisf, may Allah have mercy on him and sanctify his soul. He was a supporter and helper, along with a number of other notable individuals in the area. He participated in all our meetings out of his desire to support our efforts in this matter and to serve those residing in the area, especially those residing in Block Nine.

"He did not stop there, as he joined us in our meeting with HH our late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, may Allah have mercy on him and sanctify his soul, regarding this matter. His participation was unforgettable, as he expressed his desire to donate the furniture for the new building of the college, if necessary, but Sheikh Sabah was firm, and insisted that the government bear all the costs, otherwise, His Highness would bear them personally. In response to that, Uncle Yousef uttered valuable words of gratitude and appreciation.

"May Allah have mercy on you, O great uncle, and grant you a place in His spacious gardens, and grant your family and relatives with patience and solace. To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return."

— **Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh /Saeed Mahmoud**

Jail inmate acquitted of having drug pills in bed

Arrest, search unlawful: court

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Nayef Al-Dahoum and joined by Judge Sabri Ramadan Jaafar and Judge Abdulaziz Saad Al-Saqabi, acquitted an individual who was accused of possessing the psychotropic substance "methamphetamine" with intent of using it and smuggling it into Central Prison. However, the court ordered the confiscation of the seized items.

According to the incident officer's report, on the day of the incident, the control and support squad conducted a search of the public prison. While searching the accused's bed, they found two round pills and a third pill broken in half, all beige in color, which were suspected to be psychotropic substances.

When questioned by the Public Prosecution, the accused denied the charges, claiming that he was sleeping when police officers woke him and the other inmates and asked them to leave the ward. The authorities later in-

formed them that the seized items had been found outside the area near his bed and denied any connection to them.

The defendant's legal counsel Lawyer Bashar Al-Nassar insisted that the incident officer had overstepped his legal authority and violated both the Code of Procedure and Prisons Law in handling the case.

Lawyer Al-Nassar explained that the arrest and search were unlawful. The officer claimed to have found the two pills under his client's pillow. The bed and pillow were personal items, which could only be searched with a warrant or in the case of a red-handed offense. Therefore, the search of his client's belongings was invalid, and its results should be deemed invalid as well.

He also denied any connection between his client and the seized items, highlighting that the police officer had testified before the prosecution that the cell, where his client was held, contained about 40 inmates, with double-decker beds. This arrangement made it easy for any inmate to access another's bed and place items there.

Lawyer Al-Nassar indicated that, when the officer entered the area, another prisoner might have disposed of the pills and placed them under his client's pillow.

As a result, the court concluded that the arrest and search were unlawful due to a violation of the Code of Procedure and Prisons Law, as the search was conducted without a warrant and without the occurrence of a flagrant crime.

Gulf national arrested at Abdali border in bid to smuggle money

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: A Gulf citizen has been arrested for attempting to smuggle a large sum of money into Iraq, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to a reliable source at the General Administration for Customs, Abdali Customs inspectors were monitoring travelers and inspecting luggage early Wednesday morning when they discovered a substantial amount of money hidden in a bag in a manner indicating an intent to smuggle.

When questioned, the accused denied carrying money until it was uncovered by the inspector.

He did not provide any explanation as to why he was smuggling the funds or what the source of the money was. He was referred to the relevant authorities for further action.

CID launches hunt: Detectives have started the search for a group of individuals who helped a reckless young man escape in Al-Artal desert in the southern part of the country, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a source, the Ahmadi Traffic Department received information about a group of young men gathered in the desert; where they engaged in reckless behavior. Traffic patrols rushed to the site, where the youths were gathered. They noticed a sports car without plate number whose driver was performing car stunts. Upon sensing the presence of traffic patrols, he tried to escape. When his escape attempt failed, he abandoned the vehicle and fled on foot, while his friends deliberately obstructed the traffic patrols to help him escape.

The traffic police towed the car and referred it to the garage for impounded vehicles; while the reckless individuals are being tracked in preparation for their referral to the concerned authority.

6 co-op board members dismissed over funds scam

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: The Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah has dismissed six members of the Hateen Cooperative Society's Board of Directors for committing serious financial violations, based on the findings of the investigation committees, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to informed sources, the dismissal was followed by the appointment of six new members, including three women, by the Ministry of Social Affairs to replace the dismissed members.

Trooper's fake nationality: Owing to the close cooperation between military institutions and the

vigilance of officials, a case of forged nationality involving a soldier was uncovered, reports Al-Rai daily.

The soldier, who worked in the Kuwait Army, was asked by an officer for the phone number of a person from his phone log. However, the officer noticed something suspicious on the soldier's phone screen, which raised doubts.

Investigations carried out soon after by the relevant authorities in the Kuwait Army revealed that the soldier had fraudulently obtained Kuwaiti nationality. He held two identity cards - a Kuwaiti identity card and a Gulf country identity card, both with the same first and last name, but dif-

fering in the names of the father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. The case has been referred to the Public Prosecution, and the provisions of the nationality law have been applied to him.

10 years jail upheld: The Court of Appeals upheld the ruling of the Criminal Court to sentence a citizen -- a soldier in the Ministry of Interior -- to 10 years in prison with hard labor for joining a banned organization and planning to carry out terrorist acts in the country, reports Al-Anba daily.

The higher court acquitted two other defendants.

Sheikh Fahad honors customs inspectors

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: The acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah honored General Administration for Customs inspectors Hamid Alawi Al-Dhafiri and Anoud Khalif Al-Enezi for their outstanding efforts in preventing an illegal money smuggling attempt at the Abdali border, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

They were honored for their success in apprehending an Iraqi man and woman who were attempting to leave Kuwait with a large sum of money via the Abdali border.

2 foreigners held for cyber attacks

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: The Public Prosecution has ordered the detention of two foreign nationals on charges of engaging in activities that threaten Kuwait's national interests through the use of illegal communication networks to access individuals' banking data, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Investigations revealed that the defendants entered Kuwait in collaboration with residents from the People's Republic of China, and were instructed to carry out cyber attacks targeting communication towers using specialized electronic devices.

Expat hangs himself to death in junkyard

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: An expatriate, in his 40s, committed suicide by hanging in his residence in Amghara scrapyard after receiving a call from his family, reports Al-Anba daily.

The Operations Unit at the Interior Ministry received a report that an expatriate worker took his own life in Amghara scrapyard. Security personnel rushed to the location and they found out that the expatriate hanged himself inside his room after receiving a call from his family. No one knows about the details of the call. The expatriate's body was referred to the Forensic Medicine Department and investigations are ongoing to determine the circumstances that prompted him to end his own life.

2 dead in elevator fall: Two expatriates died when they fell from the top of the elevator shaft in an under construction house in Mutla'a, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source said the Operations Unit at the Interior Ministry received information about the incident. Police patrols and ambulances rushed to the accident, but the two expatriates already succumbed to their wounds due to the impact of the fall. The source added that the Kuwait Fire Force and Kuwait Municipality will investigate the circumstances leading to incident in order to determine the source of the malfunction that caused the death of these expatriates.



A view from the bridge.

Moi photo

Citations, arrests made in traffic & crime raids

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: The Ministry of Interior, through its Traffic and Operations Sector and Private Security Sector, launched a large-scale security campaign in the Saad Al-Abdullah area on Friday. The operation, which included female police officers, was conducted under the direct supervision of Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, reports Al-Rai daily.

As a result of the campaign, authorities recorded the following actions:

Issued 1,789 traffic violations, arrested 11 individuals for violating residency and labor laws, seized 10 vehicles involved in legal cases.

Apprehended 10 individuals wanted for various legal matters, impounded 4 vehicles due to traffic violations, detained one person for lacking identification, arrested two individuals with outstanding absence orders, referred one person to the traffic police.

This campaign is part of ongoing efforts to enhance security and enforce the law across the region.

Meanwhile, as part of ongoing efforts by the Public Security Sector to deal with violations related to illegal residents, absconding workers, and wanted individuals, the Ahmadi Security Directorate launched a security campaign recently in Abdullah Port, reports Al-Anba daily.

The campaign resulted in the arrest of seven individuals of different nationalities who were reported as absconding, and seven others for not carrying any personal identification documents.

During the campaign, officers seized a wanted vehicle, issued 25 traffic citations, and found an abandoned car in the desert which had been reported as stolen.



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'Kuwait enters new phase of radical road repairs in nation'

Exchange of expertise sought with Saudi

By **Mohammad Ghanem**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan last week warmly welcomed a delegation from the Ministry of Transport and Logistics Services for Road Affairs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Al-Mashaan said the visit is an affirmation of the depth of Kuwaiti-Saudi relations, and that it will open new horizons for cooperation, benefit and exchange of expertise in both countries. "We have been looking forward to this visit, considering it is an opportunity for the benefit to spread. Kuwait, represented by the Ministry of Public Works and the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART), has entered a new phase of radical road maintenance contracts for various areas."

Meanwhile, acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works Eid Al-Rashidi welcomed the visiting delegation to the country,

stressing that such visits strengthen the relationship between the two countries. He said the visit is an opportunity to gain experience, especially the mechanism and method of contracting. "During the meeting, we will explain the steps we have taken in the new maintenance contracts that have been signed and have started implementation," he revealed.



Dr. Al-Mashaan

He confirmed that the political leadership is keen on easing all procedures related to contracts with Saudi companies. "Our role is to translate the instructions and transfer our experience and exchange with them for the benefit of everyone," he added.

Head of the Saudi delegation Deputy Minister of Transport and Logistics Services for Roads Affairs Eng. Bader Al-Dulami thanked Al-Mashaan for the invitation.

Al-Dulami said: We have a message from

HH the Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman to provide full support to Kuwait and offer our long experience in the field of roads and their maintenance. We came to exchange experiences and you have excellent experience in road maintenance, especially the recent contracts. We will work to expand the benefit and convey greetings from the Minister of Transport and Logistics Services."

He explained that "Saudi Arabia has come a long way in terms of experience related to transportation and maintenance. We hope to achieve the aspirations of the citizens and residents in the Kingdom. We are trying to reach the desired goals. This can only be done by benefiting from and exchanging experience with sister countries such as Kuwait.

The road industry is old, but it is renewed. There are new, qualitative roads and many developments. The world is advancing in these areas. We aspire to reach advanced levels, and there are similar matters between us and Kuwait in which we seek to exchange experience for the benefit to expand."



KUNA photo

Dr. Jassem Al-Hamdan with a number of ambassadors and representatives of embassies during a tour of the (World People's Day UNESCO) forum.

KU opens 'People's Day'

Forum aims boost in cultural bonds among world's people

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15, (KUNA): Kuwait University (KU) opened the second edition of the "People's Day" Forum in Sabah Al-Salem University City on Saturday, drawing representatives from 25 countries from different continents.

In a keynote speech addressing the event, Dr. Jassem Al-Hamdan, Acting Dean of Student Affairs at Kuwait University, said that this annual forum reflects the university's insight to establish cultural interaction among world peoples, welcoming ambassadors and embassy representatives in Kuwait.

He added that the forum is primarily intended to share knowledge and information about people's various habits, customs and

traditions in an effort to deepen humanitarian relations and promote intercultural togetherness.

Al-Hamdan underlined the university's commitment to cementing cultural diversity and academic opening-up by means of offering scholarships and student exchange programs, and hammering out agreements and memos of understanding with world universities and academic institutions.

The university official also pointed out keenness on creating an educational environment that is rich in diversity in order to enable students to broaden their intellectual horizons and establish principles of international education in research and education domains.

MC environment panel holds meeting

Talks on plan to recycle plastic bottles postponed

By **Inaas Awadh**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: The Environmental Affairs Committee at the Municipal Council, headed by Alia Al-Farsi, on Thursday held its fourth meeting for the third session.

The executive bodies of the Kuwait Municipality, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Health, Environment Public Authority (EPA), Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) and Ministry of Interior attended the meeting.

After a lengthy discussion, the committee

decided to postpone talks on two out of four items in its agenda -- the proposal of member Sherifa Al-Shalfan to recycle plastic bottles with the caps and the minutes of the first workshop of the committee for the second session held on Sept 21, 2023.

In addition, the committee was informed about the request of Green Wall of Kuwait Association to collaborate with the council and the minutes of its second workshop for the third session held on Nov 2, 2024 regarding the Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh environmental system.

The committee also confirmed that it is

currently coordinating with government agencies, civil society institutions and other concerned entities to address the deteriorating conditions in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.

It scheduled a visit to the area on Feb 19 to assess the implementation of regulations related to cleanliness and the control of stray animals.

This visit is the first step in implementing the eight recommendations of the committee that were approved by Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Abdullah Al-Mishari in January.

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KUNA photo

Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi, Director of the Environment and Climate Change Program Dr. Abdullah Al-Enezi and other volunteers planting seedlings.

'Environmental Day' marked

More than 500 volunteers plant 2,000 local wild plant seedlings

By **Abdulrahman Al-Shammari**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: The Environment and Life Sciences Center at Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) recently organized the "Environmental Day" event at the Liyah Reserve in Jahra Governorate.

With the theme, "Let us plant today for a more beautiful tomorrow," the event was aimed at raising environmental awareness, promoting sustainability, and providing an interactive educational experience focused on nature and biodiversity.

More than 500 volunteers participated in the event -- including teams, institutions, companies and students; during which around 500 to 2,000 local wild plant seedlings were planted. This initiative combats desertification, reduces sand encroachment, and improves air quality.

Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi, who attended the event, stressed the significance of environmental initiatives to preserve biodiversity and sustainability.

Director of the Environment and Climate Change Program Dr. Abdullah Al-Enezi discussed environmental challenges in desert areas, as well as the potential solutions through research and technology.

Dr. Ali Al-Dosari highlighted the importance of wildlife and its role in maintain-

ing environmental balance, while Aref Al-Enezi -- an inventor -- presented innovative solutions for environmental sustainability and community awareness.

Head of the Environmental Day event Eng Dana Al-Enezi honored the supporting entities and stressed that the event aligns with the institute's ongoing environmental sustainability and land reclamation efforts.

She said an environmental competition encouraged the participants to present innovative ideas for desert environment protection.

She pointed out that desert environment rehabilitation is in line with the Kuwait 2035 Vision and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals; with the aim to combat climate change and achieve sustainable development in the northern region, including future housing and economic projects. "Such initiatives improve soil health, reduce temperatures, and limit dust storms, benefiting both the environment and society," she asserted.

She added the event reflects the institute's commitment to develop the desert environment sustainability in the country through scientific research, innovation and awareness initiatives. "It also highlights the importance of cross-sector partnerships for successful environmental sustainability in Kuwait," she concluded.

News in Brief

Milestone achieved: A member of the Board of Directors and Chair of the Administrative and Financial Committee of Mishref Cooperative Society Ali Mohammad Al-Hashash announced that the cooperative society has achieved a new administrative milestone by amending and updating its job cadre and organizational structure, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement issued yesterday, he clarified that this was aimed at keeping pace with the changes in the labor market, confronting the current challenges related to job grades, and creating a better environment for national workers.

Al-Hashash affirmed that Mishref

Cooperative Society is among the first to respond to the call for the Kuwaitization of supervisory positions.

He confirmed that all supervisory roles within the cooperative society are now 100 percent filled by Kuwaiti employees.

Al-Hashash revealed that efforts are underway to train the next generation of national employees through academic and field training programs to prepare them for future leadership responsibilities.

He emphasized that Mishref Cooperative Society successfully achieved this through thorough studies, resulting in a functional and structural framework that aligns with the aspirations of Kuwaiti employees.



Sheikh Mubarak Al-Fahad welcomes Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah.



Sheikh Mubarak with Walid Al-Khashti and Hamad Al-Musaibih.



Omani Minister of Information Dr. Abdullah Al Harrasi, Sheikh Thamer Al Jaber and Bahraini Minister of Information Dr. Ramzan Al Nuaimi.



Sheikh Mubarak welcomes Syrian media figure Musa Al-Omar.

Arab media leaders convene at prestigious Dar Jaber luncheon

Sheikh Mubarak welcomes delegations in honor of 'Capital Culture' leadership

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Director-General of the Joint Media Program Production Institution Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Jaber Al-Ahmad hosted a luncheon recently at Dar Jaber in honor of the Arab delegations participating in "Kuwait, Capital of Arab Culture and Media 2025", reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The event was attended by the Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Ambassador of Kuwait to Bahrain Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, a number of ambassadors, diplomats, and the editors-in-chief of local newspapers including the Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and the Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah.

The luncheon was organized on the day after the inauguration ceremony of the relevant activities of Kuwait, Capital of Arab Culture and Media 2025, which was held under the patronage of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

During the event, attendees, including Al-Jarallah, engaged in friendly discussions, and discussed various regional and global issues. They ex-



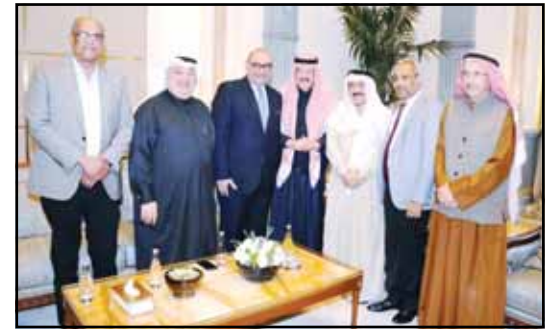
A shared smile between Minister Al-Mutairi and Editor-in-Chief Al-Jarallah.



Editor-in-Chief Al-Jarallah with Sheikh Thamer Al-Jaber.



Editor-in-Chief Al-Jarallah with media figure Mona El-Shazly.



Colleagues Sami Al-Nusf, Djiboutian Ambassador Abdul Qader Hussein, Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Youssef Al-Jassem, Iraqi Ambassador Al-Munhal Al-Safi, and colleague Imad Bukhamsin.



Photos by Rezk Tawfiq



Ambassadors of Libya, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Sultanate of Oman, Dr. Nasser Mohsen and Saud Al-Babtain.

A souvenir photo of the attendees.

Continued from Page 1

Is a four-year

No American president has ever pursued their dreams to such an extent. While it is true that US presidents have laid out their plans, some of which have been achieved, while others have failed, many have passed away before carrying out their programs, and the successors then overturned their predecessors' policies.

So, the question remains - How can Trump possibly achieve all of these goals within four years, particularly when it comes to his attempts to extract funds from certain countries?

There is something peculiar about what this president is saying. He knows well that investments follow a clear path, and they cannot be made overnight. These investments require careful planning and agreements that must be concluded before implementation. President Trump understands that not all of the deals he secured with Gulf countries during his first term came to fruition. Of the roughly \$13 billion in deals, only a portion were realized, with many others delayed due to shifting global circumstances.

First, the decisions signed by Trump represented a coup against the policies enacted by the administration of his predecessor Joe Biden, much like how Trump overturned many of the decisions made by former President Barack Obama's administration.

So, the question arises: How can Trump guarantee that all the new orders he issued will be carried out, regardless of whether they are right or wrong? Isn't it likely that his successor, four years down the line, will come in and reverse those decisions?

Mol mutes

The ministry said a violating vehicle will be impounded for 60 days and legal measures will be taken against the driver or owner. Companies that install illegal exhausts will be closed immediately, and all those involved will be referred to the competent authorities to take legal action against them. Inspectors from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry will monitor and document violations, it added.

It also stressed that it will ensure the strict application of the law to confront this phenomenon, urging vehicle owners to comply with traffic regulations and that the intensive security campaigns will continue to arrest violators and immediately take action against them.

Health ministry

This update is part of the ministry's commitment to protect society from the dangers of narcotic and psychotropic substances, and ascertain that all regulatory procedures keep pace with scientific and medical developments in the interest of the public.

The ministry added this move is within the framework of its regulatory role in controlling the circulation of narcotic and psychotropic substances, mitigating the risks of misusing them, and following up global developments in this regard to guarantee the safety of society and strengthen public protection in accordance with the best

international practices and recommendations.

Six Kuwaiti

These influential businesswomen continue to make a tangible impact in various sectors by leading some of the region's most prominent local and international companies. The rankings were based on several factors, including company size, individual achievements, leadership roles, and contributions to sustainability and social responsibility initiatives.

For the third consecutive year, Hana Al Rostamani, CEO of First Abu Dhabi Bank Group, which is the UAE's largest bank by assets, topped the list. She also marks her fourth appearance on Forbes' list of the world's most powerful women for 2024, ranking 60th globally.

Abu Dhabi Bank reported net profits of \$3.5 billion during the first nine months of 2024, with total assets reaching \$334.8 billion.

This year's ranking introduced 27 new female leaders. The 2025 list reflects the diversity of leadership talent, with the inclusion of women from 32 sectors and 29 nationalities, all contributing to the region's advancement.

The banking and financial services sector continues to dominate the list with 25 female leaders, followed by healthcare and technology sectors, each with nine female leaders, and then venture capital sector with five.

The banking and financial services sector alone accounts for 40 percent of the top ten positions, with Pakistani Shaista Asif and Indian Alisha Moopen standing out as prominent non-Arab leaders in these spots.

PM takes

The conference also gathered US Vice-President J.D. Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio along with nearly 100 foreign and defense ministers, and dozens of lawmakers and representatives of non-government organizations.

The Kuwaiti delegation to the conference is headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who arrived in Munich Thursday.

Conference's head Christoph Heugens welcomed the attendees, urging them for a minute of silence for the victims of the car-ramping attack that took place in Munich on Thursday.

Heugens affirmed the conference's security role in bringing views and dialogue closer together to reach many solutions to conflicts in the world and challenges facing international group.

Meanwhile, Steinmeier gave an inaugural speech at the conference, condemning Thursday's attacks and wishing that the participants would hold dialogued based on respect in order to discuss international crises and conflicts.

He pointed to the Ukrainian war and its security importance to Europe, saying the war caused new challenges to this continent.

He urged Europeans and the US to continue offering aid to Ukraine to help it face what he termed as "the Russian aggression".

Furthermore, he criticized US President Donald Trump's plan aiming to re-locating Gazans, noting that he has noticed strong rejection during his recent visit to Jordan regarding this matter.

According to the agenda, the conference's first day focuses on dozens activities and panel discussions on challenges facing international security topped with governance, democracy flexibility and climate security.

Moreover, the conference is set to discuss cybersecurity, geopolitical obstacles, external interference and international disputes, along some other key topics over the three days.

The three-day conference is being held this year in light of key international changes, including a new US administration and an early election in Germany as well as a new European Union legislative term.

Kuwait powers

The land area designated for these centers will span 103,000 square meters, with a capacity of up to 19 megawatts, and expected revenues of \$31 million.

Kuwait's regional leadership in innovation, technology, and data centers is attributed to the entry of major players like GDH, Omniva, and Khazna data centers, as well as the presence of major cloud service providers such as Google Cloud.

Kuwait's regional dominance is also evident in its adoption of "smart city" concepts and its use of blockchain technology and financial technology (FinTech) to enhance urban life. Blockchain has bolstered governance, transparency, and efficient public services, and FinTech solutions have improved financial inclusion and digital transactions.

The report stated that the New Kuwait 2035 vision outlines a strategic roadmap for economic diversification, community empowerment, and sustainability, with the aim of reducing reliance on oil, promoting innovation and improving infrastructure.

Through initiatives like supporting entrepreneurship, modernizing infrastructure, and investing in renewable energy, Kuwait is working to build a prosperous and inclusive society as well as strengthening global partnerships and positioning itself as a leading hub for innovation and sustainable development.

Kuwait is connected to a number of submarine cables, which support data center investments. These include cables such as FALCON, FOG, GBICS/MENA, and the Kuwait-Iran cable, in addition to the 2Africa submarine cable currently under construction and expected to be operational by the end of 2024.

The report explained that the 2Africa cable will have a design capacity of up to 180 terabytes per second to serve the Middle East and Africa region. It will utilize ASN's advanced spatial division multiplexing SDMI technology, enabling the deployment of 16 fiber pairs, and doubling the capacity of legacy systems. The cable will also incorporate optical switching for flexible bandwidth management, increase burial depth by 50 percent, and avoid areas prone to subsea disturbances in order to enhance overall reliability and availability.

MEW launches upgraded smart fingerprint system

Sahel app enables quick water requests

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy revealed the launch of the second version of the smart fingerprint system application for employees in collaboration with the Information Systems Department, Systems Development Monitoring, the Project Implementation Department, and the fingerprint system team at the ministry.

The sources explained that the ministry, in coordination with relevant government agencies, has linked the smart fingerprint system with the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) with the aim of enhancing the technical and opera-

tional security of the application and ensuring its efficiency and accuracy in various sectors and external ministry sites, particularly in power plants. Meanwhile, the ministry announced the commencement of water connection requests from residents of South Abdullah Al-Mubarak City, Block 1 with 810 plots.

The ministry explained in a press statement issued on Thursday that residents can easily submit connection requests via the Sahel application or the ministry's official website.

KU's Practical Education Center holds orientation meeting for field training

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: The Practical Education Center organized an orientation meeting titled "Heading to the Field ... From Here We Start" at the Conference Center at Kuwait University (KU).

The meeting was aimed at providing students with basic information about field training requirements and familiarizing them with the time plan and mechanisms for practical application.

The event was held under the sponsorship and in the presence of Dean of the College of Education Dr. Issa Al-Balhan, and supervised by Director of the Practical Education Center Dr. Sultan Al-Sahli.

A total of 971 students from various educational specializations participated in the meeting.

Two lectures were held during the meeting. Professor Hiba Al-Abhouh discussed the importance of field training, the challenges students may encounter, and effective strategies to overcome them.

Director of the Practical Education Center Dr. Sultan Al-Sahli presented the second lecture, outlining the time plan for the Practical Education course for the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year.



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Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, co-chairs the 10th China-UK Strategic Dialogue with British Foreign Secretary David Lammy, in London, Britain on Feb 13. (Xinhua)

China and Britain need to strengthen dialogue, communication: Wang

China and Britain need to strengthen dialogue and communication, said visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Thursday when he co-chaired the 10th China-UK Strategic Dialogue with British Foreign

Secretary David Lammy. Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said the meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and British Prime Minister

Keir Starmer in November has provided guidance and given impetus to the improvement and enhancement of bilateral relations.

The two sides have since resumed exchanges in various fields

and mechanisms of communication, with positive outcomes. This has boosted the confidence of the two societies and has sent a positive message to the world, Wang said. (Xinhua)

Modi, Trump outline plans to deepen defense partnership

SRINAGAR, India, Feb 15, (AP): There was guarded optimism among military experts in India as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump outlined plans to ramp up sales of defense

systems to New Delhi, including F-35 stealth fighter jets, to deepen the US-India strategic relationship. "Defense sector is a big money, and India happens to be one of the top buyers in the world," said Lt Gen Vinod Bhatia, India's director-general for military operations from 2012 to 2014. "As long as we buy, Trump will be happy but it's surely going to expand our conventional deterrence."

The meeting signaled that "defense diplomacy is the core of diplomacy these days," Bhatia said.

In a joint statement at the White House, the two leaders announced plans to sign a new 10-year framework later this year for the US-India Major Defense Partnership.

Modi and Trump "pledged to elevate military cooperation

across all domains - air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace - through enhanced training, exercises, and operations, incorporating the latest technologies," the statement said.

The leaders also "committed to break new ground to support and sustain the overseas deployments of the US and Indian militaries in the Indo-Pacific, including enhanced logistics and intelligence sharing," the statement said.

While Indian military experts have long sought to diversify national defense procurements, analysts say it will take years to reduce New Delhi's dependency on Russian arms, even with expanded defense cooperation with the US.

Raja Mohan, an analyst at the Institute of South Asian Studies in Singapore, said expansion in defense cooperation would take time.

"What India wants is co-production and more research and development in India. It's a long-term project," he said.

It is difficult for India to remain dependent on Russia for defense equipment owing to difficulties obtaining parts and upgrades. However, a deal with the US for F-35 stealth fighter jets will not fill India's immediate need for more than 100 aircraft, said Rahul Bedi, an independent defense analyst based in India.



Modi

Hundreds march in Boston to support democracy, protest policies of Trump, Musk

Trump's remarks on Canada becoming 51st state raise lot of questions

WASHINGTON, Feb 15, (AP): US President Donald Trump has repeatedly said Canada should be the 51st US state as he proposes to erase the 5,525-mile-long border that separates the two countries. The very notion is ludicrous to Canadians and the hurdles to transforming it into a state are sky high.

But in Trump's thinking, the traditional Lower 48 states would become the contiguous 50 as the Canadian territory between the US mainland and Alaska disappears, leaving Hawaii as the only non-continental state.

"If people wanted to play the game right, it would be 100% certain that they'd become a state," Trump said recently.

Canada at first reacted as though Trump must be joking, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said flatly his country would never be the 51st state. Trudeau more recently suggested behind closed doors that Trump's sustained annexation calls may not be just light talk and appear to be "a real thing."

Congress has to approve accepting a new state.

It takes only a House majority, but Senate filibuster rules require a minimum of 60 votes in the 100-member chamber to bring a bill to the floor - an

insurmountable threshold for all kinds of key legislation.

The Constitution's Admissions Clause, Article IV, Section 3, states: "New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new State shall be formed or erected within the Jurisdiction of any other State; nor any State be formed by the Junction of two or more States, or Parts of States, without the Consent of the Legislatures of the States concerned as well as of the Congress."

Any measure approving a new state that clears Congress would also have to be signed into law by the president. In the case of Canada, Trump has made it clear he would be eager to do so.

Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, a Trump ally, joked on X when all 50 states certified Trump's Electoral College victory last month, "They skipped Canada. We'll fix that next time!" No major legislation is advancing that would extend an invitation to statehood to America's northern neighbor.

To say that most Canadian leaders aren't interested in becoming a state would be an understatement. Ontario Premier Doug Ford, head of Canada's most populous province, has spun out



Hundreds of protesters march in downtown Boston and chant 'stop the coup' to condemn a 'billionaire takeover' of government and Trump administration policies. (AP)

a counteroffer for Trump.

"How about, if we buy Alaska, and we'll throw in Minnesota and Minneapolis at the same time," he said, adding of Trump's suggestion: "It's not realistic."

There have been multiple past path-

ways to statehood - from the absorption of the 13 colonies under the Articles of Confederation, to Congress formally agreeing to Texas' request to be annexed as the 28th state.

Most states were added after Congress accepted a petition from some

territorial legislative body, which could include legislatures that Congress itself suggested forming as part of the process. Canada would probably have to have a referendum to gauge voters' interests in joining the US before more detailed aspects of the process could begin - and that's almost certainly a non-starter.

Also:

BOSTON: Chanting "Stop the coup" and carrying signs including "I Love Democracy" and "Resist," hundreds of people rallied Friday in Boston against the policies of President Donald Trump and his billionaire adviser Elon Musk.

The peaceful rally in freezing conditions was supported by 100 civil rights, environmental and progressive groups from Massachusetts. Speaker after speaker decried administration policies targeting marginalized communities and urged the crowd to oppose what they called an attack on democracy.

"I'm here because I'm extremely concerned about my grandchildren, especially my granddaughter who's not going to have the same rights that I have had in terms of controlling my body and

all the rights that we've experienced and I've grown up with," said Diane Bleier, a 76-year-old from Lexington, at the rally in Boston Common.

"They're going to be taken away if this evidence continues to run rampant over the government and destroy our rights and destroy our democracy," she continued.

Others criticized what they see as a dismantling of the federal government.

"It's important to stand up and protest and not just stay home and do nothing," said Ellen Epstein, a Medford resident holding a sign that read "Stop the Trumpster Fire." "I feel compelled to stand up for what's right. What is happening now is very wrong."

Others stressed the need to support and protect immigrants which have been the target of Trump administration policies in the early days of the administration.

"Our government is trying to erase our people, the people that make up our beautiful country including queer people, trans people, immigrants, Black and Indigenous people of color," Logan Rubio, a 27-year-old Boston resident holding a sign that said "Queerness is Healing." "It's vile and disgusting."

Panama receives first plane of US deportees from other nations: Mulino

PANAMA CITY, Feb 15, (AP): Panama has received the first US flight carrying deportees from other nations as the Trump administration takes Panama up on its offer to act as a stopover for expelled migrants, the Central American nation's president said.

"Yesterday a flight from the United States Air Force arrived with 119 people from diverse nationalities of the world," President José Raúl Mulino said Thursday in his weekly press briefing. He said there were migrants

from China, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan, among others, aboard.

The president said it was the first of three planned flights that were expected to total about 360 people. "It's not something massive," he said.

The migrants were expected to be moved to a shelter in Panama's Darien region before being returned to their countries, Mulino said.

Asked later Thursday why Panama was acting as a stopover for these deportations, Deputy Foreign Minister

Carlos Ruiz Hernández said that it was something the US government had requested.

He also said the US government was paying for the repatriations through UN immigration agencies.

The migrants who arrived Wednesday, had been detained after crossing the US border and did not have criminal records, he said.

Last week, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met with Mulino in Panama. While US President Donald Trump's demands to retake control of the Panama Canal dominated the visit, Mulino also discussed Panama's efforts to slow migration through the Darien Gap and he offered Panama as a bridge to send US deportees back to their countries.

Rubio secured agreements on the trip with Guatemala and El Salvador as well, to accept migrants from other nations in what was seen as the laying groundwork for expanding US capacity to speedily deport migrants.

Migration through the Darien Gap connecting Panama and Colombia was down about 90% in January compared to the same month a year earlier.

Since Mulino entered office last year, Panama has made dozens of deportation flights, most funded by the US government.

Ruiz said that Panama "has been completely willing to participate and cooperate in this request they have made of us."



Panama's President Jose Mulino, left, and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrive for a meeting at the presidential palace in Panama City on Feb 2. (AP)

M23 advances into eastern Congo's second major city of Bukavu: residents

GOMA, Congo, Feb 15, (AP): Residents and business owners in eastern Congo's second largest city sat in wait on Saturday morning after a night of loud gunfire marking the ongoing advance of Rwanda-backed rebels.

Families remained indoors and shops remained closed as M23 fighters entered the outskirts of Bukavu - a city of about 1.3 million people that lies 63 miles (101 kms) south of Goma, the region's largest city taken by the rebels last month.

The group, backed by about 4,000 troops from neighboring Rwanda, is the most prominent of more than 100 armed groups vying for control of Congo's mineral-rich east. Its southward expansion encompasses more territory than rebels had previously seized and poses an unprecedented challenge to the central government's authority.

The rebellion has killed at least 2,000 people in and around Goma and



M23 rebels escort government soldiers and police who surrendered to an undisclosed location in Goma, Democratic republic of the Congo on Jan 30. (AP)

left hundreds of thousands of displaced stranded, the UN and Congolese authorities have said.

The rebels on Friday also claimed to have seized a second airport in the region, in the town of Kavumu outside Bukavu. The UN warned that the recent escalation of fighting with government forces has left 350,000 internally displaced people without shelter.

The Associated Press could not immediately confirm who was in control of the strategically important airport, which Congolese forces have used to resupply troops and humanitarian groups used to import aid.

Government officials and local civil society leaders did not immediately comment, though Congo's Communications Ministry said the rebels had violated ceasefire agreements and attacked Congolese troops working to avoid urban warfare and violence in Bukavu.



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy speaks during the Munich Security Conference at the Bayerischer Hof Hotel in Munich, Germany on Feb 15. (AP)

Zelenskyy, Scholz take strong stands as new policies under Trump jolts Europe

MUNICH, Feb 15, (AP): Two top European leaders stiffened their spines Saturday over unsettling new policies from Washington under President Donald Trump, as Ukraine's president urged creation of an "armed forces of Europe" and the leader of Germany denounced meddling in its election after US Vice President JD Vance met with a German far-right leader.

Strident speeches from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Day 2 of the Munich Security Conference testified to the impact of a blizzard of Trump decisions that have resonated at home and in Europe, notably his hopes to end the Russia-Ukraine war and nurture perceived allies on the continent.

Ramping up his desire for a more muscular and mighty Europe, Zelenskyy said Ukraine's three-year fight

against an invading Russian army has proved that a foundation exists for the creation of a European army that has long been discussed among some continental leaders.

"I really believe that time has come," he said. "The armed forces of Europe must be created."

It's unclear whether the idea will catch on with European leaders. Zelenskyy has sought greater military and economic support from the European Union for years and repeatedly warned that other parts of Europe could be vulnerable to Russia's expansionist ambitions too.

While the bloc - along with the United States - has been one of Kyiv's strongest backers, pockets of political disagreement in EU over its approach to Moscow and economic realities, including national debt levels that have crimped defense spending, have gotten

in the way of greater support.

Zelenskyy alluded to a phone conversation between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin this week, after which Trump said he and Putin would likely meet soon to negotiate a peace deal over Ukraine - breaking with the Biden administration's harder line against Moscow over Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Trump later assured Zelenskyy that he, too, would have a seat at the table to end the war. The Ukrainian leader insisted Europe should also have one. "Ukraine will never accept deals made behind our backs without our involvement, and the same rule should apply to all of Europe," Zelenskyy said. "A few days ago, President Trump told me about his conversation with Putin. Not once did he mention that America needs Europe at the table. That says a lot."

America

'Dismiss charges against Adams':

The Justice Department asked a court Friday to dismiss corruption charges against New York City Mayor Eric Adams, with a top official from Washington intervening after federal prosecutors in Manhattan rebuffed his demands to drop the case and some quit in protest.

Acting Deputy Attorney General Emil Bove, the department's second-in-command, and lawyers from the public

integrity section and criminal division filed paperwork asking to end the case. They contend it was marred by appearances of impropriety and that letting it continue would interfere with the mayor's reelection bid. A judge must still



Bove

approve the request. (AP)

□ □ □

Wyoming tunnel crash kills 2:

A fiery pileup Friday at an Interstate 80 tunnel in Wyoming killed at least two people, seriously injured at least five others and shut down the highway.

The crash involved an unknown number of trucks and other vehicles inside and outside the tunnel at Green River. Black smoke and exploding tires made getting inside difficult for rescuers, Wyoming Highway Patrol trooper Nicholas Warren said. (AP)

NBK-Egypt reports EGP 7.3 billion in net profit in FY 2024

Recording a remarkable growth of 81%

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: National Bank of Kuwait - Egypt (NBK-Egypt) reported net profits of EGP 7.3 billion (Equivalent to KWD 51.9 million) for the financial year 2024 compared to EGP 4.021 billion (Equivalent to KWD 41.4 million) reported in 2023 marking an impressive 81% increase compared to financial year 2023.

Net Operating Income stood at EGP 13.5 billion by the end of FY2024, recording a substantial increase of 57% from EGP 8.7 billion recorded by the end of FY2023. In the meantime, Net Interest Income grew by 66%, reaching EGP 11.6 billion compared to EGP 7 billion in FY2023.

Meanwhile, Net Operating Income (excluding interests) increased to EGP 1.9 billion in FY2024, compared to EGP 1.7 billion in FY2023, up by 17%, while Cost to Net Operating Income dropped from 28% in FY2023 to 21.2% in FY2024.

Total assets reached EGP 196 billion by the end of FY2024, up by 50% compared to EGP 131 billion by the end of FY2023. Furthermore, total loans and credit facilities expanded to EGP 104 billion in FY2024, reflecting a growth rate of 37% compared to EGP 76 billion recorded at the end of FY2023. Additionally, customer deposits increased to EGP 160 billion by the end of FY2024, up from EGP 106 billion at the end of FY2023, representing a growth rate of 51%.

Furthermore, the Return on Average Assets (ROAA) improved to 4.5% by the end of FY2024, compared to 3.4% by the end of FY2023, while the Return on Average Equity (ROAE) increased to 39.2% in FY2024, up from 30.7% in FY2023.

Commenting on the financial results announced by NBK-Egypt, Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer, National Bank of Kuwait, and Chairman of NBK-Egypt, said: "NBK-Egypt delivered record profits in 2024, underscoring the success of its operational strategy and reaffirming its trajectory toward further strengthening its position in the Egyptian market. As NBK Group's most significant market outside Kuwait, Egypt holds substantial growth potential, driven by its promising opportunities and positive economic outlook."

Al-Bahar highlighted that NBK's operations in Egypt are among the group's most profitable, delivering the highest returns on equity and assets.

Al-Bahar emphasized that the sustained expansion of the balance sheet and the growth of the bank's financial indicators reaffirm the success of its business diversification strategy and accelerated digital transformation. This approach aims to strengthen market share, particularly in retail banking, within the region's most populous country and a key hub for investment opportunities.

"We are committed to enhancing service quality, expanding our geographical presence, and reaching a more diverse customer base. This progress is driven by the significant advancements in our digital infrastructure, information technology, and alternative electronic channels, which have positioned the bank as a strong competitor with a distinct presence in the Egyptian banking sector. This comes amid the rising demand for banking services and the increasing momentum of financial inclusion," Al-Bahar stated.

"Egypt is a key growth market for NBK Group and a long-term strategic investment, where the Group remains committed to reinforcing its presence and strengthening its position," Al-Bahar confirmed.

Meanwhile, Vice Chairman, CEO, and Managing Director of National Bank of Kuwait-Egypt, Mr. Yasser El-Tayeb, said: "The bank's strong financial performance at the end of 2024 surpassed expectations and targets, despite challenges and exceptional circumstances affecting the business environment both locally and globally. This achievement underscores the bank's resilience and prudent business model, reinforcing its ability to sustain success and growth."

Al-Tayeb emphasized that the bank's growth is balanced



Shaikha Al-Bahar



Yasser El-Tayeb

Al-Bahar:

In 2024, we delivered the highest profit in the bank's history, driven by strong operational performance across our business segments

Financial indicators reaffirm that we are on the right path toward further expansion and market share growth

NBK-Egypt remains one of the fastest-growing banks, strengthening its presence with a distinctive footprint in the Egyptian market

Our strategic focus is on advancing banking transactions and enhancing their quality to meet the rising demand

El-Tayeb:

The bank continues to deliver strong performance, surpassing expectations across all financial indicators

We remain focused on strengthening our position in both the corporate and retail banking sectors

NBK-Egypt continues its expansion in digital services and products to cater to a diverse customer base

Aligned with global trends, we are committed to supporting sustainable finance and the transition to a green economy

CSR remains a core priority, reinforcing our commitment to long-term community impact.



across all business activities, ensuring efficiency and a risk profile aligned with sustainable expansion. This success is driven by a prudent strategy that meets the evolving needs

of both corporate and individual clients while diversifying income streams.

Al-Tayeb noted that the bank's income sources stem

from credit operations in the corporate sector, alongside a rapidly expanding retail banking segment, which has grown significantly in recent years. The bank's credit portfolio reflects a diverse client base, encompassing large, medium, and small enterprises, while its retail banking portfolio serves a broad spectrum of customers. This diversity underscores the strength and stability of the bank's revenue streams. He further emphasized the bank's commitment to strengthening its position in retail banking by introducing more advanced services and products tailored to meet customers' evolving financial needs and aspirations.

El-Tayeb further emphasized NBK-Egypt's commitment to supporting the global shift toward sustainable finance and the transition to a green economy. The bank actively backs environmentally friendly projects that promote sustainability and increased reliance on renewable energy while exploring solutions to mitigate climate change and reduce carbon emissions. He highlighted that sustainable finance has become a vital tool for ensuring long-term financial stability and resilience.

He also affirmed the bank's strong commitment to leveraging technology and digital channels to enhance its competitive edge in the banking sector. Recognizing their pivotal role, NBK-Egypt continues to expand its electronic services and encourage broader customer adoption of digital payments. This aligns with the broader strategy of the Egyptian government and the Central Bank of Egypt to promote financial inclusion, integrate new customer segments into the formal banking system, and drive the transition toward a less cash-dependent economy.

El-Tayeb concluded by highlighting NBK-Egypt's steadfast commitment to social responsibility, emphasizing that since the Group's entry into the Egyptian market in 2007, the bank has actively supported the local community. Through partnerships with reputable civil society organizations, NBK-Egypt channels its development efforts toward impactful initiatives, reinforcing its role as a responsible corporate citizen. Social responsibility remains a cornerstone of the bank's sustainability strategy, contributing to national development across key areas, including:

- Healthcare provision
- Education and employment support
- Environmental conservation
- Social solidarity
- Development of underserved areas
- Economic development

About the Bank:

NBK-Egypt has a vast network of 53 branches spread over premium locations in various Egyptian governorates and cities, including Cairo, Giza, Alexandria, Delta, Red Sea, Port Said, Upper Egypt, and the industrial zones in 6th of October 10th of Ramadan cities. The Bank is also privileged to be among the elite banks within the Egyptian market that offer Islamic banking services in addition to its conventional products throughout its Islamic branches. Moreover, NBK-Egypt has a vast network of ATMs nationwide to service the Bank's clients around the clock. Furthermore, the bank offers a wide range of digital and electronic services, providing its customers with a unique banking experience. These services enable customers to conveniently conduct their banking transactions anytime and anywhere, eliminating the need to visit the bank for every transaction.

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) was incorporated in 1952 as the first local bank and the first shareholding company in Kuwait and the Gulf region. NBK continues to enjoy collectively one of the highest ratings among all banks in the Middle East from the three international rating agencies Moody's (A1), Standard and Poor's (A), and Fitch Ratings (A+). The Bank's ratings are supported by its strong financial indicators, asset quality, and high capitalization, in addition to its highly recognized and very stable management team, as well as strategic vision and stable funding base. NBK enjoys the most comprehensive banking presence with a local and international network with international presence in the world's leading financial centers including China, UK, Paris, USA, and Singapore, in addition to its regional presence in Egypt, Lebanon, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and the UAE.

Other Voices

China & India seek alternative oil suppliers

Oil prices increase despite Russian export tightening

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

Oil prices have suddenly started climbing due to concerns over the tightening of Russian oil exports to China and India. This shift is likely to push these nations to seek additional oil volumes from Gulf suppliers and African crude oil sources.



Al-Harami

Meanwhile, Russian gas continues to flow to Europe through established pipelines, with little impact from sanctions.

At the same time, the U.S. administration is trying to limit Iranian oil exports to reduce its supply to below 500,000 barrels per day, down from about 1.5 million barrels. This action, along with reduced global supply, is expected to push oil prices beyond the current \$75 per barrel.

The firmness of oil prices is unlikely to result in a decrease in the short term, as the current U.S. administration hopes.

U.S. producers cannot afford to see prices drop much below \$80 per barrel, as this would not cover their production costs. In addition, lower prices could hinder their goal of increasing production to 15 million to 20 million barrels per day by 2030.

In the meantime, OPEC+ is waiting to release its captive oil volumes, approximately six million barrels, which are readily available to hit the markets. These volumes have been held back for two years to cover investment costs without any return. Most OPEC members are

eager to resume production and release these volumes after two years of captivity.

With the current tightness in crude oil supply, the market seems ready to absorb additional volumes from OPEC, especially if Russia and Iran are forced to curtail their sales under the U.S. administration's policies.

As of today, OPEC is producing around 27 million barrels per day, excluding Russian supply, and has six million barrels of spare capacity. This spare capacity could meet any additional demand, particularly if it involves replacing oil supplies from Russia or Iran. Some OPEC members are also eager to be allowed to release their crude oil onto the markets.

The current oil situation is driving higher prices for crude oil with higher sulfur content, such as Kuwait crude, which is selling above Brent crude, the lower sulfur variant. Brazil is charging \$5 per barrel per annum over Brent crude oil. Also, the shipping costs to China have increased by \$2 compared to previous months. China is trying hard to secure any available crude to address concerns over tightening supply from Russia.

Oil prices are unlikely to decrease, as the market faces pressure from a tightening supply of more than 6-7 million barrels if Russia and Iran are forced to curtail production to the minimum.

With higher oil prices, inflation is expected to rise globally, and this will certainly displease consumers, who may place the blame on OPEC. However, OPEC has nothing to do with this. It is working on releasing more crude oil volumes into the market to help ease global inflationary pressures.
Email: nafikuwaiti@yahoo.com

Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud pushes for oil sector integration

KNPC CEO confirms job stability post-KIPIC merger

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) Wadha Al-Khatib, who also serves as acting CEO of Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC), confirmed the KIPIC Board of Directors' commitment to guarantee job stability and security for all KIPIC employees after the merger with KNPC.

Al-Khatib also stressed that Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) prioritizes protecting the rights and privileges of all Kuwaitis employed in the oil sector.

The final stages of the merger are currently being implemented with the approval of the Supreme Petroleum Council. Once the final touches are completed, an official announcement will be made about the dissolution of KIPIC and the transfer of its assets to KNPC.

After the merger, all the legal demands of KIPIC employees will be the responsibility of KNPC; while fully protecting the end-of-service rights and validity of employee contracts with the same benefits, in addition to expediting procedures for including the nature of hard work.

The merger of oil companies affiliated with KPC into four entities was proposed in 1999 and it has been reactivated since the Corona pandemic.

CEO of KPC Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud Al-Sabah has been actively pursuing the merger; which will lead to improved performance, oversight and reduced financial waste.

Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud's meetings with the boards of directors of the labor unions of oil companies aim to reassure all Kuwaiti employees that their rights and job privileges will be protected after the merger.

Natural gas reserves in GCC reach 21.4% of global total

GCC leads in global energy indexes for oil & gas

MUSCAT, Feb 15, (KUNA): The Gulf States had first rankings in global energy indexes in terms of crude oil exports, production and reserves, the Gulf Cooperation Council Statistical Center (GCCSC) said on Saturday.

The GCC states also came first in natural gas reserves, second in its exports, and third in marketed natural gas production, the center added in a report issued on Saturday.

GCC States' crude oil outcomes hit 17 million barrels per day in 2023, making up 23.2 percent of the total global production of crude oil and a decrease of 6.8 percent compared with 2022.

The states' crude oil reserves in 2023 reached 511.9 billion barrels, making up 32.6 percent of the global reserves and an average annual growth of .03 percent between 2014 and 2023, the report noted.

In 2023, GCC states' crude oil exports hit 12.4 million barrels per day, causing a 28.2 percent of the world's total exports and a decrease of 8.2 percent compared with 2022.

GCC states' oil derivatives exports hit about 1518.6 million barrels, making up 13.4 percent

of global oil derivatives exports and an increase of 7.1 percent compared to 2022, it pointed out.

Oil derivatives imports amounted to 212.3 million barrels, with an average annual growth rate of 0.1 percent.

Gas oil/diesel outcome recorded the highest rate among petroleum derivatives in 2023, reaching 660.4 million barrels followed by gasoline with 336.2 million barrels, and kerosene and jet fuel with 319.4 million barrels, it stated.

Gasoline consumption in GCC countries hit about 336.6 million barrels in 2023 while gas oil/diesel consumption was 299.7 million barrels. The rest of derivatives varied between 34.8 and 268.3 million barrels.

GCC States' natural gas reserves amounted to about 44.195 billion cubic meters in 2023, making up 21.4 percent of the world's total reserves, and an increase in reserves of 0.2 percent compared to 2022.

GCC natural gas exports hit 180.9 billion cubic meters in 2023 that made up 13.1 percent of the world's total exports and an average annual growth rate 2.5 percent during the period from

2014 to 2023, it said.

GCC countries' outcome of marketed natural gas in 2023 reached about 464.2 billion cubic meters, 10.8 percent of the total global production, recording a rise of 1.4 percent compared to 2022.

On renewable energy indicators, the capacity of GCC renewable energy stations was 10,742 megawatts in 2023, a rise of 74.7 percent compared to 2022, thanks to the implementation of policies related to the use of renewable energy instead of fossil fuel.

GCC states' energy produced from stations reached about 14,403 gigawatts per hour in 2023, a rise of 72.4 percent compared to 2022.

GCC electricity production hit about 794.9 thousand gigawatts per hour in 2022, with an average of about 4.7 percent during the period from 2019 to 2023, with an increase of 1.2 percent compared to the year 2022.

Electricity consumption recorded about 732.5 GW per hour, an increase of 1.3 percent compared to the year 2022, the report concluded.

Brent and WTI futures see decline in Friday's trading

Kuwaiti crude oil price rises to \$78.18 per barrel

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti crude oil price rose by 76 cents during Friday's trading to hit USD 78.18 per barrel (pb), compared with USD 77.42 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC)

said Saturday.

Brent futures dropped 28 cents to USD 74.74 pb and West Texas Intermediate's (WTI) futures went down 55 cents to USD 70.74 pb.

Al Khiran Mall hosts engaging activities before Gulf Bank draw announcement

Islam Khattab wins world's largest cash prize of KD 2 million at Gulf Bank's AIDanah draw event

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: In a remarkable milestone, Gulf Bank has announced Islam Mohamed Mahmoud Khattab as the grand prize winner of the AIDanah Millionaire account, awarding an incredible KD 2 million – the largest cash prize linked to a bank account in the world, as recognized by Guinness World Records.

The announcement took place during a spectacular event at Al Khiran Mall on Thursday, February 13, 2025. Broadcast live on 360 FM and Gulf Bank's social media channels, the event was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young.

In the lead-up to the highly anticipated draw, attendees took part in a range of engaging activities from 4 PM to 7 PM, building excitement for the live announcement between 7 PM and 8 PM.

As anticipation filled the air at Al Khiran Mall, the moment everyone had been waiting for arrived – the winner's name was announced and contacted live to receive the life-changing news. Overwhelmed with joy, the winner expressed heartfelt gratitude to Gulf Bank, acknowledging how this incredible prize has transformed their future.

Financial Goals

During the event, Acting General Manager of Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank, Mr. Bader Al-Ali, welcomed the attendees and extended his warm congratulations to the winner. He expressed his appreciation to the winner for choosing the AIDanah Millionaire account as a means to achieve their financial goals and wished all customers the best of luck in the upcoming draws.

Mr. Al-Ali noted that those who did not win the KD 2 million prize still have a chance to participate in the upcoming semi-annual draw, which offers a grand prize of KD 1 million, in addition to the monthly and quarterly draws.

He added, "We take great pride in providing our customers with opportunities that can change their lives for the better and help them achieve their aspirations through the AIDanah Millionaire account. At Gulf Bank, our mission is to be a trusted partner in supporting our customers' financial success."

Mr. Al-Ali also highlighted the remarkable advancements in Gulf Bank's services, including enhancements to the mobile banking application, innovative products, digital banking solutions, branch services, ATMs, and the contact center. These improvements ensure that Gulf Bank continues to offer the most seamless, efficient, and advanced banking experience, exceeding customer expectations.

He concluded by reaffirming Gulf Bank's commitment to continuous investment in digital transformation and employee development, strengthening the Bank's position as a forward-

Bader Al-Ali:

- We congratulate the winner and wish the best of luck to all other customers in the KD 1 million draw, as well as the monthly and quarterly draws.
- We take pride in offering this valuable opportunity to transform our customers' lives and help them achieve their dreams and aspirations.
- Gulf Bank's services are among the most seamless, efficient, and advanced in the banking sector, supported by technology that goes beyond customers' expectations.
- The Bank will continue to invest generously to improve the customer experience and strengthen Gulf Bank's position as a forward-thinking institution.

Najla Aleisa:

- We are excited to continue rewarding our customers who choose to save with the AIDanah Millionaire Account.
- We encourage everyone to continue depositing into their AIDanah account to increase their chances of winning in the upcoming draws.
- We offer a variety of banking solutions that cater to customer needs, making saving easy and convenient.
- For over 25 years, the AIDanah Millionaire account has helped us build strong relationships with our customers and achieve significant milestones



Najla Aleisa with Manal Barakat and Yaser Sulaiman.



Bader Al-Ali and Najla Aleisa after signing the check.



Gulf Bank partners with calligrapher Shaimaa Al-Azmi to elegantly inscribe the grand prize winner's name on the big check.



Ahmed Al-Mutairi calls the winner.



Neo account mascot along with a fun drawing activity for children during the grand draw event.



Representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry conducts the draw.

thinking financial institution dedicated to delivering an exceptional customer experience.

Promoting Savings Culture

Gulf Bank's Chief Marketing Officer, Mrs. Najla Aleisa, said: "Our goal today was to create a vibrant and engaging experience for participants and attendees at the annual draw by hosting various activities, awarding cash prizes, and promoting a culture of saving and financial planning."

Mrs. Aleisa emphasized that the AIDanah Millionaire ac-

count is a key savings solution from Gulf Bank, providing customers with an easy way to save, along with a range of other banking products designed to support their financial goals.

"For over 25 years, the AIDanah Millionaire account has helped us build strong relationships with our customers and achieve significant milestones in reinforcing sustainability principles. We have also launched impactful initiatives and supported events that bring positive value to the commu-

nity," she added.

She concluded by expressing her excitement to continue rewarding customers who choose to save with the AIDanah Millionaire account, and encouraged everyone to keep saving to increase their chances of winning in the upcoming draws.

Supporting the Diraya Campaign for Financial Awareness

As part of its commitment to enhancing financial awareness across all segments of society and supporting the "Diraya"

banking awareness campaign – led by the Central Bank of Kuwait in collaboration with the Kuwait Banking Association – Gulf Bank actively engaged attendees through interactive competitions and educational messages. The event featured a quiz on key campaign topics, offering cash prizes to the winners.

Supporting Young Talent

As part of its dedication to nurturing young Kuwaiti talent and empowering women, Gulf Bank partnered with cal-

ligrapher Shaimaa Al-Azmi to elegantly inscribe the grand prize winner's name on the big check.

Open an AIDanah Account in Moments

Open an AIDanah Millionaire account with just KD 200 in moments by visiting a branch, using the Gulf Bank app or website, or calling the Bank – unlocking your chance to enter all upcoming draws.

Kuwait Television Band Brings Heritage to Life

The Kuwait Television Band presented a diverse selection of folk, national, and traditional songs, with a special focus on maritime songs that received enthusiastic engagement from audiences of all ages.

Founded in 1978, the Television Arts Band is a Kuwaiti folk arts group established under the initiative of former Minister of Information Mohammed Al-Sanousi, and the suggestion of singer Shadi Al-Khaleej. Their mission was to preserve, develop, and celebrate Kuwait's rich cultural heritage.

Backstage Group Performance

Backstage Group, led by renowned artist Mohammed Al-Hamli, participated in the AIDanah draw celebrations with captivating performances and traditional songs.

Engaging Young Savers with Neo Mascot & Activities

As part of its commitment to supporting customers of all ages, Gulf Bank featured the Neo account mascot along with a fun drawing activity for children during the grand draw event. The Neo account offers parents a simple and secure way to invest in their children's financial future while instilling the importance of saving and financial responsibility from an early age.

Designed for children up to the age of 14, the account can be opened by parents at any Gulf Bank branch with no minimum balance or fees.

Wishing Wall for Kuwait's National Day Celebrations

As part of Kuwait's National Day celebrations in February, a dedicated wall was placed in the mall for visitors to share their heartfelt wishes for the country.

Empowering Youth Through Sports

As part of its ongoing commitment to youth and encouraging sports participation, Gulf Bank organized various sports and youth-focused events that attracted a large audience.

Youngest AIDanah Millionaire Announces The Winner

The 21st AIDanah millionaire, Alaa Youssef Adel Al-Mutairi, made history last year as the youngest winner of the world's biggest prize and the first to receive the grand prize after its increase to KD 2 million. This year, she had the honor of activating the automated draw system to announce the 2025 grand prize winner.



Kuwait Television Band presents diverse selection of folk, national, and traditional songs.



Artist Mohammed Al-Hamli, participated in the AIDanah draw celebrations with captivating performances and traditional songs.

AIDanah Millionaire account hits KD 55 million in total prizes since 1998

Gulf Bank to unveil 24th AIDanah Millionaire with KD 1 million prize

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Mark your calendars for July 17, 2025, as Gulf Bank unveils the 24th AIDanah Millionaire with a KD 1 million grand prize.

- A prize that brings joy and inspires bigger dreams with Gulf Bank.
- Exciting rewards and exclusive benefits with AIDanah – the leading savings account in Kuwait.
- The only account in Kuwait where your chances roll over to the next year.
- Maintain a deposit of KD 200 or more to increase your chances of winning.

The winner of the KD 2 million grand prize in the annual AIDanah Account draw is officially the 23rd AIDanah Millionaire in the account's history. Through its draws, AIDanah provides customers with countless chances to win significant cash prizes throughout the year, inspiring hope, joy, and bigger dreams with Gulf Bank.

In 2025, the AIDanah draw schedule offers an exciting line-up of prizes. Alongside the KD 2 million grand prize, the semi-annual draw awards KD 1 million. The quarterly draws, held twice a year, distribute KD 100,000 each to 100 winners. Additionally, monthly draws award KD 1,000 to 10 winners every month, making a total of 322 AIDanah winners for the year.

The AIDanah Savings Account is one of the best savings accounts in Kuwait, offering regular draws with valuable prizes and numerous benefits for account holders. Gulf Bank has raised the grand prize from KD 1.5 million to KD 2 million,



Gulf Bank officials in a group photo.

earning a Guinness World Record once again for offering the largest cash prize ever linked to a bank account. Additionally, the quarterly prize, awarded twice a year, is now distributed among 100 winners, with each receiving KD 1,000, instead of a single winner taking the full KD 100,000, increasing customers' chances of winning.

A standout feature of the AIDanah Millionaire Account is that it's the only account in Kuwait that carries over your chances of winning from one year to the next, as part of Gulf Bank's commitment to rewarding customer loyalty.

What Is the Value of KD 2 Million in Global Currencies?

| Currency | Amount |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| US Dollar | 6,476,154 |
| Euro | 6,240,839 |
| United Kingdom Pound | 5,204,540 |
| Bahraini Dinar | 2,440,800 |
| Jordanian Dinar | 4,591,640 |
| United Arab Emirates Dirham | 23,780,000 |
| Saudi Arabian Riyal | 24,285,708 |
| Egyptian Pound | 327,791,924 |
| Philippine Peso | 376,427,076 |
| Indian Rupee | 562,904,346 |
| Pakistani Rupee | 1,807,705,950 |
| Iraqi Dinar | 8,469,279,490 |
| Syrian Lira | 84,202,858,388 |
| Iranian Rial | 272,142,229,366 |
| Lebanese Lira | 581,301,531,148 |

To maximize their chances of winning, customers are required to maintain a minimum deposit of KD 200 in their AIDanah

account and are encouraged to increase their balance for even more opportunities to enter the monthly, quarterly, and annual draws.

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

In alignment with Kuwait Vi-

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

AIDanah Millionaire Account Key Highlights

- Established in 1998 – The year the AIDanah Millionaire prize was introduced.
- KD 55 Million – Total value of prizes awarded since its inception.
- 23 Millionaires – Number of individuals who became millionaires through AIDanah.
- 282 Winners – Total winners across all draws held annually.
- Guinness World Record Holder – Recognized for offering the largest cash prize ever linked to a bank account.

Increase Deposits, Boost Your Chances

To improve your chances of winning and becoming the 24th AIDanah Millionaire, consider increasing your deposits. The deadline to participate in the semi-annual draw for the KD 1 million prize is March 31, 2025, with the draw taking place on July 17, 2025. To be eligible for future AIDanah monthly, quarterly, and annual draws, customers must maintain a minimum balance of KD 200 in their accounts.

Your chance to win never ends with AIDanah

The AIDanah Millionaire Account makes dreams come true with the world's largest prize linked to a bank account, along with continuous prizes throughout the year. There's always hope with AIDanah. The more you deposit and the longer you save, the higher your chances of winning.

30 November
is the last day to enter the draw

KD 2,000,000

31 March
is the last day to enter the draw

KD 1,000,000

Year-round draws with KD1,000 awarded to 280 winners.



Open an AIDanah Millionaire Account today
e-gulfbank.com/AIDanah • 1 805 805





KFH representative with the children who graduated from the Code Juniors program.

Featuring over 50 different programs benefiting 1700 kids

Kuwait Finance House extends strategic partnership with CODED Academy

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) continues to demonstrate its leadership and commitment to social responsibility, education, and innovation through its strategic partnership with CODED Academy.

This partnership has facilitated the delivery of numerous impactful and innovative programs for youth.

KFH's strategic partnership with CODED Academy, established in 2018, has been a key part of the bank's social responsibility initiatives.

This collaboration demonstrates KFH's commitment to empowering youth through innovation and technology pro-

grams, while also keeping the bank at the forefront of industry advancements.

Through a bilateral collaboration, 50 innovative educational programs were developed under the Coded Juniors initiative, reaching over 1,700 children and providing them with insights into coding, programming, and technological innovation.

Moreover, kids have gained rich practical coding experience with cutting-edge technological resources, fostering a deep appreciation for science and expanding their horizons for creativity and innovation.

This is achieved by promoting knowledge-sharing and critical and creative thinking skills.

Additionally, in line with KFH's financial literacy awareness efforts under Diraya Campaign, KFH organized specialized cybersecurity bootcamps in collaboration with CODED Academy.

These camps are designed for children and parents, focusing on raising awareness about cyber fraud prevention and best practices for data protection.

In collaboration with CODED Academy, KFH remains dedicated to organizing and supporting programs that ca-

ter to the interests of the next generation.

To foster environmental awareness, KFH incorporated the "Keep It Green" initiative into CODED Academy's programs.

This initiative offers participants hands-on training in developing sustainability-focused applications and utilizing recycled materials in workshops.

It serves to note that CODED Academy, the Middle East's first coding academy, is based in Kuwait and offers instruction in fundamental coding languages and technologies using cutting-edge tools and resources.



Group photo of the winning companies at the awards ceremony.

Company recognized for excellence in governance & transparency

stc and solutions by stc triumph at Global Business Outlook Awards '24

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced that it has won the 'Best Corporate Governance Telecom Company – Kuwait 2024', and its subsidiary, solutions by stc, won the 'Best Customer Experience Digital Platform for B2B – My Business – Kuwait 2024' at the Global Business Outlook (GBO) Awards 2024. The awards ceremony was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and aimed at recognizing organizations that have demonstrated outstanding achievements in different categories related to business and innovation. Mr. Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Murad, General Manager of the Legal Affairs and Compliance Department, represented stc Kuwait while Mrs. Zainab Ali – Director of Planning & Performance Analytics represented solutions by stc at the awards ceremony, where they received the awards on behalf of the company.

stc and solutions by stc received the awards after submitting comprehensive overviews of the various milestones and initiatives achieved throughout 2024 within the categories they submitted for, along with all supporting documents requested by the Global Business Outlook team. The Global Business Outlook Awards adhere to a rigorous evaluation process, and this efficient and judicious selection process ensures that only organizations demonstrating exceptional innovation, leadership, and commitment to business excellence are recognized.

At the Global Business Outlook Awards, stc received the 'Best Corporate Governance Telecom Company Award – Kuwait 2024' due to the Company's diligence in implementing and maintaining a robust governance structure that promotes integrity, accountability, and transparency. The Company's comprehensive corporate governance framework encompasses board composition, compliance policies, risk management, regulatory reporting and ethical business practices. stc also actively tracks



Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Murad and Zainab Ali during their participation in the awards ceremony.

the latest regulations as well as policies and procedures released by the Capital Markets Authority in Kuwait, to ensure that the Company is compliant and ready to adopt any new protocols that are announced.

Meanwhile, solutions by stc received the 'Best Customer Experience Digital Platform for B2B Award' for its innovative My Business platform. My Business is a self-service digital platform that empowers B2B customers by providing seamless access to account management, service subscriptions, and digital payments. The platform enhances operational efficiency by automating processes, offering real-time insights, and enabling businesses to manage their telecommunications needs with ease. With its user-friendly design and innovative functionalities, My Business has significantly contributed to the digital transformation of enterprise customers in Kuwait.

It is worth noting that the Global Business Outlook Awards recognize companies and individuals that dem-

onstrate innovation, leadership, and commitment to business excellence across various industries. The recognition of stc and its subsidiary, solutions by stc, further builds on the Company's position as a telecom pioneer, dedicated to enabling digital transformation in Kuwait and providing best-in-class services to customers.



GBO Awards.

Unveiling groundbreaking technological solutions

KIB & Real Estate Union hold workshop on digital transformation in real estate

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Kuwait International Bank (KIB), in collaboration with the Real Estate Union, organized a workshop titled "The Digital Transformation Revolution and Its Impact on the Real Estate Market." The event brought together a distinguished group of investors, experts, specialists in the real estate sector, and government agencies.

The workshop explored key topics, including inspiring success stories in PropTech (property technology), the impact of digital transformation on Kuwait's real estate market, and the role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and digital real estate services. It also addressed challenges faced by real estate investors and proposed solutions to enhance transparency and data accessibility.

The workshop featured the launch of KIB's innovative digital services through the KIB Aqari app, underscoring the Bank's commitment to developing modern solutions that cater to investors' needs. These services include the construction cost calculator for residential plots in the banking sector, and the first digital real estate financing calculator for investment and commercial projects. Additionally, KIB shed light on its real estate appraisal services, the comprehensive real estate database providing accurate market insights to support investor decisions, and a fee-free digital rent collection service designed specifically for property owners.

Commenting on the initiative, Jassim Al-Abdulhadi, General Manager of the Real Estate Department at KIB, stated: "The launch of these services aligns with our ambitious strategy to develop digital banking solutions for the real estate sector, aimed at enhancing transparency, improving efficiency, and enabling investors to access data more quickly and accurately. We are committed to crafting innovative solutions that elevate Kuwait's real estate market and cater to the needs of both investors and users."

From his side, Ibrahim Al-Awadi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Real Estate Union, stated: "There is no doubt that digital transformation has become an urgent necessity in the real estate market, as it enhances the business environment, streamlines processes, and strengthens trust between investors and real estate developers. This workshop highlights the importance of adopting modern technology to ensure the sustainability and growth of Kuwait's real estate sector."

In his turn, Fahad Al Saleh, Manager of the Real Estate Advisory Division and the Product Development and Support Division (PDS), elaborated: "Digitizing real estate services enhances efficiency, reduces risks, and increases transparency—key objectives we aim to achieve with KIB's newly launched services. We are committed to delivering advanced technologi-



From right:

Dr. Fahad Al-Mudhaf - Associate Professor in the Department of Finance and Financial Institutions - Kuwait University; Eng. Fahad Al-Saleh - Director of Real Estate Consulting, Product Development and Real Estate Support at KIB; Jassim Al-Abdulhadi - General Manager of Real Estate Management at KIB; Ibrahim Al-Awadi - Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Real Estate Union; Eng. Basil Salem - Real Estate Consultant in the Real Estate Consulting Department at KIB



KIB and Real Estate Union organize a workshop on digital transformation in the real estate market.

cal solutions that empower real estate investors with the tools they need to make informed decisions, ultimately boosting the attractiveness of Kuwait's real estate market."

The workshop concluded with practical recommendations for public and private sector entities, including proposals to enhance the real estate sector's digital infrastructure and strengthen collaboration between the public and private sectors in developing and leveraging technology for real estate services. These efforts aim to improve investor access to reliable, transparent data, ultimately enhancing the attractiveness and sustainability of Kuwait's real estate market.

About KIB

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is a bank that operates according to the Islamic Shari'ah, based in the State of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on

a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank focuses on offering a next-level customer experience under the slogan: "Bank for Life".

Through a network of branches spread across the State of Kuwait, KIB offers a broad range of banking products and services, as well as innovative digital banking solutions in line with international best standards. As part of its duty towards the community, the Bank also encompasses a leading social responsibility program that aims at positively impacting all members of the community through a wide range of impactful initiatives and activities.

Today, KIB has taken concrete steps in implementing its new strategic objectives. The Bank has cemented its role as a key player in the local banking industry and has continued to maintain its strong financial performance; enabling it to be globally recognized for its strong credit rating and financial position.

Musk's DOGE team faces scrutiny over alleged security breaches

Treasury Inspector General launches audit of federal payment system security

WASHINGTON, Feb 15, (AP) - The Treasury Department's Office of Inspector General on Friday said it was launching an audit of the security controls for the federal government's payment system, as Democratic lawmakers raised red flags about the access provided to Trump aide Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency team.

The audit will also review the past two years of the system's transactions as it relates to Musk's assertion of "alleged fraudulent payments," according to a letter from Loren J. Scuirba, Treasury's deputy inspector general, that was obtained by The Associated Press.

The audit marks part of the broader effort led by Democratic lawmakers and federal employee unions to provide transparency and accountability about DOGE's activities under President Donald Trump's Republican administration. The Musk team has pushed for access to the government's computer systems and sought to remove tens of thousands of federal workers.

"We expect to begin our fieldwork immediately," Scuirba wrote. "Given the breadth of this effort, the audit will likely not be completed until August; however, we recognize the danger that improper access or inadequate controls can pose to the integrity of sensitive payment systems. As such, if critical issues come to light before that time, we will issue interim updates and reports."

Treasury's inspector general began the audit before Democratic lawmakers asked for it. A. J. Altemus, acting counsel to the inspector general, said "our work is independently initiated" and standards dictate that the audit "must be non-partisan and objective. These standards remain unchanged."

Tech billionaire Musk, who continues to control Tesla, X and SpaceX among

other companies, claims to be finding waste, fraud and abuse while providing savings to taxpayers. Many of his claims are so far unsubstantiated. But there is a risk that his team's aggressive efforts could lead to the failure of government computer systems and enable Musk and his partners to profit off private information maintained by the government.

The audit would overlap with increased pressure that the Trump administration is placing on inspectors general, presidential appointees who are supposed to serve as an independent check against mismanagement and abuse of government power. In January, the administration fired several independent inspectors general at government agencies, a move that some members of Congress said violated federal oversight laws. The firings prompted a lawsuit filed on Wednesday in federal court in Washington that seeks to return the inspectors general to their jobs.

Democratic Sens. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Ron Wyden of Oregon led the push in the Senate for the inspector general office's inquiry at the Treasury.

On Wednesday, Warren, Wyden and Sen. Jack Reed, D-Rhode Island, sent a letter to Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent noting the inconsistencies in the accounts provided by his department about DOGE.

"Your lack of candor about these events is deeply troubling given the threats to the economy and the public from DOGE's meddling, and you need to provide a clear, complete, and public accounting of who accessed the systems, what they were doing, and why they were doing it," the Democratic lawmakers wrote in their letter.

Democrats on the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform also called on inspectors general to investigate DOGE and welcomed the Treasury au-

dit. "Elon Musk and DOGE can't be allowed to creep on Americans' most sensitive data as they operate in the shadows," said Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-Va., the committee's ranking member. "This is an important step, and inspectors general must be free to pursue their investigations without interference."

The Treasury Department provided conflicting information about DOGE's access to the payment system. Initially, it claimed the access was read only, only to then acknowledge that a DOGE team member briefly had the ability to edit code, and then to say in an employee-sworn statement that the ability to edit was granted by accident.

The 25-year-old employee granted the access, Marko Elez, resigned this month after racist posts were discovered on one of his social media accounts, only for Musk to call for his rehiring with the backing of Trump and Vice President JD Vance.

Earlier this week, the Treasury declined to brief a pair of the highest-ranking lawmakers on the Senate Finance Committee, including Wyden, on the controversy related to DOGE's use of Treasury payment systems, citing ongoing litigation.

Advocacy groups and labor unions have filed lawsuits over DOGE's potentially unauthorized access to sensitive Treasury payment systems. Five former treasury secretaries have sounded the alarm on the risks associated with Musk's DOGE access.

A federal judge in Manhattan on Friday heard arguments in a lawsuit brought by Democratic state attorneys general seeking to prevent DOGE from accessing Treasury Department data.



Photos from the event.

ALSAYER Group promotes STEM growth through KNRC partnership

ALSAYER celebrates Kuwait National Robotics 2025 winners

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: As part of its ongoing mission to empower the next generation and promote technological advancement, ALSAYER Group renewed partnership with the Kuwait National Robotics Competition (KNRC) at the strategic level. This partnership underscores the Group's commitment to fostering creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills among young innovators. The Kuwait National Robotics Competition invited students from across the country to showcase their digital creativity and innovations through robotics challenges to design, program and manage robots that can solve real-life problems.

This prestigious award ceremony in presence of H.E. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information, Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, has shared the platform with Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer, CEO-ALSAYER Group, Dr.

Dina Al-Mailam, Director of Kuwait University along with the dignitaries, professors and a large crowd fascinated to support the digital growth of Kuwaiti youth. This year four teams from the Kuwait National Robotics Competition are qualified to represent the VEX Robotics World Championship in Texas, USA, in April 2025. They are, Superheroes from Al-Adailiya School (Elementary level), ABS Team A from American Baccalaureate School (Middle school level), Robotech from Salah Al-Din School (High school level), and Autovortex from Bucharest University of Economic Studies (University level).

Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer, Executive Board Member and Chairman of the Sustainability Committee of ALSAYER Group, said ALSAYER Group prioritizes key collaboration and partnerships to promote social empowerment and innovative learning for our future generation

and help them to shape their journey driven by innovation, knowledge and excellence. Our strategic partnership in the Kuwait National Robotics Competition in cooperation with the Kuwait university Computer Science Department of the College of Science and the Ministry of Education, came as a unique opportunity for students to apply their academic knowledge in a competitive and collaborative environment and enhance teamwork and problem-solving skills through creative thinking and promote the values of heritage, leadership and prosperity in various aspects of their lives.

We stand today to see the achievements of this tournament and the achievements of our students ranging from school to university level, as they presented creative and innovative ideas and designs to full fill the challenges of this competition and come out as a winner who continu-

ously learn. Nehad Haj Ali, Group Manager of Corporate Excellence at ALSAYER Group, said that more than 170 teams and 800 students from schools and universities participated to showcase their skills in different categories, including VEX robots, SeaPerch, Drones and the Open Innovation Challenge. The great enthusiasm for the competition reflects the students' dedication to digital learning and their strong desire to pursue careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

ALSAYER Group will continue to support and sponsor more of these targeted projects that contribute significantly to the development of the capabilities and skills of our future students. We seek this association to build a strong alliance between the public and private sectors to nurture and support the next generation of innovators in Kuwait.

Charitable initiatives

LuLu Hypermarket launches Ramadan Souq 2025 in Al-Rai

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: LuLu Hypermarket officially launched its much-awaited "Ramadan Souq" at the Al-Rai outlet. On February 12, 2025, marking the beginning of an exciting and impactful Ramadan. The event was graced by esteemed representatives from prominent charity groups, including Namaa Charity, Mabarrat Kafel, Islamic Care Society, Baladal Al Khair, and Humanitarian Charity, who joined the celebration and symbolized the spirit of generosity and unity that defines the holy month of Ramadan.

The launch of the "Ramadan Souq" sets the stage for LuLu's month-long Ramadan campaign, which aims to provide attractive offer, exceptional shopping experiences while making a positive impact on the community. As part of this year's campaign, LuLu Hypermarket has introduced a series of charity card initiatives designed to bring joy, support, and convenience to its customers throughout Ramadan.

LuLu Hypermarket has rolled out Festive Ramadan Gift cards and available in denominations of KD 5, KD 10, KD 25, and KD 50.

These cards offer a simple and effective way for shoppers to spread joy and support during Ramadan.

To make Ramadan shopping even more convenient, LuLu Hypermarket is offering exclusive Ramadan kits in two options: a kit priced at KD 10 and KD 15. These kits contain a selection of Ramadan essentials, catering to the diverse needs of customers. Additionally, Iftar meal counters will be available throughout the store, offering ready-to-serve meals for those who are fasting.

This year's Ramadan campaign also brings exciting experiences to the store, including the "Dates Festival," "Big TV Majlis," and "Ramadan Home," each catering to different tastes and preferences.

Through the launch of the "Ramadan Souq" and its upcoming Ramadan campaign, LuLu Hypermarket continues to strengthen its commitment to community, offering a unique blend of tradition, generosity, and modern shopping experiences. This year's initiatives reflect the spirit of Ramadan, providing customers with opportunities to give back, celebrate, and enjoy the holy month with loved ones.



Photos from the launch of LuLu Hypermarket's Ramadan Souq at the Al-Rai outlet.



A group photo from the event.

STECI Kuwait organizes annual family picnic

The St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India (STECI) Kuwait Parish conducted its annual family picnic at Kabad on Friday, Feb 14. The event was inaugurated by the Parish Vicar, Rev. Sibi P.J. A variety of fun-filled activities for all age groups added to the joy of this daylong gathering. It was a day of fun and fellowship – a time to mingle, interact, and create cherished memories.

Parish Secretary, Reju Daniel John, welcomed the

members and their families. The subcommittee members coordinated the picnic and all associated activities. After a hearty breakfast, the programs continued with great enthusiasm.

The day commenced with a worship session, followed by games for the tiny tots and gradually moved on to the senior kids. Under the leadership of Ashish T. Mathew, Jeess George Cherian, and Kuruvila Cherian, numerous

games were organized for children of all ages. It wasn't just the kids who enjoyed – there were engaging games for men and women alike. One of the highlights of the day was the Tug-of-War, which saw an overwhelming response, with the crowd cheering on the participants. The thrilling competition, filled with a fantastic display of strength and determination, ended in a nail-biting finish, bringing back nostalgic memories for many. After an en-

ergetic morning, everyone gathered for a delightful lunch.

Blessed with pleasant weather, the wonderful day concluded with a group photo session, followed by the grand prize distribution. The awards ceremony was led by Rev. Sibi P.J. Parish Treasurer, Biju Samuel, expressed the vote of thanks, and Rev. Sibi P.J. concluded the event with a prayer and benediction.

A remarkable end to a spectacular day

Tykwer brings timely migration story to Berlinale

Berlin Festival kicks off with 'The Light' shining on politics

BERLIN, Feb 15, (AP) — The Berlin International Film Festival is kicking off on Thursday with the world premiere of Tom Tykwer's "The Light," a timely tale of a dysfunctional German family and a Syrian refugee.

The festival known as the Berlinale this year comes against the backdrop of Germany's parliament elections. For Tykwer, it's the third time he has opened the festival although his most recent success has come in the form of hit TV show "Babylon Berlin."

"The Light" infuses drama, political and social commentary, song and dance — and a migration storyline that Tykwer says he didn't know would be so relevant when he started working on the movie three years ago.

"Now that it aligns with the elections and the elections are riding on the subject so violently, of course, I feel (strongly) that this movie has a really strong position about it," he told The Associated Press.

Nineteen films will compete in the main competition lineup, with the

Golden Bear winner to be announced at the closing gala on Feb. 22.

Germany's national election on Feb. 23, the final day of the Berlinale, is being held seven months early, after Chancellor Olaf Scholz's governing coalition collapsed in a dispute about how to revitalize the country's economy.

Efforts to curb migration have emerged as a central issue in the campaign — along with the question of how to handle the challenge from the far-right Alternative for Germany, which appears to be on course for its strongest national election result yet.

Politics remained front and center at a news conference with this year's Berlinale international jury, headed up by American director Todd Haynes.

And despite an air of pessimism around today's global politics, there was positivity around the role of cinema.

Haynes said the Berlinale "has always had a strength of conviction and an openness to challenging and political discourse and bringing that



Timothee Chalamet poses for photographers at the photo call for the film 'A Complete Unknown' at the International Film Festival, Berlinale, in Berlin, Friday, Feb. 14, (AP)

into the filmmaking." "What's happening in the world right now has put an extra urgency to

all of that," he added.

Franco-Moroccan director and jury member Nabil Ayouch added that people need strong creative voices. "We have to be radical. We have to be strong in our choices, in our movies," he said.

"Blue Moon" is set during the opening night of the musical "Oklahoma!" and marks director Richard Linklater's return to the Berlinale for the first time since "Boyhood" premiered at the festival in 2014.

Starring long-time collaborator Ethan Hawke and Margaret Qualley of "The Substance," the movie is competing for the Golden Bear.

Rose Byrne stars in "If I had Legs I'd Kick You" alongside ASAP Rocky and this year's Oscar host Conan O'Brien.

The anxiety inducing dramedy from Mary Bronstein, follows Byrne's character Linda as an exhausted working mum surrounded by a revolving group of unhelpful bystanders, colleagues and family. After a hit Sundance world premiere, the movie gets to join the Berlinale's

competition lineup.

Jessica Chastain reunites with Mexican director Michel Franco in the drama "Dreams," about a young Mexican ballet dancer played by real-life dancer Isaac Hernández. Chastain plays a wealthy socialite who finds her young lover has moved illegally to San Francisco to pursue both her and his dancing dreams.

Emma Mackey and Vicky Krieps star in playwright Rebecca Lenkiewicz's directorial debut "Hot Milk," also a hot contender. Based on Deborah Levy's book of the same name, it's the story of a girl who meets a free-spirited traveler when she takes her mother to consult a healer about her mystery illness in a Spanish seaside town.

And Marion Cotillard plays an actress shooting a film adaptation of Hans Christina Anderson's fairytale "The Snow Queen" in Lucile Hadzihalilovic's 70s-set French fantasy drama, "The Ice Tower."

Though politics may play a part, some Berliners may be simply hop-

ing to catch a glimpse of their favorite stars.

Timothee Chalamet undoubtedly caused a stir the Palast red carpet for the German premiere of his award-winning biopic "A Complete Unknown" on Friday — a final push before the Oscars where Chalamet is up for best actor for his portrayal of Bob Dylan.

Jacob Elordi is also likely to attract a strong fan turnout when he premieres the new TV series "The Narrow Road to the Deep North" at the festival.

Justin Kurzel's much anticipated drama about a World War II hero haunted by his experiences in a Japanese prisoner of war camp has its red carpet debut on Saturday.

Robert Pattinson will also hit the Berlinale carpet on the same day for a special screening of Bong Joon-Ho's long-awaited follow-up to "Parasite."

In "Mickey 17," a sci-fi comedy, Pattinson plays a space traveler who is sure to bring out fans braving Berlin's sub-zero temperatures this February.

Film



This image released by Apple TV+ shows Miles Teller, (right), and Anya Taylor-Joy in a scene from 'The Gorge.' (AP)

A videogame-like thriller with a geological twist

Snipers, love and secrets in 'The Gorge'

LOS ANGELES, Feb 15, (AP) — In the movies, we've had green valleys, haunted hills and grand canyons. But only now has the time arrived for a long-overshadowed land formation. "The Gorge," a preposterous new videogame-like thriller, at least succeeds in, um, gorging on this often-overlooked geological feature.

The gorge in question, to be fair, is a beauty. In some northern forested wilderness sit two concrete towers, one for each side of a wide, foggy ravine encircled by sheer rock steeples. Two expert snipers — Levi (Miles Teller) from the US, and Drasa (Anya Taylor-Joy), placed by Russia — have been dropped off to man their respective stations.

Both are conscripts of a sort. Levi has been a private contractor for the military since being psychologically deemed unfit for service by the Marines. (Sigourney Weaver plays the cryptic woman who hires him.) Drasa is Lithuanian. Each operates in the murky quasi-official world of covert military operations. All they know is that they're to be at this ultra-classified post for a year, part of an annual rotation. Their main job is to shoot anything that comes out of the chasm below.

What's inside? The guy Levi is replacing thinks it could be a portal to hell. "The Gorge," directed by Scott Derrickson ("Doctor Strange," "The Black Phone") from a script by Zach Dean ("The Tomorrow War," "Fast X"), unpeels these mysteries in a film that, if it wanted to, could be a very atmospheric post-Cold War parable, a kind of kaiju-in-the-ground thriller, about deep-buried military secrets.

That may be the backdrop, but "The Gorge" wants to be something else, too. It wants to be a love story. Taking after the hybrid DNA horrors that emerge from below, "The Gorge" mixes rom-com with sci-fi, with mostly ridiculous results. This is the rare movie to boast both horse-riding tree-zombies (that's what I said) and so, so many T.S. Eliot references.

There is good preposterous and bad preposterous. "The Gorge" — which I'm happy to report features the line "The gorge is exposed!" — may find some believers on both sides of that gulf. The production quality is well above the grade of its script, with cinematography by Dan Laustsen (Guillermo del Toro's regular DP) and a score by Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross (coming off their incredible 2024 of "Challengers" and "Queer").

Mash-up

But the tonal swings, not to mention the gloss that covers the whole enterprise, make "The Gorge" an intriguing but empty genre mash-up and streaming-only exercise.

Like would-be lovers who spy each other across balconies, Drasa and Levi find their gazes trained more on each other than the evil that lurks below. It begins with a sign that could be called a tad cutesy for an elite sniper ("What's your name?"). As the months go by, their interactions advance to dancing and even, with the help of some repelling rope, a dinner date.

You could at this point be asking yourself a few ques-

tions. If some version of hell was pried open, would we, perhaps, want more than two guards? But if we're going with two, how likely is it, with ghoulish things sporadically climbing up from the abyss, that they would soon begin a "Love, Actually"-style courtship of holding up signs for each other?

These aren't quibbles that "The Gorge" has any time for, though. Though the movie's flow is choppy and occasionally distracted by overly showy camera moves, it zips along and soon enough the two of them are shooting at what you could only call skull spiders. Questionable as the romantic turn is, Taylor-Joy and Teller have convincing chemistry. Plus "The Queen's Gambit" fans can rejoice at the chance to again see Taylor-Joy play chess, albeit in a slightly different context.

Once we get a decent view of the creatures they're charged with keeping under control, they appear half tree root, half human, like demon Groots. "The Gorge" is better before our main characters are no longer poised at the mouth of hell but running through the gorge floor. One minute, they're swaying to the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, the next they're being swallowed by an adhesive root system. "The Gorge" is pretty superficial stuff, but perhaps we can await its even shallower sequel, "The Gully."

"The Gorge," an Apple Studios release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for intense sequences of violence and action, brief strong language, some suggestive material and thematic elements. Running time: 127 minutes. One and a half stars out of four.

Rocky jury weighs

Woman 'drops' case against Jay-Z, Combs

NEW YORK, Feb 15, (AP) — An Alabama woman who said she was raped by rappers Jay-Z and Sean "Diddy" Combs when she was 13 withdrew her civil lawsuit against both men on Friday, according to court filings.

The unidentified woman in December added Jay-Z, whose legal name is Shawn Carter, to a lawsuit she had filed against Combs in Manhattan federal court, alleging that she was attacked by the singers in 2000 after Combs' limo driver offered her a ride to an MTV Video Music Awards after-party.

The court document submitted by the woman's attorneys announcing the voluntary dismissal did not include any reasons or explanation for the withdrawal.

Jay-Z, who vehemently denied the claims and tried to get extracted from the lawsuit, called the woman's decision to withdraw her claim "a victory" and said the "fictional tale" she and her lawyers created was "laughable."

"The frivolous, fictitious and appalling allegations have been dismissed," he said in a statement posted on social media. "This civil suit was without merit and never going anywhere."

Combs remains jailed in New York awaiting a criminal trial on federal sex trafficking charges. He also faces a wave of sexual assault lawsuits, many of which were filed by the plaintiff's lawyer, Tony Buzbee, a Texas attorney who says his firm represents over 150 people, both men and women, who allege sexual abuse and exploitation by Combs.

Lawyers for Combs said dismissal of the lawsuit without a settlement confirmed that other lawsuits he is facing are built on falsehoods.

"For months, we have seen case after case filed by individuals hiding behind anonymity, pushed forward by an attorney more focused on media headlines than legal merit. Just like this claim, the others will fall apart because there is no truth to them," they said in a statement, adding that Combs "has never sexually assaulted or trafficked anyone — man or woman, adult or minor."



Jay-Z

Jurors in the felony assault trial of ASAP Rocky got the case late Friday after a prosecutor told them in his closing argument that they must set aside their feelings for the hip-hop star, his singing superstar wife Rihanna, and their small children.

The Los Angeles jury of seven women and five men got the case late in the day and will begin discussing two counts of assault with a semiautomatic firearm on Tuesday, after a three-day weekend.

Convictions on both counts could mean up to 24 years in prison.

Rihanna came to court shortly after closing arguments began Thursday, as she did often during their three week trial. But for the first time she brought their 2-year-old and 1-year-old sons.

Deputy District Attorney John Lewin suggested it was an attempt to manipulate jurors.

"They brought in two adorable children yesterday for closing argument," Lewin said. "They haven't been here any other time. And you have to ask yourselves, why children that age would be here in a situation like this?"

He added, "You are not allowed to consider how this might affect Rihanna and his kids. We are all responsible for our own actions in the world."

Rihanna was sitting with Rocky's mother and sister, without the children, on Friday. She and Rocky left the courtroom together, surrounded by security.

Rocky is accused of firing two shots at a former friend on a Hollywood street corner in 2021.

His attorneys argued that he only fired blanks from a prop gun he had picked up for security on a music video shoot.

During his closing argument, lawyer Joe Tacopina cast his accuser, who goes by ASAP Relli, as the aggressor and an unreliable liar.

Tacopina showed the jury belligerent text messages from just before the confrontation, later deleted by Relli, where he urges Rocky to beat him up. The prosecution had shown only Rocky's angry responses to suggest he started the fight. But it was not the opposing lawyers' fault, he said.

"Their witness lied to them, lied to police, and deleted the messages," Tacopina said. "He destroyed evidence."

Tacopina showed jurors the transcript of the moment during testimony that he confronted Relli about the messages.

"At first he said, 'I don't recall.' Then I showed him the messages," Tacopina said. "What did he say next? His go-to line. 'It's fake! It's fake!' Anything that crushed him was fake."

He dwelled on how combative Relli was on the stand.

"That was in front of you," Tacopina said. "Imagine what he's like in the street."

Variety

NEW YORK: Sarah Jessica Parker will be this year's recipient of PEN America's "Literary Service Award." The "Sex and the City" star, a longtime advocate for reading and literacy, will be honored May 15 at the free expression organization's annual spring gala.

Jon Yaged, CEO of Macmillan Publishers, will receive the "Business Visionary Award."

Parker has been involved in numerous literary projects, whether as founder of her own publishing imprint or serving as executive producer of the anti-book banning documentary "The Librarians," which premiered last month at the Sundance Film Festival.

The PEN/Audible Literary Service Award had previously been given to an "important writer" who has attracted a wide audience and "helped us



Parker

understand the human condition," with previous winners including Stephen Sondheim and Toni Morrison. The criteria is now "a writer or advocate who has served the literary community through their words or work."

"We are now at a crisis point with books by underrepresented writers being pulled from school libraries and classrooms," PEN co-CEO Clarisse Rosaz Shariyf said in a statement released Friday. (AP)

NEW YORK: Jailed and disgraced movie mogul Harvey Weinstein alleges in a new lawsuit that his brother, Bob Weinstein, and other executives at their now-defunct film company duped him into guaranteeing a \$45 million loan in 2016, but diverted funds for their own personal use while setting the stage for his downfall.

Harvey Weinstein, 72, filed the claims Thursday in a long-running civil case in New York City involving a lender accusing him of defaulting on the loan. He is currently detained while awaiting a retrial on sex crimes charges in New York.

"Harvey Weinstein was deceived by those closest to him, and secured a \$45 million dollar loan under the pre-

tense of saving The Weinstein Company," Imran Ansari, Harvey Weinstein's lawyer, said in a statement. "While Harvey personally guaranteed the loan, others within The Weinstein Company enriched themselves and strategically undermined him, leaving him 'holding the bag' of debt while 'lining their pockets' when the company was in crisis." (AP)

MAYVILLE, N.Y.: Jurors watched videos Friday showing Salman Rushdie being repeatedly stabbed on a stage in western New York while audience members gasped in horror at the attack that left the prize-winning novelist seriously wounded and blinded in one eye.

It was the first time chaotic footage of the assault has been played during the trial of Hadi Matar, 27, who is charged with attempted murder.

The video recorded by the Chautauqua Institution's house cameras on Aug. 12, 2022, shows fleeting views of Rushdie's assailant, dressed in black and wearing a black face mask, as he quickly strikes the author over and over before being tackled by bystanders and pinned to the stage. (AP)

Bird flu spread to veterinarians without symptoms

Some people didn't know they had bird flu infection: study

NEW YORK, Feb. 15, (AP): A new study shows that bird flu has silently spread from animals to some veterinarians.

The study published Thursday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention echoes two smaller ones that detected evidence of infection in previously undiagnosed farmworkers. In those studies, several of the infected workers remembered having symptoms of H5N1 bird flu, while none of the veterinarians in the new paper recalled any such symptoms.

The new study is more evidence that the official US tally of confirmed human bird flu infections - 68 in the last year - is likely a significant undercount, said Dr. Gregory Gray, an infectious disease researcher at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

"This means that people are being infected, likely due to their occupational exposures, and not developing signs of illness and therefore not seeking medical care," Gray said. He said it shows that officials cannot fully understand bird flu transmission by only tracking people who go



A worker grabs a chicken to slaughter inside a poultry store in New York, Feb. 7, 2025. (AP)

to medical clinics with symptoms. CDC researchers went to an American Association of Bovine Practitioners veterinary conference in September 2024 in Columbus, Ohio. They recruited 150 vets from 46 states to fill out a questionnaire and agree to have their blood drawn.

None said they had suffered red eyes or other symptoms associated with bird flu.

Testing found three of the vets, or 2%, had evidence of antibodies to H5N1 infection. All three worked with dairy cattle, as well as other animals. None said they'd worked

with a herd that was known to be infected, although one had worked with a flock of infected poultry.

Gray and some colleagues did a study last year of 14 dairy farmworkers and found two, or 14%, had evidence of past infections. Both had experienced symptoms but were never diagnosed.

Another study published last year by the CDC checked 115 dairy workers. The researchers found that eight of them, or 7%, had evidence in their blood of recent infection. Half recalled feeling ill.

The studies were far too small to use as a basis to provide a solid estimate of how many undiagnosed human infections are out there, Gray said. But even just a very small percentage could translate to hundreds or thousands of Americans who were infected while working with animals, he noted.

That's not necessarily a reason to be alarmed, said Jacqueline Nolting, an Ohio State University researcher who helped CDC with the latest study.

Available studies suggest people who are infected mount antibody re-

sponses and may develop natural immunity, which is "good news," she said.

However, if the virus changes or mutates to start making people very sick, or to start spreading easily from person to person, that would be "a completely different story," Nolting said.

The H5N1 bird flu has been spreading widely among wild birds, poultry, cows and other animals. Its escalating presence in the environment increases the chances people will be exposed, and potentially catch it, officials have said.

Right now the risk to the general public is low, the CDC says. But officials continue to urge people who have contact with sick or dead birds to take precautions, including wearing respiratory and eye protection and gloves when handling poultry.

"No one's really questioning that the virus has been moving around the country more than has been reported," said Keith Poulsen, director of the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.

He said he expected to see stepped-up information reminding veterinarians across the country to protect

themselves with gloves, masks and other equipment to halt infection.

Meanwhile, at least two cats in Oregon were euthanized this month after eating raw pet food contaminated with bird flu, prompting agriculture officials to issue a public health alert Friday about the products.

Officials in Oregon and Washington state warned that bird flu virus was detected in samples of raw pet food made by Wild Coast LLC of Olympia, Washington.

Two cats living in separate households in Multnomah County, Oregon, fell ill after consuming the raw pet food. After consultation with their veterinarians, owners of the animals agreed to euthanize the pets because of the severity of their illnesses, officials said.

In both cases, veterinarians reported the illnesses to state officials. Staff collected samples from the cats and open containers of food. Tests at state and federal laboratories confirmed bird flu in the cats and the food. Washington state officials also tested unopened containers and found the virus.

How to treat disorder

Why medicine took so long to recognize adult ADHD?

By Daniel Merino
The Conversation

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

Parents and doctors have known about childhood ADHD - attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder - for decades, but it is only recently that the medical field has started to recognize, diagnose and seriously study ADHD in adults. In this episode of The Conversation Weekly podcast, we explore what adult ADHD looks like, how it is diagnosed today and the many new treatments available to help those with the disorder live better lives.

The name attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder is a pretty good description of this common condition, but it can manifest in a few different ways. Some people only struggle with paying attention, some people can focus on tasks but are constantly fidgeting or dealing with excessive energy and some people exhibit both attention problems and hyperactivity. But for those who study ADHD, it is how these symptoms affect people's daily lives that is most important.

Tamara May is a senior research fellow at Monash University in Australia. She says that ADHD "affects the way our executive functions work. These are things like how we pay attention, how we sort of moderate ourselves, how we plan and organize, time management and how we switch attention." As May explains, many people with ADHD are

forgetful and bad at time management and these issues can affect many aspects of daily life. "It means that you underachieved academically or you had to drop out. It means that your interpersonal relationships are impacted, you can't maintain friendships or you're heavily relying on a partner to do all your organizing."

Awareness

Thankfully, as awareness of adult ADHD has grown, so has the body of knowledge on how to treat it, both with drugs and also with behavioral therapy. Laura Knouse is an associate professor of psychology at the University of Richmond in the US and studies how therapy can help adults with ADHD. She says that, according to most recent research, the best nonmedication treatments "fall under this umbrella of something we call cognitive behavioral therapy. I like to simplify that and just say a skills-based treatment, a treatment that's going to help you figure out how to structure your environment and how to structure your time and develop the strategies that you're going to need to make your goals real, even in the presence of having ADHD in your life."

In the full episode of the podcast, we talk in depth with Knouse about what these therapies are, how they work in concert with medication and what's next for treatments. Then we end the episode with Tamara May, digging into how perceptions of adult ADHD - both within medicine and culture more generally - have changed in recent years, and what it means for those who have it. (AP)

Medical resources strain to treat war injuries

Gazans turn to Egypt for treatment after collapse of healthcare system

CAIRO, Feb. 15, (Xinhua): Nasser Mohammed, 33, finally lies on a hospital bed in Egypt, receiving treatment for his brain tumor after months of agonizing despair in the war-torn Gaza Strip.

Mohammed's story, however, is not one of relief, but an illustration of the catastrophic state of healthcare in the besieged strip, where months of war between Israel and Hamas has turned hospitals into rubble and access to essential medical care almost impossible.

"Most of the medical effort in Gaza is focused on treating war injuries," Mohammed, who is currently receiving treatment in El Arish General Hospital in Egypt's North Sinai Province, explained in a weak voice. "Especially after most hospitals went out of service."

For patients like him, battling chronic illnesses, cancer, and other life-threatening conditions, the war has become a different kind of enemy -- one that attacks not with bombs, but with the slow, agonizing denial of medical care.

"The most that hospitals in Gaza could provide me was some painkillers," he told Xinhua. "Those were not even always available."

His family, forced to live in tattered tents after their home was destroyed, were denied, by the Israeli army, the right to accompany him to Egypt.

"They live in tents in the bitter cold," Mohammed recounted as his voice cracked with emotion. "I have



A Palestinian child is transferred to El Arish General Hospital in North Sinai Province, Egypt, on Feb. 11, 2025. (Xinhua)

not been able to communicate with them since I arrived because they do not have internet or electricity."

On Feb. 1, sick and injured individuals from the Gaza Strip started entering Egypt with family members accompanying them through the Rafah crossing, the only link between Egypt and the Palestinian enclave. Since May 2024, the Palestinian side of the crossing has been controlled by Israel, which had blocked its operation until the recent ceasefire agreement.

Seven-year-old Hussam al-Aidi made it to El Arish Hospital with his

mother, both among the latest group of Gazan patients entering Egypt. His fight for life offers another heart-wrenching hint into healthcare crisis of Gaza, where tens of thousands have been injured during the war.

"He was in Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Gaza," al-Aidi's mother said. "There, he only received treatment for his symptoms, but not for the cancer itself, as chemotherapy is not available in Gaza."

While al-Aidi's condition has slightly improved since arriving in Egypt, his mother's relief is tied up with a profound fear.

Croatia performs 1st osteosarcoma tumor removal

ZAGREB, Feb. 15, (Xinhua): The Department of Orthopaedics and Traumatology at the Clinical Hospital Centre (KBC) Split has successfully performed its first removal of a highly malignant osteosarcoma tumour from the tibia in Croatia, the Croatia Week said in a report on Friday.

Osteosarcoma is among the most aggressive tumours in the human body. Due to the complexity of such procedures, patients in Croatia were previously referred abroad for treatment.

This operation was recently conducted on a young man from Split, the second largest city in Croatia, and he

is now recovering well, according to the report.

During the operation, the medical team completely removed the patient's knee joint and the upper 17 centimetres of the tibia, the report said, adding that these were replaced with a special tumour prosthesis and an implant substituting the removed bone. The resulting defect was then primarily closed and covered with a skin-muscle flap.

This success marks a significant advancement in the capabilities of the Croatian healthcare, offering patients access to high-level medical procedures within the country, the report noted.

13 hospitalized

Measles cases in US rise to 48

NEW YORK, Feb. 15, (AP): The ongoing measles outbreak in West Texas has doubled in size to 48 cases, mostly in children and teens, making it the state's worst in nearly 30 years.

State health officials said Friday in a news release that those who are infected are either unvaccinated or their vaccination status is unknown. Thirteen people have been hospitalized.

The cases have been concentrated in a "close-knit, undervaccinated" Mennonite community, Texas Department of State Health Services spokesperson Lara Anton said. Gaines County is highly rural, so many of the families send their children to small private schools or are home-schooled, Anton said.

"The church isn't the reason that they're not vaccinated," Anton said. "It's all personal choice and you can do whatever you want. It's just that the community doesn't go and get regular health care."

Vaccination

Anton said the state is working with local health officials to increase screening and vaccination efforts. Health officials are also working to educate school officials on identifying measles symptoms and encouraging families to vaccinate their kids.

The outbreak is in a sparsely populated swath of rural Texas, near the New Mexico border, and has spread from its epicenter in Gaines County to include single-digit cases in Lynn, Terry and Yoakum counties.

One case was reported in Lea County, New Mexico, where residents were alerted Tuesday to a measles case in an unvaccinated teenager. The New Mexico Department of Health said the teen had no recent travel or exposure to known cases from the Texas outbreak.

Texas Department of State Health Services data shows there were 49 cases of measles in Texas in 1996. In 2013, there were 27 cases reported after a person who traveled to Asia returned and interacted with a vaccine-hesitant community, the state reported.

Measles is a highly contagious virus that can survive in the air for up to two hours. Up to 9 out of 10 people who are susceptible will get the virus if exposed, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Before the vaccine was introduced in 1963, the US saw some 3 million to 4 million cases per year.

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Victory secures semifinal berth against LeBron in All-Star Game

Castle, George propel Team C to Rising Stars glory

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb 15, (AP): Congratulations, Team C. You've won the Rising Stars competition.

Your reward? A trip to the All-Star Game on Sunday night - where LeBron James, Stephen Curry and Kevin Durant are among those who'll be waiting in the second semifinal.

San Antonio's Stephon Castle scored 12 points and won MVP honors. Keyonte George had a 3-pointer for the game-winning score and Team C beat Team G League - composed of players from the NBA's developmental league - 25-14 in the championship game of the Rising Stars competition to open All-Star weekend on Friday night.

"We all wanted to play on Sunday," Castle said. "We all wanted to win."

Combined, the seven first- and second-year players on Team C - Castle, George, Phoenix's Ryan Dunn, Memphis teammates Zach Edey and Jaylen Wells, Golden State's Trayce Jackson-Davis and the Los Angeles Lakers' Dalton Knecht - have a combined 5,028

points, 25 double-doubles and no triple-doubles in their NBA careers. (An eighth player, Houston's Amen Thompson, was added to the roster after Friday's final.)

"All of us are about to play in our first All-Star Game," Knecht said. "That's crazy. ... I might play against 'Bron, right? That true? I get to go against one of my teammates. It's going to be a lot of fun to get a chance to go out there and make a statement."

Team C - which will go by Candace's Rising Stars on Sunday, named for Candace Parker - will face the team drafted by Shaquille O'Neal in the All-Star semifinal. That means it'll be taking on James, Curry, Durant, Kyrie Irving, Jayson Tatum, Jaylen Brown, Damian Lillard and James Harden.

That team, combined: 7,577 NBA games, 188,331 points, 1,812 double-doubles, 243 triple-doubles - and about \$2.7 billion in on-court earnings.

But past stats won't mean anything in a first-to-40 game on Sunday night. The NBA stars will

surely feel some pressure against a young team that has nothing to lose.

"Nobody will want to lose to that team," Curry said.

Dink Pate of the Mexico City Capitanes and Leonard Miller of the Iowa Wolves each had five points for the G League team in the Rising Stars final.

Three of the teams in the Rising Stars tournament were named in honor of Golden State's famed Run TMC days. Team T was named for Tim Hardaway Sr., Team C for Chris Mullin and Team M for Mitch Richmond.

George scored 10 points, Castle made the game-winning jumper and Team C defeated Team T in the first semifinal.

Toronto's Grady Dick led Team T with 12 points in the first-to-40-points, untimed format.

Bryce McGowens hit a 3-pointer for the winning score and Team G League beat Team M 40-39 in the second semifinal.

Miller had 14 points for Team G League. Houston's Amen Thompson had 10 points for Team M.



San Antonio Spurs guard Stephon Castle (5) looks to pass the ball against Washington Wizards forwards Corey Kispert, center, and Tristan Vukcevic (00) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, on Feb. 10, 2025, in Washington. (AP)

Mitoma, Minteh double hand Brighton 3-0 win over Chelsea



Brighton and Hove Albion's Kaoru Mitoma, center, controls the ball on his way to scoring against Chelsea during a Premier League match at the American Express Stadium, in Brighton, England, Friday, Feb. 14, 2025. (AP)

Fighting Brest salvage draw with Auxerre in Ligue 1

BRIGHTON, England, Feb 15, (AP): Brighton completed a league and cup double over Chelsea on Friday after beating the London side 3-0 for the second time in a week.

Brighton beat Chelsea 2-1 in the FA Cup last Saturday and gave an even better performance for all three points in the Premier League on Friday thanks to a magic moment from Kaoru Mitoma and brace from Yankuba Minteh.

With 27 minutes gone, the Japanese striker brought down with aplomb a hopeful punt forward by goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen and powered past the last man before firing a low shot past Filip Jorgensen.

Mitoma was also involved in Brighton's second 11 minutes later. He danced through the Chelsea penalty box before firing a low shot across goal. The defense cut out the cross but couldn't clear the danger and the ball fell to Minteh, who stroked it home.

The Gambian winger got his second and Brighton's third 17 minutes into the second half after working a nice one-two with Danny Welbeck and firing in from a tight angle as the Chelsea defense stood and watched.

"Three goals, a clean sheet, what more can you ask for?" Brighton keeper Verbruggen told broadcaster Sky Sports.

It was the third loss in its last four games for an insipid Chelsea side and left it in fourth place in the Premier League table, four points behind Nottingham Forest, which has a game in hand.

Chelsea had 70% possession but couldn't put a shot on goal.

"Probably since I arrived that is the worst performance, especially in the moment we are in," Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca told the BBC.

Brighton's first home win in the league since Nov. 9 lifted it two places into eighth, and was a brilliant reply to the humiliating 7-0 loss to Nottingham Forest on Feb 1.

"It has been a massive couple of weeks for us after a horrible result and it was important we reacted in the right way," Welbeck told Premier League Pro-

ductions.

"There was obviously something wrong against Forest. We had to look at ourselves and have some honest conversations in the dressing room and with the manager. It was something we could not just gloss over. We had to have that feeling of what it was like and carry it with us."

In Brest, France, Fighting Brest twice came from behind to draw at home to Auxerre 2-2 in Ligue 1 on Friday.

Auxerre hasn't won since November but it started the game on the front foot and took the lead after 18 minutes when Gaetan Perrin controlled Theo Blair's knockdown to fire home.

Abdoulaye Ndiaye levelled on the hour mark when he was quickest to react to a loose ball but Auxerre went ahead again 15 minutes later when Perrin showed a poacher's instinct and made it 2-1.

However, Ludovic Ajorque gave the home side a deserved share of the points when he headed home an equalizer with 11 minutes left.

Brest was eighth on the table while Auxerre was 11th and without a win in 11 matches.

Milwaukee defeats Wright State in OT

Sanders scores 18 points to spark Nevada past San Jose State 73-58

SAN JOSE, Calif., Feb 15, (AP): Kobe Sanders' 18 points helped Nevada defeat San Jose State 73-58 on Friday.

Sanders also contributed nine assists and three steals for the Wolf Pack (15-10, 7-7 Mountain West Conference). Brandon Love scored 13 points while going 6 of 8 and 1 of 3 from the free-throw line and added five rebounds. Justin McBride went 6 of 12 from the field (0 for 4 from 3-point range) to finish with 12 points.

Latrell Davis finished with 17 points for the Spartans (12-15, 5-10). Sadraque Nga'nga added 10 points for San Jose State. Donovan Yap also had nine points and five assists.

Nick Davidson scored seven points in the first half and Nevada went into the break trailing 27-26. Sanders' 16-point second half helped Nevada finish off the 15-point victory.

Milwaukee 88, Wright State 80, OT

In Milwaukee, Themus Fulks scored 21 points and Milwaukee used an 8-0 run to open overtime to beat Wright State 88-80.

Fulks also contributed 12 assists for the Panthers (17-9, 10-5 Horizon League). Jamichael Stillwell scored 15 points and added eight rebounds. AJ McKee had 12 points and went 5 of 12 from the field (1 for 3 from 3-point range).

Brandon Noel finished with 25 points and seven rebounds for the Raiders (13-14, 7-9). Solomon Callaghan added 16 points for Wright State. Alex Huibregtse also had 11 points and seven assists.

These two teams both play Sunday. Milwaukee hosts Northern Kentucky and Wright State visits Green Bay.

UCLA 72, Indiana 68

In Bloomington, Indiana, Dylan Andrews hit two free throws with four seconds left to allow UCLA to hold off Indiana, 72-68.

With five games left in the Big Ten regular season, the Bruins (19-7, 10-5) are in fifth place. The top four finishers earn a double bye into the conference tournament.

UCLA led by as many as 13 points in the first half and held a 62-52 lead after Tyler Bilodeau's jumper with 7:43 left but Myles Rice hit a layup and Malik Reneau scored at the basket twice, then answered Kobe Johnson's jumper with 3:26 left by tipping in a missed 3 from Mackenzie Mgbako to make it 67-63 with 2:42 left. Reneau turned a three-point play with :53 left to get the Hoosiers within two, 70-68.

Rice missed a jumper and Mgbako missed a layup and a 3-point attempt before Andrews stepped to the line to make it a two-possession game.

Bilodeau finished with 12 points, five rebounds and three assists to lead the Bruins. Skyy Clark was 3-for-3 from 3-point range and finished with 11 points and Johnson added 10 points, six rebounds and three assists.

Brown 70, Princeton 56

In Providence, R.I., Kino Lilly Jr. scored 17 points as Brown beat Princeton 70-56.

Lilly shot 5 of 11 from the field, including 3 for 8 from 3-point range, and went 4 for 4 from the line for the Bears (11-10, 3-5 Ivy League). N'famara Dabo scored 13 points while shooting 4 of 7 from the field and 5 for 6 from the line and added five blocks. Landon Lewis shot 5 of 10 from the field and 2 of 4 from the free-throw line to finish with 12 points, while adding seven rebounds.

Dalen Davis finished with 15 points for the Tigers (16-7, 5-3). Xaivian Lee added 11 points, seven rebounds and two steals for Princeton. Caden Pierce also recorded nine points and 11 rebounds.

Saint Peter's 65, Fairfield 52

In Jersey City, N.J., Armoni Zeigler's 14 points helped Saint Peter's defeat Fairfield 65-52.

Zeigler added six rebounds for the Peacocks (8-13, 3-10 Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference). Marcus Randolph shot 2 of 12 from the field, including 1 for 5 from 3-point range, and went 8 for 8 from the line to add 13 points. Bryce Eaton shot 3 of 9 from the field, including 1 for 4 from 3-point range, and went 6 for 6 from the line to finish with 13 points. The win broke a five-game skid for the Peacocks.

Kyle Jenkins led the way for the Stags (9-16, 5-9) with 12 points. Braden Sparks added 11 points and two steals for Fairfield. Jamie Bergens finished with 11 points.

N. Kentucky 73, Green Bay 60

In Green Bay, Wisc., Josh Dilling scored 25 points as Northern Kentucky beat Green Bay 73-60.

Dilling shot 8 for 14 (5 for 10 from 3-point range) and 4 of 7 from the free-throw line for the Norse (12-14, 7-8 Horizon League). Trey Robinson scored 20 points while going 8 of 15 from the floor, including 0 for 3 from 3-point range, and 4 for 9 from the line and added six rebounds. Keeyan Itejere had eight points and shot 3 of 4 from the field and 2 for 4 from the line.

The Phoenix (2-24, 0-15) were led in scoring by Marcus Hall, who finished with 19 points. Green Bay also got 11 points from Foster Wonders. Jeremiah Johnson also recorded eight points and eight rebounds. The loss is the 21st in a row for the Phoenix.



Sanders

Duplantis sets pole vault meet record

BERLIN, Feb 15, (AP): Pole vaulter Armand Duplantis set a new meeting record on his return from a winter break by jumping 6.10 meters at the ISTAF Indoor meet in Berlin on Friday.

The Swedish star attempted to beat his own world outdoor record set in Chorzów, Poland last August with two attempts at 6.27, but it was too high this time for the 25-year-old who broke the outdoor record three times last year.

The second time was when he won his second Olympic gold medal with a record jump of 6.25 in Paris. He extended the world outdoor record by a centimeter to 6.26 in Poland on Aug. 25.

Duplantis needed two attempts to clear 6.10, putting it down to "rust" in his first competition since September. It's the best indoor mark so far this year. "It was a good season-open-



Armand Duplantis from Sweden, competes in the pole vault competition at the indoor track and field meet, on Feb. 14, 2025, in Berlin. (AP)

er," Duplantis said. "Of course, your first competition, there's always a little bit of rust that you kinda have to knock off, but I think the energy of everybody here really really helped me."

The meet at the 12,000-capacity arena beside the Spree River was a sell-out, and Duplantis

was cheered on by, it seemed, everyone at each attempt.

"I try to channel the energy that everybody's giving me as much as I can, but at the end of the day, you don't really think about it," he said. "You're just trying to make the bar and you're trying to keep it as simple as possible. But of course, you feel it. You feel the energy. You feel everybody. You feel the crowd and the roar and everything like that. And it's very important. It gives you a lot."

Duplantis, widely known as "Mondo," has broken the world outdoor record 10 times in his career - each time by one centimeter - and the world indoor record five times.

Emmanouil Karalis also delighted the fans on Friday by jumping 5.94 on his second attempt for a new Greek record.

Bayern extends Musiala's contract until 2030

MUNICH, Feb 15, (AP): Bayern Munich star Jamal Musiala extended his contract with the club through June 2030 on Friday.

The 21-year-old Musiala, who joined the club as a youth from English side Chelsea in 2019, signed a new deal to extend the one he had that was expiring at the end of next season, the Bavarian powerhouse announced.

Bayern celebrated on its website with a picture of Musiala dressed as a magician and a competition to win a shirt signed by the player.

"People go to the stadium for players like Jamal Musiala. He's a truly exceptional player," Bayern president Herbert Hainer said. "Sometimes you feel like the rules of gravity don't apply to him. Credit to our sporting management and the board. Today is a very good day for FC Bayern."

Musiala's extension follows recently announced new deals for teammates Alphonso Davies and goalkeeper Manuel Neuer.

Bayern midfielder Joshua Kimmich and forwards Leroy Sané and Thomas Müller still have contracts expiring at the end of this season.

Musiala fired Bayern to the 2023 Bundesliga title with the winning goal at Cologne in the last round while Borussia Dortmund was held to a draw by Mainz.

He has scored 10 goals and set up four more in the Bundesliga this season, while he has 43 goals in 132 league appearances altogether for the club, as well as six goals in 43 Champions League appearances.



Bayern's Jamal Musiala celebrates after scoring during their German Bundesliga soccer match against Borussia Dortmund at the Signal-Iduna Park in Dortmund, Germany, Saturday, Nov. 30, 2024. (AP)

"Bayern is one of the biggest clubs in the world," Musiala told the club website. "I took my first steps in professional football here and firmly believe we can achieve something big with this club in the coming years. I feel at home both in Munich and at the club with our great fans. We've got a lot of things we want to achieve. I'm excited for everything that's to come."

Musiala has seven goals in 38 appearances for Germany.

SPORTS



KUNA photo
Al-Qadsia player tries to take the ball from Al-Tadamon player.

Benrahma, Khafi and Soula shine

Qadsia's late hat-trick clinches 3-0 victory against Al-Tadamon

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15, (KUNA): Qadsia SC defeated Al-Tadamon 3-0 in the 15th round of the Zain Premier League at Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium. Al-Tadamon managed to withstand Qadsia's attack until the last ten minutes before its defense collapsed, allowing Qadsia to score three consecutive goals near the end of the match.

Mehdi Benrahma scored the first goal for Qadsia in the 84th minute, Ismail Khafi added the second in the 90th minute, and Mohammed Soula completed the hat-trick in the 96th minute.

With this victory, Qadsia raised its points tally to 29, securing third place, while Al-Tadamon remained at 17 points, occupying sixth place.

Di Lollo's late header sends Boca Juniors past Banfield

BUENOS AIRES, Feb 15, (Xinhua): Lautaro di Lollo struck late as Boca Juniors continued their resurgent form with a 1-0 away win over Banfield in Argentina's Primera Division Apertura tournament on Friday.

The 20-year-old defender broke the deadlock with a glancing header following a Carlos Palacios corner four minutes from time.

The visitors were forced to endure a nervous final few minutes after Ayrton Costa was sent off for a second bad foul.

But the Buenos Aires giants held their nerve to secure their third win in four league outings.

Fernando Gago's men are now third in the 15-team Group A standings, behind leaders Estudiantes and second-placed Argentinos Juniors.

"In the first half we had time on the ball, and we threatened to hurt them, but we lacked that final pass," Gago said. "In the second half, we veered away from our game plan, but thankfully we were snatched a positive result."



Grant Fisher, of the United States, celebrates after winning the bronze medal in the men's 5000 meters final at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Aug. 10, 2024, in Saint-Denis, France. (AP)

Grant Fisher breaks world indoor mark in 5K meters

BOSTON, Feb 15, (AP): Grant Fisher broke his second world indoor record within a week when he shattered a 21-year-old mark in the 5,000 meters on Friday at the BU David Hemery Valentine Invitational.

The American crossed the finish line in 12 minutes, 44.09 seconds to eclipse the mark that Ethiopia's Kenenisa Bekele set on Feb. 20, 2004, by 5.51 seconds.

Last Saturday at the Millrose Games, Fisher broke the indoor world record in the 3,000 meters when he finished in 7:22.91. That broke the record of 7:23.81 set by Ethiopia's Lamecha Girma two years ago.

The last few days have been filled with world-record performances. Norway's Jakob Ingebrigtsen broke a world record in the indoor mile on Thursday, breaking Yared Nuguse's mark set just five days earlier at the Millrose Games. Ingebrigtsen finished in 3:45.14, improving on Nuguse's 3:46.63 in New York.

Ingebrigtsen, a two-time Olympic champion, also set the world indoor 1,500 meter record at the meet in northern France. He finished in 3:29.63 to lower his own mark that he established on the same track in 2022.

The world records are pending ratification by World Athletics.

Getafe stuns Girona with late Mayoral goal

Last-minute own goal gives Bologna 3-2 win over Torino in Serie A thriller

BOLOGNA, Italy, Feb 15, (AP): As debuts go they don't come much more unfortunate than this.

Cristiano Biraghi scored a last-minute own goal on his first appearance for Torino and gave Bologna a 3-2 win in Serie A on Friday.

With just seconds remaining, the ball hit the retreating defender and spun past his helpless goalkeeper.

It was a disaster for the recent signing from Fiorentina and marked the first defeat in eight games for Torino, which, after a shaky run in the final weeks of 2024, stabilized its form with six draws and a win in its previous seven games.

The match at Stadio Renato Dall'Ara had a bit of everything, including a double from Dan Ndoye.

A moment of inspiration from Eljif Elmas gave Torino a 2-1 lead 20 minutes into the second half, the on-loan striker from Leipzig nutmegging a defender and dinking the ball over the keeper.

Five minutes later, Ndoye took advantage of a penalty award to level the scores.

The result lifted Bologna one place into seventh and left Torino in 11th spot.

In Girona, Spain, Getafe won away for the second time in a week with



Bologna's Dan Ndoye scores from the penalty spot during a Serie A soccer match between Bologna FC and Torino at Renato Dall'Ara Stadium in Bologna, Italy, on Feb. 14, 2025, (AP)

goals for Christianus Uche and Borja Mayoral for 2-1 at Girona in La Liga.

The win came a week after it beat Alaves and lifted the Madrid club three places into 11th spot.

With three minutes gone, sloppy defending cost Girona. Ladislav Krejci was easily dispossessed inside his own penalty box and Uche made no mistake with a low drive.

'NEOM 2029 will be an exceptional edition'

Saudi Arabia to host 10th Asian Winter Games

HARBIN, China, Feb 15, (KUNA): Saudi Minister of Sports and Chairman of the Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee, Prince Abdulaziz Al-Faisal, stated that the 10th Asian Winter Games, scheduled to be held in the Saudi city of NEOM in 2029, will be an "exceptional edition that everyone will enjoy."

This was mentioned in a press statement by Prince Abdulaziz Al-Faisal on the occasion of Saudi Arabia officially receiving the flag of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) on Friday evening. The handover marked the Kingdom's hosting of the 10th edition during the closing ceremony of the 9th Asian Winter Games, held in the Chinese city of Harbin over the past few days, in the presence of officials and representatives from the 45 Asian member states of the council.

Prince Abdulaziz Al-Faisal emphasized that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is undergoing



The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) flag handover ceremony is seen during the closing ceremony of the 9th Asian Winter Games in Harbin, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, Feb. 14, 2025. (Xinhua)

"a major transitional phase in the sports sector, thanks to God Almighty, and through the generous directives and support the sports sector receives" from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and Crown Prince and Prime Min-

ister, Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

He added that this generous patronage has made Saudi Arabia "a preferred destination and an ideal home for major global and continental sporting events and activities."

Prince Abdulaziz Al-Faisal also expressed his deep gratitude to the Olympic Council of Asia and all Asian countries for their confidence in the Kingdom and its ability to position itself as "a global and continental preferred destination for athletes and fans alike." He highlighted that Saudi Arabia is the first country from West Asia to host this significant continental sports event.

During the ceremony, the official logo for the NEOM 2029 Games was unveiled. The logo is inspired by the NEOM Mountains, symbolizing strength and ambition, while the dynamic shapes formed by bodies on the snow represent the energy and vitality of winter sports. The letter "A" is distinctively incorporated into the design, reflecting the mountainous environment and encapsulating the essence of NEOM's "Future Rings" and its spirit of progress and innovation.

Swiss Rast wins women's slalom at Alpine skiing world championships

Shiffrin misses record-setting 16th career medal

SAALBACH-HINTERGLEMM, Austria, Feb 15, (AP): Camille Rast beat teammate Wendy Holdener as Switzerland took gold and silver in the women's slalom at the Alpine skiing world championships on Saturday.

Mikaela Shiffrin finished fifth and missed out on what would have been the American's record-setting 16th career medal from the worlds. She shares the best mark with German skier Christl Cranz, who won 15 medals in the 1930s.

Shiffrin had won a medal in slalom - including four gold - at all six previous world championships she competed in since 2013.

Rast held on to her first-run lead to beat Holdener by 0.46 seconds.

"Everything must fit to win a world title and today that was the case," Rast told Austrian TV. "We have a cool team spirit and push each other forward."

Rast was competing at her fifth worlds and won her first medal, after she took gold in slalom at the 2017 junior world championships.

Rast leads the slalom season standings after getting the first two World Cup wins of her career.

Holdener posted the fastest second-run time to improve from fourth position and earn her third silver medal at the worlds, after finishing runner-up in the team combined with Lara Gut-Behrami and in the mixed-team parallel event last week.

Katharina Liensberger was 1.32 seconds behind in third took bronze. The Austrian won the slalom world title in 2021.



Switzerland's Camille Rast, center, winner of a gold medal in a women's slalom, celebrates on the podium with silver medalist Switzerland's Wendy Holdener, left, and bronze medalist Austria's Katharina Liensberger, at the Alpine Ski World Championships, in Saalbach-Hinterglemm, Austria, Saturday, Feb. 15, 2025. (AP)

Liensberger edged out fourth-place Paula Moltzan for bronze by two-hundredths of a second. The American had won bronze in giant slalom on Thursday.

Shiffrin was third after the opening run, 0.72 behind Rast.

"I think that was some of the best skiing I've done lately," said the American star after the first run.

Shiffrin has eight gold, four silver and three bronze medals from her 19 races at the worlds since 2013.

Shiffrin won gold with American

teammate Breezy Johnson in the team combined on Tuesday but sat out the giant slalom two days later. She felt not ready yet to race GS after recovering from an abdominal injury sustained in a GS crash in Killington, Vermont in November.

"It was a big challenge to keep up with the pace, and for me especially on the end of the course," Shiffrin said. "It's like 15 seconds longer than anything I've skied since before Killington. I don't have very much in my legs left."

Zrinka Ljutic was one of the pre-race favorites after winning three of the last four slaloms on the World Cup circuit but the Croatian finished 2.73 seconds behind in ninth.

Defending champion Laurence St-Germain of Canada didn't finish her first run.

Olympic slalom champion Petra Vlhova didn't race as she's still recovering from knee surgery a year ago. The Slovakian standout told Austrian TV she had "no idea" when she might return to racing.

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Philippines, from left, Christian Haller, Enrico Pfister and Alan Frei competes against South Korea during the finals of men's curling at the 9th Asian Winter Games in Harbin, China on Friday, Feb. 14, 2025. (AP)

Sports

Al-Ajmi praises athletes' strong performance in debut

Kuwait shines in 9th Asian Winter Games closing ceremony



Mission Director Al-Ajmi with a number of members of the Kuwaiti delegation at the closing ceremony. KUNA photo

HARBIN, China, Feb 15, (KUNA): The 9th Asian Winter Games (Harbin 2025) concluded on Friday evening at the Harbin Convention Center in the Chinese city of Harbin. The event witnessed the participation of athletes from 34 countries, including Kuwait, with China securing first place, South Korea second, and Japan third.

During the week-long tournament, Asian athletes competed in 11 individual and team sports across numerous competitions. Some events were held indoors in the city, while others took place in snowy mountain regions outside Harbin, creating a competitive atmosphere marked by high sportsmanship.

The closing ceremony began with the entry of delegations from the participating countries, including Kuwait, which received warm applause from the Chinese audience. A representative of the Chinese Organizing Committee delivered a speech thanking all participating countries, followed by a speech from a representative of the Olympic Council of Asia.

Fahad Al-Ajmi, director of the Kuwaiti mission, expressed his pride in an official statement to the Kuwaiti media delegation. He highlighted the significance of raising the Kuwaiti flag at such a prominent continental sporting event, stating that it fosters pride and honor among Kuwaiti youth involved in winter sports.

Al-Ajmi expressed gratitude for the support of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as the Kuwaiti government's dedication to winter

sports. He emphasized that this support has contributed to the steady progress of Kuwait's athletes across various disciplines.

He praised the successful participation of the Kuwaiti delegation, noting that many players achieved remarkable results despite this being their first tournament. Al-Ajmi also commended the efforts of the Chinese Organizing Committee for their exceptional arrangements, which culminated in a "wonderful" closing ceremony.

Furthermore, Al-Ajmi congratulated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on receiving the tournament flag, as it prepares to host the 10th edition in 2029 in the Trojena region. This marks the first time the event will be held in the Arab region. He expressed confidence in Saudi Arabia's ability to organize an exceptional tournament, given its distinguished administrative capabilities.

China dominated the medal tally, finishing with 85 medals (32 gold, 27 silver, and 26 bronze). South Korea came in second with 45 medals (16 gold, 15 silver, and 14 bronze), followed by Japan in third with 37 medals (10 gold, 12 silver, and 15 bronze). Kazakhstan secured fourth place with 20 medals (4 gold, 9 silver, and 7 bronze).

Uzbekistan and the Philippines shared fifth place, each winning one gold medal. North Korea ranked seventh with one silver medal, while Chinese Taipei and Thailand shared eighth place with one bronze medal each. The remaining 25 participating countries did not win any medals during the tournament.

Kuwait Motor Clubs win first places at Arab Drag Race Championship in Doha

Abdulaziz Al-Suwailem crowned season champion

DOHA, Feb 15, (KUNA): Kuwait Motor Clubs achieved advanced positions in the sixth and final round of the Arab Drag Race Championship in the Qatari capital, Doha. The Kuwait Motor Club racers succeeded in securing several top spots in the championship, which concluded on Friday evening, including crowning racer Abdulaziz Al-Suwailem as the season champion in the (5.8 index) category.

Racer Muhammad Zaman won third place in the (0.9 index) category, while Abdulwahab Al-Saleem took second place in the (Pro Street Bike) category. Racer Hussein Al-Maqseed claimed first place in the (8.4 index) category.

Muhammad Al-Salem of the (965 Motor Club) secured first place in the (Street Bike) category, while his teammate Muhammad Al-Awad earned second place in the (Pro Bike) category.

Racers from the Basil Al-Sabah Motor Racing Club also won several top positions. Ahmed Karam took first place in the (5.8 bikes) category, Ali Rakan placed first in the (5.8 index) category, and Fahad Al-Khawari came in second in the (0.9 index) category. In the (Street Bike) category, Mohammed Al-Matrouk secured second place, while Musa Al-Balushi finished third. In the (8.4 index) category, Abdullah Al-Qallaf took third place. Abdullah Al-Matrouk and Mubarak Al-Awad claimed first and second places, respectively, in the (5.4 index) category.

In the (0.4 index) category, Am-



Kuwait Motor and Motorcycle Club Racers. KUNA photo

mar Hamid earned second place, and Badr Khorshid placed third. In the (Pro Bike) category, Mishaal Al-Saber took first place, while Ahmed bin Bilal and Mishari Al-Marri finished second and third, respectively, in the (Super Street Bike) category.

Jaber Al-Maghribi came in third in the (Super Street Pro) category, while Turki

Al-Dhafiri won first place in the (Super Street Outlaw) category. Basil Club competitors dominated the first three places in the (Pro NA) category, with Ali Abbas taking first place, Sayed Hussein Al-Haddad finishing second, and Khaled Al-Khalidi in third. In the (6 Cylinder) category, Mohammed Al-Aghbar earned second place.

A number of the club's competitors were crowned champions of the season in various categories. Fahad Al-Khawari claimed the title of season champion in the (0.9 Index) category, Nasser Burbaa in the (5.8 Bikes) category, Mohammed Al-Matrouk in the (Street Bike) category, Ahmed Al-Kaheel in the (5.4 Index) category, Bader

Khorshid in the (0.4 Index) category, Mishaal Al-Saber in the (Pro Bike) category, and Sayed Hussein Al-Haddad in the (Pro NA) category.

It is worth noting that the Arab Drag Race Championship, hosted by the Qatari capital Doha, launched last January and consists of six rounds.

Merino shines

Arsenal sinks Leicester 2-0

LEICESTER, England, Feb 15, (AP): Mikel Merino solved Arsenal's attacking problems with two late goals off the bench to secure a 2-0 win at relegation-threatened Leicester in the Premier League on Saturday.

With Arsenal's makeshift front three struggling to create chances, Merino - a central midfielder - came on in the 69th minute to play as a striker and quickly got on the end of two good crosses to decide the game.

The Spain international headed home a pinpoint ball into the box from 17-year-old Ethan Nwaneri in the 81st and then steered in a low cross from Leandro Trossard in the 87th.

Merino said manager Mikel Arteta only told him when he was about to go on that his job was to play up front.

"It was a bit of a surprise because it's the first time in my career I played that position," the 28-year-old Merino said. "But he told me go on as a striker and to make sure I go with my strengths. I think I solved it."

The win puts Arsenal within four points of leader Liverpool, which can restore the gap to seven points when it hosts Wolves at home on Sunday.

It was Arsenal's first game since leading scorer Kai Havertz sustained a season-ending hamstring tear in training in Dubai, joining striker Gabriel Jesus and winger Bukayo Saka on the long-term injury list.

While the front three of Trossard, Raheem Sterling and Nwaneri struggled to create chances, the latter produced another impressive performance to further boost his rapidly growing reputation.

The teenager hit the woodwork twice, shaving the top of the crossbar from outside the area on the hour mark and then hitting the post with a fierce strike in the 76th. And after scoring two spectacular recent goals against Girona in the Champions League and Manchester City in the league, Nwaneri turned provider this time for Merino's breakthrough goal.

"He's an amazing player," Merino said about Nwaneri, a product of Arsenal's academy. "I've been talking to him the whole season that I needed those kinds of balls when I'm arriving in the box. And he has such a wonderful left foot that he put it right on my head, so I could only score."

250 shooters vying for share of \$128,000 in prizes

Shotgun Grand Prix competitions kick off in Doha



Some of the participants in the tournament. KUNA photo

DOHA, Feb 15, (KUNA): The second edition of the Amir of Qatar Grand Prix for Shotgun kicked off on Friday at the Lusail Shooting Complex in Doha, with the participation of around 250 shooters representing 34 countries.

The first day of the tournament, which runs until February 21, featured official training for the skeet competition across four categories: men, women, youth, and young women. A total of 66 shooters participated in the men's category, 14 in the women's category, 16 in the youth category, and 5 in the young women's category.

The official skeet competitions will begin tomorrow on five fields, where shooters will compete by shooting at 75 plates distributed across three rounds. The competition will then continue on Sunday with two rounds of 50 plates, each consisting of 25 plates per round. The top six shooters will qualify for the final round, where they will compete for the top three positions. The competition will conclude with a ceremony to crown the winners.

Following the conclusion of the skeet competition, the trap competition for all four categories will begin next Monday.

Shooters in both the skeet and trap competitions will compete for podium positions and championship prizes. The Qatar Shooting Federation has allocated valuable prizes for the winners, amounting to 122,000 euros (approximately 128,000 US dollars).

China and Australia advance to quarters of AFC U20 Asian Cup

SHENZHEN, Feb 15, (Xinhua): Substitute Zhu Pengyu scored twice as host China defeated Kyrgyzstan 5-2 in AFC U20 Asian Cup Group A action on Saturday, securing a spot in the last eight.

Liu Chengyu broke the deadlock before Umar Madaminov equalized for Kyrgyzstan, only for Wang Yudong to restore China's lead just before half-time. Kyrgyzstan was reduced to 10 men early in the second half, allowing China to dominate the remainder of the match.

Liu opened the scoring in the 13th minute, finishing Wang Yudong's cross after Kuai Jiwen provided a through pass from deep on the left side. Kyrgyzstan responded in the 25th minute when Madaminov curled a left-footed shot into the far corner. Wang then put China back in front in the 45th minute with a composed penalty, sending the goalkeeper the wrong way.

Kyrgyzstan's challenge weakened just two minutes into the second half when Artem Istrashkin received a second yellow card, leaving his team a man down. China took advantage moments later as Mao Weijie extended the lead with a header.

Yrskeldi Madanov's header gave Kyrgyzstan a lifeline in the 65th minute, but China nearly restored its advantage five minutes later, only for substitute Zhu Pengyu's header to be denied by the crossbar.

However, Zhu made no mistake in the 80th minute, dribbling into the box and slotting the ball through the goalkeeper's legs to seal the victory. He struck again in injury time, heading home Wang Yifan's cross to complete the 5-2 win.

In an earlier match, Australia defeated Qatar 3-1. With both Australia and China winning their first two matches in the group, they have already secured their places in the final eight.