

ARAB ? TIMES

Scan the OR code to access the Arab Times WhatsApp Channel

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IN FREE KUWAIT Established in 1977 / www.arabtimesonline.com

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2025 / SHA'BAN 24, 1446 AH

emergency number 112

NO. 18833

16 PAGES

150 FILS

Kuwait's Amir congrats Saudi on Founding Day

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable on Saturday to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud on the occasion of the Kingdom's Founding Day.

In his message, His Highness the Amir praised Saudi Arabia's significant civilizational and developmental achievements across various sectors, enhancing its prestigious international standing. He also expressed pride in the deep-rooted fraternal ties between the ruling families of both nations, emphasizing their shared history and strong bilateral relations. His Highness wished King Salman continued health and prosperity for the Kingdom.

Similarly, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent congratulatory cables to King Salman, lauding the Kingdom's progress and wishing it further development and

His Highness the Amir also extended his congratulations to Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, commending the Kingdom's advancements and reaffirming Kuwait's commitment to strengthening cooperation at all levels. His Highness the Crown Prince and the Prime Minister sent similar cables, applauding Saudi Arabia's achievements under its leadership.

Continued on Page 5

KUWAIT AMIR JOINS CONSULTATIVE MEETING IN RIYADH



In this photo Arab leaders (left to right), Bahrain Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein of Jordan, Egyptian President Abdulfattah El-Sisi, Jordan Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah, and UAE's National Security Advisor Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al-Nahyan pose for a picture during their meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on Friday, Feb 21, 2025.

Leaders unite

RIYADH, Feb 22, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah took part in a fraternal consultative meeting with leaders of the GCC states, Egypt, and Jordan in Riyadh on Friday.

Initiated by Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman, the informal gathering brought together UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed, Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad, Jordanian King Abdullah II, and Egyptian President Abdulfattah El-Sisi. The meeting aimed to reinforce regional cooperation and unity amid pressing regional and international challenges.

Following the discussions, His Highness the Amir departed Riyadh, where he was seen off by Kuwait's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. He arrived back in Kuwait later in the evening and was received at the airport by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Minister of State for Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

Continued on Page 5

Saturday.

Experts urge action on

growing budget deficit

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Two experts have underscored the

urgent need for Kuwait to expedite the implementation of eco-

The Ministry of Finance has projected a KD 6.3 billion defi-

The experts warned that Kuwait's ongoing dependence on

cit in the upcoming budget, with oil revenue barely covering

salary expenditures and non-oil revenues continuing to decline.

oil revenue — a commodity subject to international price fluc-

tuations — poses significant risks. They suggested that borrowing from abroad, following the issuance of the Public Debt Law

Decree, could be a viable option; provided the funds are used

Businessman and economic expert Qais Al-Ghanim agreed

that utilizing public debt to finance development projects is not

inherently problematic, as long as the projects generate suf-

ficient returns to allow the government to repay the debt. He

emphasized the importance of conducting thorough studies to

consider putting them under a specialized body to improve Ku-

wait's credibility with international financial institutions. Both Al-Ghanim and economic expert Dr. Salah Borsali stressed the need for Kuwait to diversify its economy to reduce

He also recommended that the State evaluate its assets and

ensure that borrowed funds are allocated wisely.

nomic projects to tackle its growing budget deficit.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. Mustafa Madbouli on

Kuwait's travel market takes flight with KD 341 mln boost

More airlines, more passengers, more possibilities

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: A recent statistic showed a remarkable growth in travel activity to and from Kuwait over the past year as the total travel ticket sales in 2024 amounted to KD 341.2 million.

The newspaper obtained data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) which revealed that approximately 3.31 million tickets were sold in Kuwait's air transport market in 2024, marking a modest 0.12 percent increase compared to 2023, when 3.304 million tickets were sold.

May 2024 recorded the highest number of ticket sales with 338,000 tickets sold; followed by July with 331,000 and June with 299,000 tickets. In the summer season alone, more than a million tickets were sold, highlighting a surge in travel demand during this period.

The statistics also revealed that the Kuwaiti market accounted for 7.6 percent of all ticket sales in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Moreover, the report showed that the number of carriers operating at Kuwait International Airport has risen to 85 -- an increase of three carriers compared to 2023; while the number of licensed travel and tourism agencies in Kuwait now stands at 439.

Continued on Page 5

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Ahmadi security officers have ar-

rested a non-Kuwaiti man with a criminal record who ran over

doned off, and the suspect was arrested in under 15 minutes.

A large number of alcohol bottles were discovered in his pos-

session, while the injured officer was immediately transported

hicle after being stopped by a patrol for routine inspection, hit-

A security source revealed that the accused fled in his ve-

Following the suspect's escape, the area was swiftly cor-

a police officer in Abu Halifa before fleeing the scene.



various activities including bicycle race and walkathon. - See Page 16

Under the guidance of Assistant Undersecretary for Public

Security Affairs at the Interior Ministry Major General Hamad

Al-Muneifi and the leadership of Assistant Director of Ah-

madi Security Brigadier Hussein Dashti, the security officers

quickly sealed off the area, leading to the suspect's immediate

eral bottles believed to contain alcohol.

A thorough search of the vehicle led to the discovery of sev-

The necessary legal action has been taken against the ac-

The ministry emphasized that these steps are part of the

ongoing efforts by the Ahmadi Security Directorate within the public security sector to maintain public safety and or-

cused who was referred to the concerned authorities.

Photo by Mohammad Morsi Participants fill Sheikh Jaber Bridge on Saturday morning for Kuwait Sports Day, with a vibrant turnout of all ages enjoying

Non-Kuwaiti with criminal record caught with alcohol haul

Hit-and-run suspect arrested in record time

sovereign fund to support local projects. While recognizing that borrowing is common even in strong economies like the United States, he stressed that borrowed funds should be invested in projects that strengthen Kuwait's economic and service infra-

Borsali proposed using profits from the State's trillion-dollar

structure. Al-Ghanim voiced concerns about the entry of foreign investments into Kuwaiti bank shares and the exit of private com-

panies to neighboring countries. He attributed these trends to

Continued on Page 5

areas till Monday

effectively.

reliance on oil.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: The Ministry of Electricity and Water announced that maintenance work is being carried out on several secondary transformer stations in 15 areas, which will result in partial power outages in some residential areas from Saturday to Monday from 8:00 am for a duration of four hours, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

On Saturday, the following areas experienced partial power outages: Al-Sabah Health Zone, Al-Oyoun, Saad Al-Abdullah, Shamiya, Rumaithiya,

Abdullah Al-Mubarak. On Sunday, February 23, power will be cut off in the following areas: Hawally, Mangaf, Fahaheel, Fintas, Saad Al-Abdullah, Al-Naseem, Qurain, Sabah Al-Salem, Rehab, and Sabah Al-Nasser. These areas will experience partial power outages on February 24 as well.

'Power cuts' in 15 Ministry enforces strict safety rules for 'National Day

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: The Ministry of Interior has confirmed that the use of water balloons or water guns will not be allowed during the national celebrations, reports Al-Seyassah

During last year's national holiday celebrations, Kuwait witnessed an unprecedented level of adherence to the ministry's warnings regarding negative behaviors that had been repeated in previous years before 2024.

In a post on its X platform account, the ministry also declared that children are prohibited from leaning out of vehicle windows or openings in

order to ensure their safety. It affirmed that it will begin enforcing the new traffic law starting April 22, which includes penalties for serious violations such as running red

Newswatch

to the hospital.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: The First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, and Chairman of the Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Nationality Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah issued decision No. 52/4-2 for the year 2025 to revoke the Kuwaiti nationality of 13 individuals based on Article 11 of Amiri Decree No. 15/1959 regarding Kuwaiti nationality, reports

13 individuals lose

Kuwaiti nationality

ting the police officer in the process.

Al-Seyassah daily.

CAIRO: Secretary-General of the Arab League Ahmad Aboul-Gheit said on Saturday he looks forward for a unified Arab position to back the steadfastness of Palestinians.

Speaking during the seventh conference of the Arab Parliament and chairmen of Arab legislatures at the Arab League's H.Q, Aboul-Gheit affirmed the rejection of displacing Palestinians and supporting alternative initiatives.

The Arab region is going through the most dangerous period in its modern history, as the Palestinian cause, which has a great position inside all Arabs, is facing a plan of liquidation through the displacement of Palestinians after destroying land, he said.

He said the idea of displacing Palestinians is rejected on Arab and international levels, as it is illicit, immoral and

He underlined the exceptional impor-

tance of the collective Arab voice in this decisive period. (KUNA)

ISTANBUL: The Turkish Airlines said Saturday it was forced to cancel some flights to and from Istanbul Airport (IST) scheduled for Sunday, "due to the expected adverse weather conditions" in

"In this regard, additional rights have been granted to passengers whose flights have been cancelled," the national flag

carrier said in a post on its X account. "For the latest information regarding your flight, you can check our flight status page or make inquiries via TK Asistan on WhatsApp. You can also find detailed information about ticket changes and refund requests," it added.

Air traffic over the Black Sea region has been chaotic over the past three days with dozens of flights being rescheduled due to bad weather. (KUNA)

NBK launches Ramadan 2025 'Doing **Good Deeds' campaign** with interactive community initiatives





Markaz records total revenue of KD 20.31 mln for 2024



Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr attends the national days celebration at Embassy of Kuwait in Switzerland

Expected weather for next 24 hrs: By Day: Mild and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-45

km/h with a chance for rising dust. By Night: Cold and partly cloudy

Weather with light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind to northerly wind, with speeds of 12-45 km/h.

Station **Max Exp** Min Rec **Kuwait City** 26 Kuwait Airport

Abdalv Bubyan 14 13 16 16 12 10 Jahra Failaka Island Salmiyah Ahmadi Jal Aliyah Nuwaisib

Kuwaiti embassies mark Nat'l, Liberation Days

Celebrations bolster global ties: Permanent Rep to UN

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22, (KUNA): Kuwaiti embassies in Algeria, Lebanon, Germany, Portugal, Pakistan, and Vietnam marked Kuwait's 64th National Day and 34th Liberation Day with official celebrations attended by ministers, ambassadors, senior officials, and other guests.

Algeria

The Kuwaiti Embassy in Algeria hosted a reception at its headquarters, where Acting Charge d'Affaires Khaled Al-Yoha conveyed his congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and the people of Kuwait, and emphasized the strong relations between Kuwait and Algeria, highlighting ongoing preparations for the next joint committee meeting, which aims

to enhance economic and trade cooperation.

Al-Yoha also reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to peaceful crisis resolution and praised Algeria's role in the UN Security Council, reiterating Kuwait's stance on Palestinian rights, supporting a two-state solution based on 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as the capital, while condemning any forced displacement of Palestinians, and reaffirming Kuwait's support for Saudi Arabia's stability and sovereignty, as well as for Syria's reconstruction efforts.

Lebanon

In Beirut, Kuwaiti Charge d'Affaires Yassin Al-Majed highlighted the historical ties between Kuwait and Lebanon, emphasizing Kuwait's unwavering support for Lebanon's sovereignty and stability, and congratulated Lebanon on its political progress following the election of a new president and government.

Representing Lebanon's leadership, Minister of State for Administrative Development Fadi Makki praised Kuwait's consistent support for Lebanon throughout various challenges, and Member of Parliament Ayoub Hmayed extended Lebanon's gratitude to Kuwait, reaffirming aspirations for stronger bilateral relations.

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Germany Reem Al-Khaled highlighted the strong bilateral ties between Kuwait and Germany, spanning over 60 years in political and economic cooperation, and expressed gratitude for Germany's steadfast support during Kuwait's liberation in 1990.

Portugal

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Portugal Hamad Al-Hazeem reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to deepening relations with Portugal across political and economic sectors, during the embassy's celebration, he announced the successful formation of a major Portuguese trade delegation currently visiting Kuwait to explore investment opportunities.

Pakistan

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Pakistan Nasser Al-Mutairi extended his congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and to the people of Kuwait

Pakistan's Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain praised the historical bilateral ties between Kuwait and Pakistan, and also extended his best wishes to Kuwait's leadership and the people of Kuwait on the occasion of the National and Liberation Days celebrations on the behalf of the Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif and the people of Pakistan, and he also expressed Pakistan's eagerness to expand cooperation in trade, industry, and defense.

Vietnam

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Vietnam, Yousef Al-Sabbagh reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to strengthening its 49-year diplomatic ties with Vietnam, and Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Le Thi Thu Hang praised Kuwait as the first



Staff members of Kuwaiti Embassy in London.



KUNA photos



Celebrations in embassy at Rabat.

GCC country to establish diplomatic relations with Vietnam in 1976 and a key contributor to its development programs.

She highlighted the USD 7.3 billion bilateral trade volume in 2024 and commended Kuwait's role in Vietnam's energy security through the Kuwait-Japan-Vietnam Nghi Son Refinery, and expressed confidence in Kuwait's Vision 2035 economic plan, and lauded Kuwait's efforts to position itself as a global financial and trade hub.

Across the six nations, Kuwaiti diplomatic missions underscored Kuwait's strong bilateral relations, commitment to international cooperation, and unwavering support for regional and global stability, and the celebrations reinforced Kuwait's vision for continued economic growth and strengthened partnerships worldwide.

Also, Kuwait's diplomatic missions in Slovakia, Switzerland, Brunei and Italy celebrated the country's 64th National Day and 34th Liberation Day with official events attended by ministers, ambassadors and senior guests.

Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva Nasser Al-Hayen said the national celebrations strengthen





Cake-cutting at embassy in Slovakia.

global ties and reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to collective action for a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Al-Hayen emphasized that this event reflects Kuwait's cooperative approach and openness to the world under the leadership of His Highness Amir Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Kuwait emphasizes a diplomatic approach that promotes international peace and security, which is evident from its UN Security Council membership (2018-2019) and ongoing role in the Human Rights Council until 2026. It seeks support for its continued membership until 2029.

Al-Hayen affirmed Kuwait's dedication to humanitarian and human rights principles such as justice, gender equality, and the rights of vulnerable groups.

Peaceful coexistence

He stressed the importance of tolerance and peaceful coexistence for human development within the New Kuwait 2035 vision framework. Kuwait has become a reliable international partner in humanitarian efforts, offering aid to crisis-affected countries through UN cooperation and bilateral initiatives.

This commitment reflects a core principle of Kuwait's leader-

ship human solidarity is a moral responsibility beyond diplomacy. Al-Hayen praised the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development for its 411 grants to 148 countries, showcasing Kuwait's dedication to global development and stability in

developing communities. He noted that the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development has provided 411 grants to 148 countries, underscoring Kuwait's commitment to global sustainable development.

Kuwait underscores the importance of dialogue in diplomatic relations for global stability and is dedicated to collaborating with international partners on human rights, sustainable development, and peace.

The ceremony drew UN officials, ambassadors, interna-

tional representatives, and members of the Kuwaiti community in Switzerland.

Brunei

In Brunei, Acting Charged Affaires Khaled Al-Farhan congratulated His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince of Kuwait during a Royal Brunei Polo Club ceremony. He wished the Kuwaiti government and people continued

security and prosperity under the Amir's leadership. Al-Farhan highlighted the strong ties between Kuwait and Brunei, stressing the need to enhance these relations through se-

nior official visits and increased economic and trade cooperation. The ceremony showcased a presentation on Kuwait's economic and urban development, emphasizing infrastructure

projects that attract foreign investment.

Notable attendees included Mohammad Azmi Hanifah, Brunei's Deputy Minister of Energy, senior officials, diplomats, and influential business leaders.

Italy

Kuwait Embassy in Rome hosted a reception to mark the 64th National Day and 34th Liberation Day with senior Italian officials, including the Undersecretary of the Italian Ministry of Defense and other dignitaries, taking part. Welcoming his guests, Ambassador to Italy Nasser Al-Qahtani praised the strong historical relations between Kuwait and Italy.

He extended congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Embassies and consulates of Kuwait in multiple countries have begun celebrating the anniversary of Kuwait's 64th National Day and the 34th Liberation Day in the presence of an official and diplomatic rally with a number of attendees from ministers, ambassadors, and officials.

Dubai

On this occasion the consulate in Dubai and northern UAE, alongside embassies in Belgium, Thailand, Albania, Azerbaijan, Lebanon and Algeria celebrated the occasions of both the National and Liberation days.

In a statement to KUNA the Consul General of Kuwait in Dubai Khalid Al-Zaabi during the celebrations presented highest congratulations and blessings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and to Kuwait's government and people on this occasion, wishing the country with perpetuate security and safety.

The event was held in an atmosphere that reflected the national spirit and pride with various artistic and cultural paragraphs, with the history of Kuwait reviewed through paintngs that reflect the stages of development of the country.

Several Kuwaiti companies partook in the celebrations showcasing their products and services, where pavilions showcased their role in supporting the national economy and promoting sustainable development.

Brussels

In Brussels Ambassador to Belgium and Head of its mission to the European Union and NATO Nawaf Al-Enzi, said during the celebrations that Kuwait is keen and committed to strengthen distinguished relations with Belgium, EU, and NATO in various fields, expressing his appreciation for the high-level presence.

The ceremony was attended by officials from Belgium, European Special Envoy for the GCC Luigi Di Maio, NATO special Envoy for the Southern Region Javier Colomena, deputies from the European and Belgian parliament, as well as editors in chief of European newspapers and media channels.

Other Voices

Ethics in diverse societies

By Ahmad alsarraf

Socities behave differently based on their diverse perspectives, whether it involves disregarding rules, regulations, or fundamental standards of decency and safety.

In some societies, failing to adhere to appointments has long been a well-established custom. In addition, behaviors in public spaces like restaurants and theaters such as holding the door for others or thanking those



who provide services have become defining traits of our societies. However, these behaviors can change in individuals within hours, often the time it takes to travel from one country to another or even from one area to another within the same country

For example, shoppers in one mall may behave more politely than those in another, which is a common occurrence. Also, some people suddenly begin using more polite or refined language, especially with those who serve them, frequently saying phrases like "Thank you," "Please," and "May I."

There is a concept known as the "shopping cart theory", which refers to how people handle the cart after using it. The percentage of people who return

it. The percentage of people who return the shopping cart to its designated location varies from one society to another. This percentage tends to increase when the cart requires a coin deposit that can be refunded upon its return.

It has also been observed that the more backward a society is, the higher the average of those who neglect to return the shopping cart to its designated

Many countries impose fines for actions like spitting in the street, littering, or disturbing others, but no country fines individuals for failing to return a shopping cart. As a result, adherence to this simple

act has become an indicator of a society's level of sophistication or backwardness. In many ways, a person's character can be better understood by how they handle the shopping cart than through any scientific or religious test.

In addition to the lack of a law requiring carts to be returned, this action often demands extra effort from the shopper, who must search for the designated cart return area and take the cart back, despite the fact that he usually feels tired after shopping. Psychologist and consultant Tati Silva

explains that the way an individual handles the shopping cart often reflects their personality, which is shaped by both genetics and the environment in which they were born, raised, and educated. It also relates to their belief in virtues such as honesty, kindness, and a sense of responsibility. These virtues are revealed over time through various situations. People are greatly influenced by the situations they encounter. If someone chooses not to return the shopping cart, it reflects their character. They might justify their actions because there is no law to prevent them or to indicate that they are wrong for not returning the cart to its designated spot. This behavior persists because it falls on the individual to decide what is right, wrong, good, or bad, as there are no clear social norms or rules to define whether this behavior is acceptable.

Silva also believes the shopping cart theory can be applied to other behaviors, such as littering, tossing cigarette butts, chewing gum, or discarding used masks and gloves on the ground. Even actions like laughing at someone who has fallen or failing to hold the door for others reflect an individual's character. These behaviors may occur out of habit or without awareness, rather than for any specific reason.

However, this can be changed by expanding self-awareness and teaching morals, manners, and proper education, which falls under the responsibility of

email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

Amir congratulates Saint Lucia on Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to Governor General of Saint Lucia Errol Charles, on his country's Independence Day

His Highness wished the Governor Gen-

eral a long healthy life and more development and prosperity for Saint Lucia and its people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to Governor General of Saint Lucia Errol Charles, on his country's In-

dependence Day on Saturday, wishing Errol a long healthy life.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to Governor General of Saint Lucia Errol Charles, on his country's Independence Day on Saturday.

Heartfelt condolences on demise of 2 soldiers: Russian envoy

Potholes dot road to settlement with Ukraine: Geltov



Russian ambassador with ambassadors, diplomats.

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Russian Ambassador to Kuwait Vladimir Geltov said the 'Defender of the Fatherland Day', which Russians celebrate on Feb 23 every year, has a special significance for the Russian people.

In a press statement during the reception organized by the Russian Embassy to celebrate the 'Defender of the Fatherland Day', Geltov stressed "this is a dear and honorable occasion that we have been celebrating for 100 years. Therefore, celebrations are held in Russia or in Russian embassies abroad.' In the presence of a diplomatic and military crowd, he stated: We offer our

condolences to Kuwait, His Highness the Amir, the government and people for those who were martyred while on duty. Military work is fraught with risks." Regarding military cooperation between Kuwait and Russia, he disclosed "we have security and military cooperation with Kuwait. About 10 days ago, the joint military exercises in Kuwait -- between the Russian National Guard

forces and the Kuwaiti Special Forces -- ended. In return, we are waiting for

the Kuwaiti team from the Special Forces in Russia next summer.' On the Russian-American meeting in Riyadh and its outcome, he pointed out that using the word "optimism" is inaccurate, as Europe and Ukraine are suffering from frustration. "This was expected given the presence of many external players in the Ukrainian equation and America only cares about its own interests," he elaborated.



Photos by Rizk Taufiq Ambassadors and diplomats at the ceremony.

He pointed out that the road to a settlement with Ukraine is full of obstacles and artificial and non-artificial bumps, as the settlement is still far away and there are major obstacles standing in the way of the desired goal -- to reach an agreement that guarantees security for everyone.

About Russian confidence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, he affirmed that the Saudi leadership is characterized by wisdom. He added "Russian-Saudi relations do not prevent us from achieving the desired goals. Perhaps, the conversation between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Saudi Crown Prince His Highness Prince Mohammad bin Salman regarding Saudi Arabia hosting Russian-American consultations is the best evidence of the confidence of the Russian and American parties in Saudi Arabia.'

On his assessment of the Arab and Gulf diplomatic movements and initiatives, especially the Kuwaiti ones, concerning the situation in Syria and Gaza he explained that the Palestinian issue is extremely difficult and complex due to the internal factors and external interventions that unfortunately carry a clear desire to expel and displace the Palestinians. He stressed that Russia is with the Palestinian people and their right to exist on their land and birthplace, adding that the positions announced by the Arab leaderships are

He stated that the Palestinian people deserve a decent life on their land, indicating that Russia hopes for Arab unity and a single Arab voice to reject all attempts to replace the real settlement of the Palestinian issue with imaginary scenarios to liquidate the Palestinian issue, empty it and bury it.

considered the best manifestation that there is no room for retreat.

diwaniya 🕐 چيوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Stop buying Zubaidi ... rates will plummet to rationality

"DURING the time of Caliph Omar bin Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), meat merchants raised their prices, so people went to Al-Farouq asking him to intervene and lower the price. They told him: The meat has become expensive, so set the price for us," **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"He told them: Make it cheaper. They asked: How can we make it cheaper, O Commander of the Faithful? He responded: Leave it to

them (merchants). "So, the people stopped buying meat for days. When the meat got spoiled at the butchers, the merchants were forced to reduce the price. Caliph Omar presented a simple economic theory for the peo-



Al-Dawas

ple. He could have ordered the reduction of prices, but he wanted to teach them the way to eliminate high prices.

"In October 2013, some people in Saudi Arabia launched a campaign entitled, 'Leave it to spoil,' to boycott tomatoes and refrain from buying them until the sellers were forced to reduce the price. The boycotters raised banners stating, 'Leave it on the shelf. Do not raise prices, the alternative is waiting. 'Leave it to rust' and 'Leave it to spoil' are slogans that had a positive impact later on, as the merchants were forced to return the prices to their previous state.

"In Argentina, people woke up one morning to find that poultry and egg merchants had agreed to raise the price of eggs, but the Argentineans were more resourceful and intelligent. One went to the supermarket and when he found out that the price of eggs was high, he returned the item to its place. This was the case for all Argentineans. They agreed on the 'leave it to spoil' idea.

"The merchants waited for days, and the people waited as well. Days passed and the 'greedy' merchants got involved, so the eggs piled up in refrigera-tors, warehouses, stores and groceries without any buyer. After a few days, the merchants agreed to sell the eggs at the previous price, but the people refused to buy them in order to discipline the merchants. Thus, the merchants were forced to reduce the price, but the people still refused to buy the eggs

"Did the story end here? No, the people did not buy the eggs, so the merchants were very upset because their losses were accumulating. Finally, they agreed to sell the eggs at a quarter of the price before the increase, with a public apology published in the newspapers including the promise not to repeat what

The story ended here. The wise Argentineans emerged victorious in their battle with the merchants. They were from the original price. Congratulations

"The examples we mentioned are an application of a law in economics that 'if consumer demand decreases, the price of the commodity decreases'. I wish we could focus on this particular issue in our daily lives.

"The price of Zubaidi in our local markets is very high. How could the price of three pieces of fish range from KD9 to KD13 in a country like Kuwait, overlooking the sea? The sea is supposed to be generous and the price must be low. Come and take this group of fish for one or two Kuwaiti Dinars only.

"Imagine, my dear reader, if people boycotted the fish, it would pile up at the merchants and spoil over the hours. It would have to be sold and the merchants would have no solution but to reduce the

"Let us do like the Argentineans and Saudis whenever the price of a commodity increases

"What happened is basically an eco-nomic theory that says 'if demand decreases, the price decreases'."

"Just a few days separate us from the month of goodness, blessings, and happiness that Ramadan, as always, spreads across hearts. Throughout its blessed days, one feels comfort, tranquility, and serenity, far from anything that disturbs the atmosphere. This month will also be a great opportunity for families to gather around one table, and for relatives and friends who have not met for months due to ongoing commitments, daily life circumstances, and various responsibilities", columnist Dr. Mubarak Alabdulhadi wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"The blessed month of Ramadan is also an opportunity to train the souls that have neglected, for months or days, many religious, ethical, and moral obligations, values, principles, and customs. These should be an inseparable part of us as we live in peaceful societies always striving for good. This will be reflected and witnessed in the extended iftar tables and the assistance provided to the poor and needy, both locally and abroad.

"More importantly, it is necessary to stop and address the issue of extravagance, which is evident in some iftar tables that end up being wasted. In addition, the rush by some people to markets and cooperative societies causes overcrowding and chaos, especially on the first day of the blessed month or just a few days before it, as if the food will vanish unless they hurry to get it.

"Fasting is an act of worship, not a habit, and therefore it is a religious and educational process aimed at teaching endurance and patience. As such, souls should not rush as if in a race against time when breaking their fast, to avoid overeating and other issues

"Furthermore, it is important to prepare for this blessed month by developing good morals in treating others and refining one's behavior, rather than allowing some individuals to become disruptive and harmful under the excuse of being fasting.

"Some employees' behavior becomes very difficult, and some drivers transform into aggressive beasts, attacking anyone who comes near them. Also, there are some who use fasting as an excuse for their bad behavior. Some others resort to using cushions and sleeping continuously, sometimes until the time of Iftar, to pass the fasting hours.

"The question is: How do these individuals experience the true essence of worship throughout the blessed month, especially since they are eager to take leave from work during this time due to their inability to bear fasting during working hours, which are few and hardly noticeable?

"This blessed month is an opportunity to reset oneself, and reflect on the essence of worship in the morals and behavior of the fasting individuals, ensuring that their fast is not reduced to merely abstaining from food, but remains a true act of wor-

"In conclusion, Ramadan Mubarak in

"When files related to citizenship forgery were exposed and the list of those whose citizenship had been revoked was published in the official gazette, unexpected voices began to rise to argue against the revocation of citizenship for certain individuals, claiming that their kindness should be considered," columnist Fawaz Ahmad Al-Hamad wrote for Al-Qabas

"However, what is built on falsehood remains false. Kuwait does not wrong anyone, rather, individuals wrong themselves by engaging in identity forgery, citizenship fraud, and deceiving the people, government, state institutions, and even banks. The forger may have been a skilled actor who was able to deceive everyone for a long time, but the truth cannot be hidden forever.

"A forger, but he is kind, a killer, but he prays, a thief, but he is generous -these expressions all convey the same message: leniency toward forgers and lawbreakers, and a call to not apply the law on them. However, we live in a state of institutions, where individuals from all walks of life are incarcerated based on judicial rulings, because the law is applied equally to everyone.

— Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh/Simi K. Kutty

Kuwaiti gang nabbed for stealing 4 vehicles

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: The Sabah Al-Ahmad Investigations Department at the Criminal Security Sector in the Interior Ministry referred four Kuwaiti citizens to the Public Prosecution for stealing four vehicles, including a bulldozer, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source disclosed that the detectives need more time to complete the investigations, but the legal period for these citizens to remain under investigation has ended prompting the detectives to refer the suspects to the Public Prosecution.

He added it is expected that further investigations will prove the suspects have stolen dozens of vehicles.

The source said the department had earlier been instructed to look for unknown persons who stole a Japanese-made half-lorry and a bulldozer from a company in Sabah Al-Ahmad.

He also confirmed the formation of a team that identified and arrested the suspects, in addition to the recovery of the stolen bulldozer, half-lorry and two other vehicles that were reported stolen at Andalusia Police Station.

The source disclosed that the accused, including minors, admitted to stealing vehicles using fake keys, with the intention of dismantling the vehicles and selling spare parts or scrap, indicating one of the suspects has a criminal re-

Maid commits suicide: A domestic worker, born in 2001, committed suicide by hanging inside her room at her sponsor's house in Sabah Al-Ahmad, reports Al-Anba daily. The Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received information about the incident, so it immediately dispatched a security team to the location.

The person who reported the incident told police that he went to sleep around 10:00 pm. When he woke up the next day, he did not see the domestic worker, so he thought she ran away. He then went to her room, only to find her body hanging from the top of the door.

A case was registered and investigations are ongoing to determine the circumstances that prompted the domestic worker to end her own life.

Expat electrocuted: A 39-year-old expatriate machinery lubrication technician died due to electrocution in Al-Qash'aniya, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source said the Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received information about the work-related accident in Abdally.

Securitymen and medical emergency workers were then dispatched to the accident site. The worker was rushed to Jahra Hospital where he was declared dead on arrival

Initial investigations revealed that the victim worked at an engineering construction company and he was electrocuted while working under a power line tower, specifically due to a ground cable in an under construction



Ministry of Defense Undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Major General Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah visit the injured soldiers.

'Army personnel safety top priority'

Qatar, Oman express regret over martyrdom of troopers

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense Undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Major General Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah visited the two Kuwaiti Army personnel who were injured during a joint military exercise with the US army (Desert Observer).

In a statement on Friday, the ministry said that during their visit to Al-Jahra Hospital, the two officials followed up on the health of the injured officers, wishing them a speedy recovery.

The statement quoted the Deputy Chief of Staff as saying that the safety of members of the Ground Forces is a priority for the Kuwaiti Army, thanking the medical staff for their quick response.

Qatar

The State of Qatar expressed on Friday its solidarity with the State of Kuwait over the martyrdom of two servicemen and the injury of others during a night shooting exercise with live am-

The Qatari news agency QNA quoted a statement by the Qatari Foreign Ministry expressing Qatar's sincere condolences and sympathy to the families of the two martyrs and the government and people of Kuwait, wishing the injured a speedy recovery.

The General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army had announced the martyrdom of two members of the land force and the injury of others during a night shooting exercise with live ammunition on Wednesday evening.

Oman

The Sultanate of Oman expressed on Friday its heartfelt condolences to the State of Kuwait over the martyrdom of two military personnel who lost their lives while carrying out a live ammunition drill.

In a statement, Oman's Ministry of

Foreign Affairs said it shares Kuwaiti brothers' sadness over this incident, adding that the Ministry voiced sympathy to the victims' families, praying to Allah to bestow his mercy upon their souls and wishing a rapid recovery for those wounded.

Power theft in farms probed

Wafra, Abdali livestock pens targeted

By Mohammad Ghanem Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy (MEW) is currently conducting an extensive inspection campaign to uncover electricity and water violations in agricultural lots, equestrian stables and industrial areas.

Head of the judicial control team Abdullah Al-Aibani confirmed this campaign is in compliance with the directive of Assistant Undersecretary for the Customer Service Sector and Head of the Follow-up Committee Falah Bader Al-Mutairi, who also laid down the plan to implement Law No. 48/2005. He affirmed the campaign aims to discover violations like illegal extensions in the electrical and water networks or wastage of such vital resources.

Al-Aibani disclosed the inspection campaign in Kabad has concluded and it continuing in Jahra stables, to be followed by the agricultural areas in Wafra, Abdali, Sulaibiya and livestock pens. He said they are currently coordinating with the relevant authorities and ministries to obtain approval to conduct joint inspection campaigns in these areas.

He explained that the plan aims to put an end to violations in remote and industrial areas in order to reduce pressure on the electricity and networks. He added the judicial control team will be in

various governorates, indicating that increasing the number of members to 27 judicial officers will support the work, as the judicial officers will control violations, each according to his jurisdiction.

He affirmed that warnings will be issued and cases of water or electricity wastage will be recorded. He added that tampering, extension violations or encroachments on the network will be reported and the electricity will be disconnected immediately. "The violator must visit the relevant committee in the ministry for reconciliation orders and pay the fine or be referred to trial," he warned.

He urged the public to extend a hand of cooperation with the judicial control team by reporting violations through hotline numbers 152-153 round the clock, asserting that legal measures will be taken immediately.



The driver of the vehicle died.

Apartment on fire

Driver perishes as SUV smashes into light pole

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: A vehicle crashed into a light pole on Umm Safaq Road on Saturday, resulting in the death of the driver.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters from Wafra fire station rushed to the location after receiving information about the accident and handed over the site to the relevant authorities for investigation.

Apartment on fire: Firefighters from Farwaniya and Sabhan fire stations extinguished a fire that broke out in an apartment of a residential building in Farwaniya on Saturday morning. According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), the incident did not result in any deaths or injuries.

Minister sacks 3 officers to instill discipline, order

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: In a step aimed at instilling discipline and commitment in the security sector, First Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf issued decisions to dismiss an officer for being active in various social media sites and two policemen who were proven to have assaulted a prisoner, reports Al-Rai daily.

A security source told the daily that after reviewing an officer's appearance in comic clips uploaded on social media, the Control and Inspection General Department formed a committee that investigated the officer who confirmed the authenticity of the clips.



Worker critical after altercation

Police hunt mobile grocery thief

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: The Public Prosecution has instructed the Jahra Investigations Unit to arrest an unidentified person who did not only steal items from a mobile grocery store but also dragged the expatriate grocery worker after deliberately pinning him into the car window and drove for about 30 meters, causing severe injuries to the expatriate who is now confined at the intensive care unit in Jahra Hospital and is said to be in critical condition, reports Al-Anba daily.

The case has been tentatively classified as robbery by using force, which will change in the event the victim dies.

According to a security source, the Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received a report about an expatriate, born in 1974, who was rescued from a public road. The report stated that the expatriate suffered from abrasions in the face, scalp and right leg, bruises in the legs and left knee and injuries in other parts of the body. It added that the victim was rushed to Jahra Hospital.

The source confirmed that police officers were dispatched to the hospital where they saw the victim in a vegetative state.

The source revealed that an expatriate born in 1981 informed Sulaibiya Police Station about the incident. The witness narrated: I was waiting in my vehicle when I noticed a golden fourwheel drive vehicle parked in front of the grocery store where the victim When the order was delivered, an argument ensued between the suspect and the grocery worker. The suspect closed the car window and the worker clung to it. The suspect drove for about 30 meters, dragging the victim and then opened the window suddenly, so the worker fell on the ground.

The witness added that the accused fled to an unknown location. He provided police with the plate number of the suspect's vehicle.

In collaboration with the General Traffic Department, police found out that the suspect is wanted by law for a misdemeanor theft case filed at the same police station. The deputy public prosecutor was informed about this development and investigations are ongoing to arrest the suspect.

KUNA photo

Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi during his tour of the exhibition.

'Expo 965 showcases **Kuwait rich heritage'**

Al-Baghli honored for his contributions

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22, (KUNA): Minster of Information and Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi said on Thursday the "Expo 965" exhibition creates atmosphere for innovation and creativity that bring authenticity and modernity together in a manner that goes in harmony with **Kuwait's position.**

This contributes to enhancing the national identity and cements "our" cultural values, Al-Mutairi added in a speech while opening the 6th edition of "Expo 965" exhibition on rare heritage and possessions.

He noted that the "outstanding event is an honorable window of Kuwait's authentic heritage and shows keenness of us all to protect traditional handcrafts and highlight the innovations of Kuwaiti craftsmen"

The event embodies a message of maintaining heritage and transferring it to the upcoming delegations, through embracing national talents and backing crafts' projects as well as spreading cultural and heritage awareness, the minister pointed out.

The expo coincides with National Days' celebrations, which make happiness and joy, and the country's hosting of "Kuwait as the Arab capital of media and culture for 2025", he elaborated.

He referred to high turnout at this expo, indicating this shows much attention of handicrafts and heritage, and eagerness of the Ministry of Information, and the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) to create a stimulating environment to upgrade talents and skills. In a speech delivered on behalf of "Expo

965" general coordinator and founder Mohammad Kamal, Dr. Ali Al-Nejada said Ibrahim Al-Baghli was chosen for this year's outstanding personality due to his contributions to maintaining Kuwait's heritage and handicrafts for years.

Al-Nejada said about 300 persons of the team, along brothers from GCC states, are partaking in this year's edition, in addition to the participation of about 750 others from national, voluntary and official bodies.

Dozens of dignitaries in different fields will be honored during this year's expo, which includes a large number of pavilions, he stated.

Award-winning works highlight nation's artistic brilliance

Kuwait Fine Arts Festival honors creativity

By Medhat Allam Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: The Kuwait Society for Fine Arts organized the opening ceremony of Kuwait Festival for Fine Arts Creativity, under the patronage of Ambassador of Kuwait to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Honorary President of the Society Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

The exhibition showcased various artworks, including photography, sculpture and ceramics, in the context of the development and remarkable presence of the Kuwaiti fine arts scene.

At the awarding ceremony for the winners of the festival competition, head of the Kuwait Society for Fine Arts artist Abdul



Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah with Rasoul Salman during the opening ceremony.

Rasoul Salman stated: "I present to you a bouquet of fragrant roses, full of longing. We live moments of joyful demonstration with our national celebrations, which fill our hearts with joy and deepen the feelings of friendship and love among everyone in the most beautiful images

of loyalty to our homeland.

The artistic diversity that we witnessed while touring the exhibition is a testament to the cognitive and cultural diversity that our beloved Kuwait is witnessing in raising the value of the art and cultural scene and what it reflects as an image of the reality of social life, in addition to youth experience, some of

which presented models of artistic development and the use of heritage and reality that contribute to the advancement of the art movement in Kuwait."

He praised the efforts of Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, considering the exhibition coincide with National Day and Liberation Day, as well as the declaration of Kuwait as the Capital of Arab Culture and Media 2025.

He added: "All thanks

and appreciation to His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his wife for their continuous presence and support. We cannot express gratitude in return for this flowing torrent of good feelings of happiness. To everyone who contributed and participated with us in this artistic event, we express our feeling of confidence and feeling under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may Allah protect him and his loyal Crown Prince. It is a memory immortalized in the history of yesterday, and we live its joy today, to draw the hope of the future.'







Photos by Mohamed Morsi

Awarding ceremony for the winners of the festival competition.

Over 2,000 flags raised to celebrate national holidays

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Kuwait Municipality has completed all preparations to commemorate the country's national holidays under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the Director of the Public Relations Department and spokesperson of Kuwait Municipality Mohammed Al-Sindan explained that the Decorations and Flag Installation section in the Public Relations Department

raised more than 2,000 Kuwait flags of various sizes on masts distributed throughout the country. In addition, 138 mobile advertisements have been installed under the slogan "Pride and Dig-

Palace in Jahra Governorate, in addition to maintaining 490 flagpoles on bridges and their bases from Amiri Airport to Bayan Palace.

A number of masts were installed at the Red

Al-Sindan urged both citizens and residents to

cooperate with the field decorations monitoring teams, and stressed the importance of preserving the flags and reporting any damaged ones for re-

He praised the initiative by the Legal Department of Kuwait Municipality, led by Director Hussein Al-Ajmi, to organize a celebration for employees on Wednesday in honor of the upcoming Independence and Liberation Day anniversa-



35%

DISCOUNT OFF ON ROOM RATES

 In-house guests can avail of a 15% discount on all food and beverage consumption.

 Walk-in guests can enjoy a fantastic 15% discount at the Fish Market Restaurant.

Promo period from 24th February - 28th February 2025

Tel: +973 17701201 - Ext. 351 Email: reservation@albander.com

Terms & conditions apply*

www.albander.com

Bangladesh Ambassador's message

Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuhu

I, on behalf of the people, the Government of Bangladesh and from my own behalf, would like to extend our heartiest congratulations and warm greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Government and the brotherly people of the State of Kuwait on the auspicious occasion of the 64th National Day and 34th Liberation Day

of the State of Kuwait. Kuwait's journey since independence has been remarkable. From its strategic role as a trading hub in the Arabian Gulf to becoming a global leader in oil production and financial services, Kuwait has consistently demonstrated resilience, innovation, and a commitment to progress. The nation's ability to rebuild and thrive after the challenges of the 1990 invasion is a testament to the strength and unity of its people.

As we celebrate this joyous occasion, we also



Ambassador of Bangladesh - Major General Sved Tarea Hussain, OSP, awc, psc

recognize Kuwait's con-

tributions to regional and global peace. Kuwait has emerged as a beacon of diplomacy, fostering cooperation and dialogue in the Gulf region and beyond. Its efforts in humanitarian aid, mediation, and sustainable development have earned it respect on the international stage.

The strong bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Kuwait are a source of pride. Over the vears, our relations and partnership have grown stronger, encompassing many fields with par-

ticular focuses on human resources, trade, investment, development, and defence sectors. We believe that both our countries have the potential to further consolidate these relations through more interactions for mutual benefit of our two countries. We look forward to deepening this collaboration in the years to come. working together to address global challenges and promote shared prosperity.

On this special day, we join the people of Kuwait in celebrating their rich cultural heritage, vibrant traditions, and the spirit of unity that defines their nation. We also wish continued peace, progress and prosperity to the brotherly people of Ku-

May the Kuwaiti flag continue to fly high, symbolizing freedom, pride, and hope for future generations

Major General Syed Tareq Hussain, OSP,

awc, psc Ambassador of Bang-

ladesh

KFAS, Nature Masterclass empower researchers at bioethics workshop

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) and the Nature Masterclass recently concluded the bioethics workshop at the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations (KIMS).

Numerous researchers and students in the field attended the workshop, which focused on international ethical standards in clinical

KFAS said this workshop provided a valuable opportunity for early-career clinical researchers to learn about international ethical standards related to human research participants, ensuring their safety and identifying disease risk factors. This knowledge will ultimately facilitate the publication of high-quality research, it affirmed.

Dr. Jeffrey Robbins, Head of the Department Community Interaction in Nature Portfolio, conducted the workshop, which also aimed to equip clinical researchers with the tools and knowledge needed to improve the quality of their research, aligning it with global ethical standards.

Robbins, who holds a doctorate from the



ethical clinical research standards with local researchers.

University of Pennsylvania, has extensive experience in conducting training workshops globally to enhance the quality and impact of scientific publications.

The workshop is in line with the vision of KFAS to foster a thriving scientific and innovative culture in Kuwait by encouraging investment in scientific research and staying abreast of scientific and technological ad-

CSC ends social development deadline

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: The Information Systems Sector at the Civil Service Commission (CSC) has been tasked to delete the tardiness records of evening shift employees in government departments in the fingerprint attendance system, if any and exclude them from the grace period granted to employees, reports Al-Anba daily.

Sources explained there is no fingerprint attendance system for evening shift employees in government departments.

In another development, sources told the daily that the deadline granted by the CSC to the employees of the Social Development Office to complete the procedures for them to work other government entities ended Thursday

Asked about the possibility of extending the deadline, sources pointed out this decision is in the hands of the CSC officials who are keen on protecting the interests of em-

It is important to mention that the distribution of these employees to the new government agencies has been completed and the initial deadline ended last Sunday.

State-of-the-art facility set to serve victims across Middle East and Africa

Egypt inaugurates first burn hospital with Kuwaiti support

CAIRO, Feb 22, (KUNA): The first burn hospital in Egypt is officially in effect as of Thursday thanks to the donation of the heirs of the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

During the opening ceremony, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah gave a speech expressing sincere happiness for this occasion and for the hospital that under his father's name has officially opened, and for the hospital's waiting room that is under his uncle's name late Sheikh Sabah Mohammad Sabah Al-Sabah.

He also greatly valued the role the hospital plays for the people of Egypt, Middle East, and Africa to serve as the first hospital specializing in burned victims.

The enclosure of preparing the major operating and waiting rooms comes thanks to the strong bilateral relations between Kuwait and Egypt especially in the health sec-

He also mentioned his mother's efforts in this project Sheikha Dr. Suad Mohammad Al-Sabah and her continued support as she and his father both visited the burned victims of the October war of

He also said, "I had the honor of sponsoring the ceremony of the Ahl Masr Foundation for Development which was held in Kuwait on December 2, 2019" were this initiative was embarked on.

Sheikh Abdullah presented great thanks to all those who contributed to these efforts and the success of



KUNA photo Opening of the two major operating and waiting rooms at the 'Ahl Masr' Hospital with a donation from the heirs of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-

its initiative to provide an opportunity for a better life for those victims.

The hospital is designed and equipped with the most modern utilities with the capacity of 200 beds of which 40 specialized for intensive care units, as well as a nursery center equipped to rescue and treat children, and an emergency department to receive more than 30 cases per minute.

It also contains operating rooms, a physical rehabilitation center, physiotherapy, and a psychological rehabilitation center among other departments and services that are aimed at the goal of saving the lives of burnt victims and reducing the rates of mortality, disability and deformities, and scheduled to provide service to 200,000 cases

Attending the ceremony was former Prime Minister, Honorary President and Member of the Board of Trustees of the Ahl Masr Foundation for Development, Ibrahim Mahlab, advisor to the President of Egypt for Economic Development, former Minister of

Planning and Economic Development, and member of the Board of Trustees of the Ahl Masr Foundation for Development, Dr. Hala Al-The opening was also attended

by the Head of Kuwaiti Health office in Cairo, Dr. Muhammad Al-Ajmi, the executive director of the Ahl Masr Foundation, Iman Sharif and the Director of Ahl Masr Hospital Dr. Refaat Abdel Maksoud.

Zakat provides 10 tons of food aid for Ramadhan

Kuwait sends 30th relief aid plane to Syria

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22, (KUNA): Kuwait's 30th relief flight from Kuwait's air bridge departed on Friday to Damascus International Airport, carrying 10 tons of food aid, as part of "Kuwait By Your Side" campaign.

Kuwait Zakat House, in coordination with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense, as well as Kuwait Air Force, organized this latest initia-

In a pre-takeoff statement to KUNA, Zakat House's Observer of Projects and External Bodies Ayed Al-Mutairi said his charity would keep delivering various relief aid to the Syrian people. especially with the approaching of the holy month of Ramadhan, at the behest of the political leader-

He added that Kuwait's 30th aid plane contains foodstuff involving flour, oil and date, with a view to answering the needs of the Syrian people.

He added that today's humanitarian supplies were determined in coordination with Syrian Arab Red Crescent, revealing that 20 trucks carrying relief supplies would be sent to Syria in the coming pe-

This plane is Kuwait Zakat House's sixth relief flight, bringing its overall aid shipments to 168 tons of the Kuwaiti air bridge to Syria, which now stands at a total of 727 tons



Official entities participating in the 30th relief flight to Syria.

Continued from Page 1

Experts urge

the absence of taxes in Kuwait's financial system and the lack of a favorable investment environment for the private sector.

He also pointed out that banks are not providing sufficient loans for construction projects, and that private sector capital is often invested abroad due to higher returns.

He suggested that raising government service fees could improve the budget, although he acknowledged that it would take time for the government to realize profits from its devel-

opment projects. Borsali recommended opening the door to foreign labor in the private sector to support the execution of development projects and bolster the national economy.

In general, these experts' recommendations emphasize the urgent need for Kuwait to address its financial challenges through strategic investments, a more diversified economy, and a more attractive business environment for both local and foreign investors.

Kuwait's travel

Sources privy to the matter told the newspaper that agencies at the airport are intensifying efforts to coordinate flight schedules for the upcoming summer season, which is expected to see a high volume of passengers.

Civil aviation authorities will grant operational approvals based on passenger terminal capacity and the allocation of shares to approved airlines. The goal is to enhance operational efficiency and improve the overall travel experience for passengers. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has also been proactive in expanding air transport connections, recently signing several bilateral agreements with various countries. These efforts are aimed at further strengthening Kuwait International Airport's connectivity to major global and regional airports, sources added.

Kuwait's Amir

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah congratulated Saudi Interior Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, while Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah sent a cable to his Saudi counterpart, Prince Khaled bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, extending his best wishes on the occasion.

In cables to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, His Highness the Amir expressed deep appreciation for the warm hospitality extended to him and his delegation. He lauded Saudi Arabia's leadership and pivotal role in regional and global affairs, particularly its unwavering support for the Palestinian cause.

The Amir also emphasized the significance of ongoing coordination among regional nations to address shared challenges and aspirations, ensuring a more stable and prosperous

Kuwait offers water tech to Latin America

By Mohammed Ghanem Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy Wednesday organized an exploratory visit for the ambassadors of Latin American countries to learn about the water desalination technologies used in Kuwait including flash distillation, reverse osmosis, and multiple-effect distillation, and consider their implementation in their countries to deal with the water crisis expected to occur in Latin America in the coming

During the visit, the ambassadors were accompanied by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy Dr. Adel Al-Zamel.

The ambassadors toured the distilleries and the control room at the Doha East Power and Water Distillation Plant, as well as the reverse osmosis water desalination system and its control room at the Doha West Power and Water Distillation Plant. Dr. Al-Zamel expressed the ministry's readiness to share its 70+ years of expertise in the field of water desalination.

He affirmed that Kuwait is a leading country in water desalination and high-quality water production, and reiterated the ministry's willingness to transfer this knowledge to other nations.

Municipal Council to review land use and environmental proposal

Municipality sets leave deadline

document property represented as

■ Proposal of members Sherifa

Al-Shalfan and Abdullatif Al-Da'i

to study the use of water collection

basins and sewers during torrential

Plot 1A/1 in survey plan;

By Inaas Awadh part of Block Three in Sharq, represented by the remaining part of the

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: The Municipal Council headed by Abdullah Al-Mahri will hold its 13th regular session for the third session on Sunday to discuss the following:

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

■ Request of the Kuwaiti Society for the Development of the Educational System to use a vacant land in Salmiya for the establishment of its headquarters;

■ Amiri Diwan's request to deduct 1,161 square meters from Hind Intermediate School for Girls in Jabriya, with a total space of 27,613.25 square meters; ■ Ministry of Electricity and Re-

newable Energy's request to allocate a site for a secondary transformer Station No. 1 in Jabriya, Block 10; ■ Proposal of member Sherifa

Al-Shalfan regarding the recycling of plastic bottles and their caps; Final approval to reorganize

and Financial Affairs Committee, headed by Fahad Al-Abduljader, held its third meeting, during which it decided to postpone talks

rains in Kuwait.

On the other

hand, the Legal

on the proposal

Al-Mahri

of the committee chairman on the establishment of an electronic platform for municipal violations

It also returned to the executive body to provide it with a technical opinion on the two items related to the proposal submitted by member

Abdullatif Al-Daai on allowing the

setback of a roofed area for commercial activities; proposal of members Abdullatif Al-Daai and Sharifah Al-Shalfan to amend Article Four of the Roads, Squares, Sidewalks and Public Squares Occupancy Regulations; and set aside the request of the heirs of Abdul Hamid Al-Qattan regarding naming Street Two in Surra, Block Four, after the late Abdul Hamid Al-Qattan.

Meanwhile, the Kuwait Municipality's Financial and Administrative Affairs Sector has instructed all departments to submit their mission and study leave requirements for fiscal 2025/2026 to the Administrative Development and Training Department by March 5.

The submissions should align with the Municipality's work and will be used to create the annual plan for missions and study leaves.

This initiative aims to enhance employee skills and keep them upto-date with advancements, ultimately improving the operational efficiency and service delivery of the Municipality.

Ministry of Commerce and Industry



RECALL INFORMATION







Speaker/Strobe

Horn/Strobe

Tyco Fire Products LP is the manufacturer of the Simplex branded TrueAlert ES Addressable Notification Appliances (including sounders, horns and visual strobes) manufactured on or after January 19, 2021 (for Xenon Type Notification Appliances) and on or after August 19, 2021 (for LED type Notification Appliances) until August 18, 2022, and marketed and sold in Kuwait by Bader Al Mulla & Bros Co. (the "Affected Products"). This announcement does not include the following products:

- All Addressable Notification Appliances manufactured before January 19, 2021 or after August 18, 2022
- All LED Type Notification Appliances manufactured before August 19, 2021 or after August 18, 2022
- All Addressable Speaker Only Notification Appliances

RECALL **REASON**

Tyco Fire Products recently became aware of an issue that potentially impacts certain of the Affected Products, such as sounders, horns and visual strobes. We learned that if an Affected Product, experiences a memory chip issue and becomes non-responsive, one or more additional Affected Products on the same fire alarm system hardwire loop may also become non-responsive, with the result being that those Affected Products may not sound or strobe in the event of an alarm ("Impacted Appliances"). Some, but not all, Impacted Appliances with speakers may then "chirp."

REMEDY

Tyco Fire Products has performed advanced testing and implemented a remedy for the issue. This issue is resolved through a firmware update to the Affected Products that is implemented through the fire alarm control panel at all sites containing these devices. Any Impacted Appliances that do not recover following the firmware update will be replaced.

If you believe that you have an Affected Product, please reach out to us in order for us to evaluate your system, and, if necessary, implement the firmware update and replace devices as needed.

All Affected Products that require replacement must be responsibly disposed of in compliance with applicable laws. They may not be resold or reused.

CONTACT Address

For any questions, please contact Tyco Fire Products LP and its local agent, Bader Al Mulla & Bros Co on the following contact details:

Phone **Email** Fax

: Tel +965 60747963 : emerson.toquero@almullagroup.com

: +965 2225 0880

: Street number 10, Shuwaikh Industrial Area Next to FedEx Depot, Off Canada Dry Street Kuwait City, Kuwait.

Mailing address: P.O. Box: 177, Safat, 13002, Kuwait

This Recall is run pursuant to articles (42,43,44,45,46,47 and 48) of no. (27/2015) issuing the executive by laws no. (39/2014) on Consumer Protection



Fully Furnished & Serviced Apartments

Located in

for Companies & Individuals

Salmiya, Salwa, Surra, Bayan Mangaf, Mahboula & Fintas

- 24 Hours Security & Maintenance
- Recreational Facilities Satellite & Internet

Contact Details

Office: +965 22465888 / 22452700 Website: www.aaahousing.com Email: house@aaahousing.com

'Acacia Center for Justice may resume all activities'

WH reverses previous decision, reinstates legal aid for migrant children

MIAMI, Feb 22, (AP): Days after telling legal groups who help migrant children who arrive in America alone - some so young they are in diapers or their feet dangle from their chairs in court - that they must stop their work, the federal government Friday reversed itself.

The Trump administration told the groups that they can resume providing legal services to tens of thousands of unaccompanied children. The Acacia Center for Justice said that they received notice from the government of the

The notice came after the government on Tuesday suspended the program that provides legal representation to children who have arrived in the United States across the border with Mexico without parents or legal guardians. Several organizations that offer assistance to migrant children had criticized the measure and said at the time that the minors were at risk.

The \$200 million contract allows Acacia and its subcontractors to provide legal representation to about 26,000 children and legal education to another

The Friday notice from the United States Department of Interior obtained by The Associated Press does not explain the Trump administration decision to reinstate the program. I states that it "cancels" the order to halt legal services to migrant children.

"Acacia Center for Justice may resume all activities," the short notice says. Shaina Aber, executive director of Acacia said that they will continue to work with the government "to ensure that these critical services upholding the basic due process rights of vulnerable children are fully restored" and their partners can resume their work.



Children cover their heads as they sit outside of a migrant shelter on March 13, 2024, in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago. (AP)

She warned, however, that this is a "critical moment to ensure that no child is forced to navigate" the immigration system alone.

Acacia said that in less than 48 hours, members of the public sent more than 15,000 letters to the Congress demanding the resumption of the program. The program is funded by a five-year contract, but the government can decide at the end of each year if it renews it or not. The deadline for this year's decision is in March.

Michael Lukens, the executive director of Amica Center for Immigrant Rights, one of the subcontractors, said that despite the reversal he is still concerned.

"I'm very concerned because the attack on children is unprecedented and to even begin that is troubling," Lukens said. He said if the stop-work order had remained in place, it would have left kids across the country without due

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2008 created special protections for children who arrive alone in the U.S. The law said the government should facilitate legal representation for the children put into deportation proceedings, though it did not mandate every child have a lawyer.

Unaccompanied children under the age of 18 can request asylum, juvenile immigration status, or visas for victims of sexual exploitation.

Some of the organizations that provide legal representation said the decision to restore funds ensures the continuation of vital protections for vulner-

"We urge the administration to stay this course by exercising the remaining year services under this existing contract," said Wendy Young, president of the Kids in Need of Defense, one of the organizations that assists migrant

Trump fires chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Brown

WASHINGTON, Feb 22, (AP): US President Donald Trump abruptly fired Air Force Gen CQ Brown Jr. as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Friday, sidelining a history-making fighter pilot and respected officer as part of a campaign led by his defense secretary to rid the military of leaders who support diversity and equity in the ranks.

The ouster Brown, only the second Black general to serve as chairman, is sure to send shock waves through the Pentagon. His months



in the job had been consumed with the war in Ukraine and the expanded conflict in the Middle East. "I want to thank General Charles 'CQ' Brown for his over 40 years of service to our country, including as our current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He is a fine gentleman and an outstanding leader, and I wish a great future for him and his family," Trump posted on social media.

Brown's public support of Black Lives Matter after the police killing of George Floyd had made him fodder for the administration's wars against "wokeism" in the military. His ouster is the latest upheaval at the Pentagon, which plans to cut 5,400 civilian probationary workers starting next week and identify \$50 billion in programs that could be cut next vear to redirect those savings to fund Trump's priorities.

Trump said he's nominating retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Dan "Razin" Caine to be the next chairman. Caine is a career F-16 pilot who served on active duty and in the National Guard, and was most recently the associate director for military affairs at the CIA, according to his military biography.

Caine's military service includes combat roles in Iraq, special operations postings and positions inside some of the Pentagon's most classified special access programs.

However, he has not had key assignments identified in law as prerequisites for the job, including serving as either the vice chairman, a combatant commander or a service chief. That requirement could be waived if the "president determines such action is necessary in the national interest.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, in a statement praising both Caine and Brown, announced the firings of two additional senior officers: Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti and Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. Jim Slife.

Franchetti becomes the second top female military officer to be fired by the Trump administration. Trump fired Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan just a

day after he was sworn in. A surface warfare officer, Franchetti has commanded at all levels, heading U.S. 6th Fleet and U.S. Naval Forces Korea.



Agents love this guy: Trump

US Attorney General Pam Bondi, (right), arrives for a swearing-in ceremony for Kash Patel, President Donald Trump's new director of the FBI, (left), joined by Alexis Wilkins, on Feb 21, in the Indian Treaty Room at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House campus in Washington. (AP)

Texas and Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio.

Trump added that the "agents love this guy." Patel will inherit an FBI gripped by turmoil as the Justice Department over the past month has forced out a group of senior bureau officials and made a highly unusual demand for the names of thousands of agents who participated in investigations related to the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol.

Democrats had for weeks sounded the alarm about the appointment, saying they fear Patel will operate as a loyalist for Trump and abuse the FBI's law enforcement powers to go after the president's adversaries. They've cited past comments, such as his suggestion before he was nominated that he would

"come after" anti-Trump "conspirators" in the government and media.

Patel sought to assuage those concerns at his confirmation hearing last month, saying he intended to follow the Constitution and had no interest in pursuing retribution, though he also said at his swearing-in Friday that reporters had written "fake, malicious, slanderous and defamatory" stories about him.

Meanwhile, Republicans angry over what they see as law enforcement bias against conservatives during the Democratic Biden administration, as well as criminal investigations into Trump, have rallied behind Patel as the right person for the job.

Patel has repeatedly spoken of his

desire to implement major changes at the FBI. That includes a smaller presence in Washington - he once said he thought the decades-old FBI headquarters in Washington should be closed down and reopened as a "museum of the deep state" - and a renewed emphasis on the bureau's traditional crime-fighting duties rather than the intelligence-gathering work that has come to define its mandate over the past two decades as national security threats have proliferated.

He said Friday that the FBI's "national security mission" was equally important as its efforts to fight violent crime and drug overdoses.

"Anyone that wishes to do harm to our way of life and our citizens, here and abroad, will face the full wrath of the DOJ and FBI," Patel said. "If you seek to hide in any corner of this country or planet, we will put on the world's largest manhunt and we will find you and we will decide your end-state.

A former Justice Department counterterrorism prosecutor, Patel was selected in November to replace Christopher Wray, who was picked by Trump in 2017 and who resigned at the conclusion of the Biden administration to make way for his chosen successor.

Wray infuriated Trump throughout his tenure, including after FBI agents searched his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida in August 2022 for classified documents in one of two federal investigations that resulted in indictments against Trump that were dismissed after his election win. FBI directors are given 10-year terms as a way to insulate them from political influence and keep them from becoming beholden to a particular president or administration.

US vice president criticizes Germany's free speech laws in remarks to conservatives

BERLIN, Feb 22, (AP): U.S. Vice President JD Vance has criticized Germany's free speech laws during an appearance at a conservative gathering outside Washington, linking the country's limits against hate speech to American troops stationed there.

German law sets restrictions on free speech, including the long-standing ban on Holocaust denial and any glorification of the country's Nazi past.

The limits are an effort to curb extremism and incitement, and have led to authorities policing the internet for hate speech and arresting the peo-ple allegedly posting, and reposting, such comments. "There are thousands upon thousands of American troops in Germany today. Do you think that the American taxpayer is going to stand for that, if you get thrown in jail in Germany for posting a mean tweet? Of course they're not," Vance told activists gathered Thursday at the Conservative Political Action Conference.



US Vice President JD Vance, walks on stage to speak at the Conservative Political Action Conference, CPAC, at Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center on Feb 20, in Oxon Hill, Md. (AP)

There are nearly 84,000 U.S. service members in the European Theater, according to the U.S. Department of Defense. The figure fluctuates, however, and has increased since the start of the Russia-Ukraine war on Feb. 24, 2022.

in offices in other cities.

promise to the American public that

FBI agents will be in communities fo-

cused on combatting violent crime. He

has directed FBI leadership to imple-

ment a plan to put this promise into ac-

tion," the FBI said in a statement that

did not provide any specifics. The per-

son who discussed Patel's vision did so

on condition of anonymity to describe

plans that have not been made public.

on Thursday by a 51-49 margin, with

two Republican lawmakers, Susan

Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski

of Alaska, breaking party ranks and

called the opportunity to lead the na-

tion's premier federal law enforcement

agency the "greatest honor" of his life.

ever at that position," President Don-

ald Trump told reporters Friday ahead

of the ceremony, which was conducted

by Attorney General Pam Bondi and

attended by Republican supporters in

Congress, including Sen Ted Cruz of

"I think he'll go down as the best

At his swearing-in ceremony, Patel

voting against him.

Patel was confirmed by the Senate

The U.S. military is stationed throughout Germany, according to U.S. European Command, including at Ramstein Air Base. A count of U.S. service members in Germany wasn't

immediately available on Friday. Vance's remarks followed his speech earlier this month at the Munich Security Conference, where he lectured European leaders about the state of democracy and free speech across the continent. His comments were met with rebukes from multiple European leaders, including German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

"Obviously we're going to continue to have important alliances with Europe," Vance told CPAC moderator Mercedes Schlapp. "But I really do think the strength of those alliances is doing to depend on whether we take our societies in the right direction."



People gather in Bratislava, Slovakia on Feb 21 to mark the seventh anniversary of the slayings of an investigative journalist and his fiancee – Jan Kuciak and Martina Kusnirova. (AP)

Thousands rally in Slovakia to mark '18 slayings of journo, fiancee

Thousands rallied all across Slovakia on Friday to mark the seventh anniversary of the slayings of an investigative journalist and his fiancee.

The rallies are part of a wave of protests against the pro-Russia policies of populist Prime Minister Robert Fico. People in Slovakia's capital, Bratislava, observed a minute of silence to honor Ján Kuciak and Martina Kušnírová, both age 27, were shot dead at their home in the town of Velka Maca, east of Bratislava, on Feb.

The killings prompted major street protests unseen since the 1989 anti-communist Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia. The ensuing political crisis led to the collapse of a coalition government headed by Fico.

Kuciak had been investigating possible government corruption, among other issues, when he was killed. People applauded the parents of Kuciak and the mother of Kušnírová who greeted them from the stage.

"I believe that our common fight will be successful, said Jozef Kuciak, the father of Ján. (AP)

Russia says 'Trump-Putin summit preparations underway'

MOSCOW, Feb 22, (AP): Preparations are underway for a face-to-face meeting between US President Donald Trump and Russia's Vladimir Putin, Russia's deputy foreign minister said Saturday, marking a dramatic shift away from Western isolation of Moscow over its war in Ukraine.

Speaking to Russian state media, Sergei Ryabkov said a possible Putin-Trump summit could involve broad talks on global issues, not just the war

"The question is about starting to move towards normalizing relations between our countries, finding ways to resolve the most acute and potentially very, very dangerous situations, of which there are many, Ukraine among them," he said.

But he said efforts to organize such a meeting are at an early stage, and that making it happen will require "the most intensive preparatory work."



In this file photo taken, July 16, 2018, US President Donald Trump shakes hand with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the end of the press conference after their meeting at the Presidential Palace in Helsinki, Finland. (AP)

America

Blast injures 7: A suspected gas explosion in the grill area of a Hawaii beachside resort has injured seven people, including three in critical condition, according to hotel management and police on Maui.



suggested liquefied petrole um gas, which supplies barin the resort's

evacuate, the

Department

said, and pre-

liminary in-

vestigations

common area was involved in the explosion. Hawaii's governor is Josh Green. (AP)

Snowboarder killed: A snow-

boarder was killed in an avalanche in the mountains of southwestern Colorado on Thursday, the fourth person to die in an avalanche in the U.S. West this week after a string of winter storms. Sarah Steinwand, 41, of Crested Butte, Colorado, was caught in the debris of the avalanche in the backcountry near Silverton, but a man who was skiing with the snowboarder escaped the snow slide, the Colorado Avalanche Information Center said. (AP)

US offers UN resolution on war in Ukraine that stops far short of competing European statement

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 22, (AP): The United States has proposed a draft UN resolution that stops far short of a competing European-backed statement demanding an immediate withdrawal of all of Moscow's forces from Ukraine.

Both are timed to the third anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which falls on Monday, when the U.N. General Assembly will vote on the nonbinding resolutions.

It sets up a clash between the United States and Europe as the strength of the transatlantic alliance has been called into question over the Trump administration's extraordinary turnaround on Russia, opening negotiations with Moscow after years of isolation as the USlooks to broker a rapid end to the war. European leaders were dismayed that their officials and those from Ukraine weren't invited to preliminary U.S.-Russia talks this week in Saudi Arabia.

The very short U.S. draft resolution offers mourning for "the tragic loss of life throughout the Russia-Ukraine conflict" and "implores a swift end to the conflict and further

urges a lasting peace between Ukraine and Russia."
Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia told U.N. reporters about the US resolution, "It's a good move.'

Russia also suggested an amendment, seeking to add the phrase "including by addressing its root causes" so the final line of the U.S. resolution reads, "implores a swift end to the conflict, including by addressing its root causes, and further urges a last-

ing peace between Ukraine and Russia." By contrast, the draft resolution from the European Union and Ukraine refers to "the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation" and recalls the need to implement all previous assembly resolutions "adopted in response to the aggression against Ukraine."



Ambassador to the United Nations Vasily Nebenzya shakes hands with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi before a Security Council meeting on Feb 18, at the UN headquarters. (AP)

South Korea protests against Japan's repeated territorial claim to disputed islets

SEOUL, Feb 22, (Xinhua): South Korea on Saturday protested at Japan's repeated territorial claims to the disputed islets lying halfway between the two countries, called Dokdo by South Korea and Takeshima by Japan.

South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that the South Korean government strongly protested against Japan's unjust repeated sovereignty claims over Dokdo, which is an integral part of the South Korean territory historically, geographically and under international

The ministry also expressed a strong protest against the attendance of a high-level Japanese government official at the "Takeshima Day" event hosted by Shimane Prefecture.

The prefecture has held annual events to claim its administrative sovereignty over the rocky islets since it designated Feb. 22 as Takeshima Day

The islets, covering an area of about 0.18 square kilometers, are claimed by South Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan. South Korea currently controls the islets.

SEOUL: The Democratic People's Republic of **Korea** (DPRK) has condemned **US** military provocations, vowing to counter the strategic threat posed by the United States and other enemies with strategic means, reported the official Korean Central News Agency on Saturday, citing a defense official.

The United States and its followers are getting evermore pronounced in their military provocations threatening the DPRK security environment since the **Trump** administration returned to office, the chief of Information Office at the DPRK Ministry of National Defence was quoted as saying in a statement on Friday.

The statement lashed out at an array of recent military moves by the United States and South Korea, including a joint live firing drill near the DPRK southern border, the U.S. deployment of a nuclear submarine in South Korean city of Busan and its air reconnaissance operations targeting the DPRK of various tactical and strategic reconnaissance planes, as well as a plan to beef up the large-scale joint military exercises Freedom Shield between the two countries in March

tion of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to follow the lofty wills of the top leaders of the two parties and countries and continuously strengthen and develop friendly relations between the DPRK and China, the DPRK's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Pak Myong Ho has said.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and the last year to implement the five-year plan put forward by the WPK's 8th Congress, and it is also the final year of China's 14th Five-Year Plan, Pak said while meeting with Chinese Ambassador to the DPRK Wang Yajun at the Chinese embassy on Tuesday.

Pak hoped that the two countries will continue to make new and greater achievements in socialist construction, and the two sides will strengthen exchanges and cooperation to promote DPRK-China relations to a higher

For his part, Wang said that over the past year, China-DPRK relations have made new progress under the personal care and strategic guidance of the top leaders of the two parties and coun-



In this undated photo provided on Jan 29, 2025, by the North Korean government, its leader Kim Jong Un, second from top, inspects a facility that produces nuclear material at an undisclosed location in North Korea. (AP)

Beijing expels Philippine aircraft over South China Sea

China issues warning of live-fire exercises to planes flying above: Australia

MELBOURNE, Australia, Feb 22, (Agencies): Airliners were over the Tasman Sea crossing between Australia and New Zealand when the Chinese navy warned they were flying over a secret live-fire exercise, Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles said on Friday.

Regulator Airservices Australia warned commercial pilots of a potential hazard in airspace between the countries as three Chinese warships conducted exercises off the Australian east coast.

But Marles said Australian authorities only learned about China's livefiring plans in international waters midway between Australia and New Zealand from the airlines.

"To be clear, we weren't notified by China," Marles told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio in Perth.

"What China did was put out a notification that it was intending to engage in live firing. By that, I mean a broadcast that was picked up by airlines or literally ... commercial planes that were flying across the Tasman," Marles said.

"This was very disconcerting for the planes that were flying," he add-

Three flights from Sydney bound for the New Zealand cities of Christchurch and Queenstown were in the air on Friday morning before they were first warned by a Chinese warship of a live-fire exercise, media re-

All changed course. The three airlines involved, Emirates, Qantas and Virgin Australia, did not comment.

Marles said the Australian navy would typically give 12 to 24 hours' notice of a live-firing exercise to allow airlines time to properly plan

But he said all flights were able to divert and no one was put in danger.

The warships - frigate Hengyang, cruiser Zunyi and replenishment vessel Weishanhu - are exercising a freedom of navigation in international waters off the Australian east coast of a kind that angers Beijing when exercised by the Australian military in the disputed South China Sea.

During a regular Chinese foreign ministry briefing on Friday, spokesperson Guo Jiakun said China's military had organized its fleet to conduct high seas exercises. "The drill was carried out in a safe, standard and professional manner in compliance



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese gestures during a press conference at Parliament House in Canberra on Dec 20. (AP)

with relevant international law and international practice" Guo said.

Australian defense officials were uncertain whether any live fire of weapons had occurred. The risk had since passed, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said.

"There was no imminent risk of

danger to any Australian assets or New Zealand assets," Albanese told reporters, citing information from his Defense Ministry.

New Zealand's aviation regulator did not issue warnings. The Civil Aviation Authority said it was "aware" of the Australian advice, ac-

cording to a statement. The authority did not explain its decision.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said she would discuss the air service disruption when she meets her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi at a G20 ministers meeting underway in South Africa.

Flight monitoring websites showed multiple flights had avoided an area between Australia and New Zealand.

Air New Zealand, the country's national carrier, said in a statement it had "modified flight paths as needed to avoid the area, with no impact on our operations.'

Australian and New Zealand military ships and P-8 Poseidon surveillance planes have been monitoring the Chinese warships for days.

Chinese warships rarely venture so far south in a deployment regarded as a demonstration of the Chinese navy's growing size and capabilities.

Captain Steve Cornell, vice president of the Australian and International Pilots Association, which represents Qantas pilots, was critical of where the Chinese chose to hold their exercise.

"It's a big bit of ocean and you would think that they could have parked somewhere less inconvenient whilst they flexed their muscles," he

The Chinese exercise was legal and took place in international waters outside Australia's exclusive economic zone, Albanese said.

Meanwhile, a teenage boy has been taken into custody after a senior man died in a fatal crash in Australia's state of Queensland on Saturday morning. Queensland police said in a statement on Saturday that the crash took place at approximately 10:40 a.m. in Kingston, a town over 20 km southeast of Brisbane, the state's capital city. A white Holden Barina and a red Ford Focus collided before the Ford Focus left the road and crashed into a mobility scooter. A 76-year-old Kingston man who was on the mobility scooter was declared deceased at the scene. A 17-year-old boy, the driver of the Ford Focus, was taken into custody at the scene. Initial investigations indicate a male and female, believed to be occupants of the Ford Focus, were observed leaving the scene on foot. The driver and sole occupant of the Holden Barina was not physically injured. Investigation into the accident is ongoing.



South Sudan refugee children attend a class in Juba, South Sudan on Feb 12. (AP)

South Sudan closes schools after students collapse due to extreme heat

South Sudan closed all schools Thursday for two weeks due to an extreme heat wave that has caused some students to collapse.

This is the second time the country - which faces extreme effects from climate change, including flooding during the rainy season has closed schools during a heat wave in February and March.

Deputy Education Minister Martin Tako Moi said "an average of 12 students had been collapsing in

Juba city every day."

Most schools in South Sudan have makeshift structures made with iron sheets and do not have electricity that could power cooling

Environment Minister Josephine Napwon Cosmos urged residents to stay indoors and drink water as temperatures were expected to rise as high as 42 degrees Celsius (107.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

ment employees "work in shifts" to avoid heat strokes.

Education workers have urged government to consider amending the school calendar so that schools close in February and resume in April when the tempera-

Abraham Kuol Nyuon, the dean

Napwon proposed that govern-

tures decline.

of the Graduate College at the University of Juba, told The Associated Press that the calendar should be localized based on the weather in the 10 states. (AP)

Ugandan opposition figure charged with treason

KAMPALA, Uganda, Feb 22, (AP): Ugandan opposition figure Kizza Besigye was charged with treason on Friday in an escalation of legal troubles stemming from allegations he plotted to remove the country's long-time leader by force. Besigye, a four-time presidential can-

didate in the east African country, sat in a wheelchair as he faced the charges in a courtroom in the capital, Kampala. Treason carries the death penalty in Uganda. Besigye, 68, has been in custody

since Nov 16, when he went missing in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. Days later, he was presented before a military tribunal in Kampala to face charges over threatening national security. The Supreme Court stopped his

military trial last month, saying courtmartial panels cannot try civilians. Besigye's family, supporters and others wanted him freed immediately, but he was kept in a maximum-security prison and later started a hunger strike.

Besigye has looked frail in recent court appearances, leading to concerns



Ugandan opposition leader and presidential candidate four-time Kizza Besigye appears in a civilian court in Kampala, Uganda on Feb 19. (AP)

that any harm to him in prison could trigger deadly unrest. Many Ugandans are urging authorities to release him on compassionate grounds. Besigye was remanded until March

7, when he is expected back in court. Amnesty International also called for Besigye's release, saying his "abduction clearly violated international human rights law and the process of extradition with its requisite fair trial protections."

This is the second time Besigye has faced treason charges stemming from allegations he tried to overthrow the government. The first case, brought in 2005, failed to take off. This time, he and others are accused of attending meetings, in European cities and elsewhere, during which Besigye allegedly solicited "military, financial and other logistical support to overturn the government of Uganda as by law established," according to the charge sheet.

Erias Lukwago, Besigye's attorney, described the case against Besigye as politically motivated. He told reporters that Besigye is now ending his hunger strike after being charged in a civilian court.

Guterres to propose UN assumes funding for mission struggling to fight gangs in Haiti

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, Feb 22, (AP): UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he would request that the United Nations assumes funding for the structural and logistical expenses of a multinational force in Haiti that is struggling to fight violent gangs.

Guterres made the announcement late Wednesday in Barbados, where leaders of a 15-member Caribbean trade bloc known as Caricom gathered for a three-day conference to tackle regional issues, including gang violence

"If the Security Council will accept this proposal, we will have the conditions to finally have an effective force to defeat the gangs in Haiti and create the conditions for democracy to thrive." Guterres said. He added that the salaries for the

multinational force would be paid through an already existing trust fund. UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the proposed support would include logistics and non-lethal equipment, adding that he expects a detailed plan to be submitted by the end of Feb-

"It will not be a peacekeeping mission. The structure would very likely stay the same," he said of the current

Dujarric added that Guterres has



United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres addresses the audience at the Grand Palais during the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit in Paris on Feb 11. (AP)

not changed his stance on considering a UN peacekeeping mission as a last

The current UN-backed mission is led by a contingent of around 800 Kenyan police joined by soldiers and po-

lice from countries including Jamaica,

that the mission that began in June lacks personnel and resources and called for a U.N. peacekeeping mission to replace the current one.

Guatemala and El Salvador who are

working alongside Haiti's National

Last year Haiti and the US warned

In a statement Thursday, Haiti's government said that its presidential adviser, Laurent Saint-Cyr, met with Guterres and repeated the country's request for a UN peacekeeping force. It added that Haiti's transitional presidential council "remains committed to resolving this crisis and moving

towards constitutional reforms, the

organization of general elections and

responding to humanitarian needs." Under the Biden administration, the US contributed some \$600 million to the mission. It's unclear if funding would continue under President Donald Trump, although US Secretary of State Marco Rubio recently said the administration would keep supporting the mission as he urged wealthy nations to contribute more.

As the international community debates options to help Haiti, gangs in recent months have carried out at least four major massacres, killing hundreds of people. Guterres called the situation in Haiti "appalling."

Jair Bolsonaro's push for amnesty means admitting guilt in Brazil coup plot, says Lula

SAO PAULO, Feb 22, (AP): Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said Thursday that his predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro, is acknowledging his guilt in a case in which he's accused of plotting a coup to stay in power after his 2022 electoral defeat by focusing on a

campaign for amnesty.

Bolsonaro and allied lawmakers are pushing for a bill that would pardon those convicted over an insurrection on Jan. 8, 2023 - when supporters of the far-right leader stormed government buildings in Brasilia, Brazil's capital, emulating the



Former Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro arrives for a luncheon with senators from his support base, at the National Congress building in Brasilia, Brazil on Feb 18. (AP)

US Capitol riots. They are also trying to amend a law that prevents convicted criminals from running for office.

"He's asking for amnesty, which means he's basically saying, 'Guys, I'm guilty. I tried to come up with a plan to kill Lula, I tried to come up with a plan to kill (Vice President Geraldo) Alckmin, I tried to come up with a plan to kill (Justice) Alexandre de Moraes," Lula told Radio Tupi during a live interview.

Prosecutor-General Paulo Gonet on Tuesday charged Bolsonaro with devising a multipronged plot to remain in power despite his loss to Lula, including an alleged plan to poison Lula and shoot dead Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, a foe of the former president.

Bolsonaro has denied any wrongdoing and dismissed accusations against him as vague, saying the charges were the result of an authoritarian regime manufacturing internal enemies. He was already banned by Brazil's top electoral court to run in elections until 2030 over abuse of power while in office and casting unfounded doubts on the country's electronic voting system.

Kuwaiti crude oil price drops to \$79.15 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti crude oil price fell by 21 cents during Friday's trading to reach USD 79.15 per barrel (pb), compared with USD 79.36 pb the day before, Kuwait

Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Saturday. Brent futures fell USD 2.05 to USD 74.43 pb and West Texas Intermediate went up down USD 2.08 to USD 70.40 pb.

Business

Bank promotes road safety with pre-Iftar meal distribution

NBK launches Ramadan 2025 'Doing Good Deeds'

Explore a Diverse Range of Investment Options With NBK Brokerage and **NBK** Invest

NBK Invest launches comprehensive investment platform.

CEO highlights NBK's vision of inclusivity

Watani Investment launches NBK Invest & NBK Brokerage

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Watani Investment Company K.S.C.C., a subsidiary of NBK Group,has announced the launch of its comprehensive investment platform, NBK Invest, and the renaming of Watani Brokerage to NBK Brokerage.

This initiative aims to unify the identity of the investment products and services provided by Watani Investment Company for clients under the NBK brand, bridging the gap between clients and new investment opportunities.

Accordingly, Watani Investment Company has launched the NBK Invest mobile application to provide a range of investment solutions that meet the diverse needs of clients. The platform includes a digital financial advisory service and a selection of mutual funds, all accessible through a user-friendly interface designed for both beginner and experienced investors.

Through the digital advisory service, clients can access globally diversified investment plans, tailored to their needs and risk tolerance. The service also offers conventional and Shariah-compliant investment options. with the flexibility to customize invest-ment plans according to individual financial goals.

Additionally, the application provides access to a diverse range of mutual funds with a long and established track record managed by Watani Investment Company. These include seven funds covering equities, bonds and money markets, allowing investors to diversify their investments easily. The equity and bond funds provide broad diversification across regional equities and fixed-income. Meanwhile, the money market funds offer low-risk, highly liquid investments, available in both Kuwaiti Dinars and US Dollars, with both conventional and Shariah-compliant options.

Clients can open an account entirely digitally through the application, eliminating the need for paperwork or branch visits, ensuring a seamless and efficient investment experience.

Meanwhile, NBK Brokerage continues to provide access to trading services in local, regional, and US markets, as well as offering Sharia-compliant options. Through its innovative online platforms, NBK Brokerage aims to provide quick fund transfers and swift execution capabilities. The platforms feature advanced tools, including realtime prices and detailed account analysis. Users can also view their transaction history, access statements, and benefit from mobile trading features for a seamless experience in tracking, buying, and selling investments.

NBK Brokerage operates across three separate platforms, each tailored to specific markets and services: NBK Broker-- Regional, NBK Brokerage - US, and NBK Brokerage - Sharia.

Operating separately from NBK Invest,NBK Brokerage offers a more active trading experience with seamless trading services, empowering clients with direct digital control over their trades through a user-friendly mobile app and website.

A Comprehensive Investment

Commenting on this significant development, Deputy CEO of Watani



Fahad Al-Rushaid Al-Bader

Al-Bader:

- The launch of NBK Invest was driven by the belief that investment opportunities should be easily accessible to everyone
- NBK Invest seeks to empower clients with a wide selection of investment solutions through its comprehensive financial platform
- The platform offers an array of services suitable for a range of financial goals and risk appetites
- Account registration is available to all
- The platform's intuitive access to investment solutions

Investment Company, Mr. Fahad Al-Rushaid Al-Bader, stated, "Guided by its vision of inclusivity and social responsibility, Watani Investment Company seeks to deliver sustainable investment solutions to all its clients.'

He elaborated, stating that the enhanced platforms address a wide range of investment and savings needs, offering distinctive investment services across various instruments and asset classes in global markets.

"These digital investment platforms offer investment opportunities tailored to the investor's goals, financial aspirations, and risk tolerance, making long-term investing accessible," he concluded.

Watani Investment Company, a leading investment firm in the region, was established in 2005. It is setting the standard in growth-focused innovative financial products and services with a customer-centric approach, addressing the specificneeds of investors. Watani Investment Company combines local and regional expertise with the resources and global network of National Bank of Kuwait, one of the largest and oldest financial institutions in the region, to consistently deliver integrated solutions, innovative products and objective research with excellence in service.

With over 139 investment professionals, Watani Investment Company prides itself in a leading regional presence and a global reach and scale.

campaign with interactive community initiatives KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: As part of its continued commitment to social responsibility, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) is launching its annual Ramadan campaign, "Doing Good Deeds," which has been a cornerstone of its CSR initiatives for over 25 years. This year's program introduces new community-driven activities designed to strengthen social bonds and pro-

month. Manal Faisal Al Mattar, Head of Group Corporate Communications at NBK, stated: "We have expanded our Ramadan program this year to include more interactive initiatives that engage with the community, support families, and reinforce values of generosity and social solidarity. Our goal is to create a meaningful and lasting impact throughout the holy

mote generosity during the holy

Raising Awareness on Sustain-

Reduce Food Waste Campaign: NBK is launching a campaign to encourage food conservation and minimize waste. Refrigerators will be placed at 12 NBK branch entrances (two in each governorate) to collect surplus food.

The community is encouraged to donate excess food, embracing a culture of sustainability and social responsibility.

Embracing The True Spirit of Ramadan Through Community **Participation**



Manal Al Mattar

"Your Iftar with NBK". This social initiative is designed to create meaningful connections md strengthen community bonds during Ramadan.

As part of this effort, NBK will distribute shopping vouchers at leading supermarket chains, enabling families to fully embrace the spirit of Ramadan together.

Encouraging Physical Activity During Ramadan

NBK Ramadan Challenge NBK will host a 10-day sports and social event at Al-Shaheed Park.

Participants can select their preferred challenges, promoting an active and healthy lifestyle in the spirit of Ramadan.

Al Mattar:

- This year, our program includes innovative initiatives that
- strengthen social and humanitarian values

 Field initiatives include distributing Iftar meals, supporting families, promoting sports, and raising environmental awareness to reduce food waste
- Interactive cultural and entertainment competitions, along with Gergean celebrations, aim to enhance Ramadan tra-

Interactive Knowledge-Based Challenge

NBK Cultural Competition: A digital cultural competition will be hosted through a dedicated app, featuring general knowledge and cultural questions throughout Ramadan. The two-day competition will award valuable prizes to the top three winners, fostering community engagement through both entertainment and education.

Celebrating Ramadan Tradi-

NBK Gergean with Boqshah: In collaboration with Boqshah Exhibition, NBK will be the official sponsor of an interactive Gergean celebration. The initiative, "Reserve Your Spot for Your Kids' Gergean," will be open to the public with limited registrations, creating a joyful community experience for families during this cherished

Ramadan tradition. **Spreading Festive Joy**

Before Eid, NBK will engage with the community at Souq Al-Mubarakiya and other popular locations by distributing special Ramadan gifts, including incense burners, oud, perfumes, and traditional fabric sets. This gesture aims to spread joy and celebrate the spirit of giving.

Promoting Road Safety Awareness

NBK is launching a road safety initiative to encourage responsible driving before Iftar. Light meals will be distributed to drivers at key locations to remind them to slow down and drive safely before Maghrib prayer. This initiative aims to reduce traffic accidents and promote safer roads during Ramadan.

NBK's Commitment to Social Responsibility

Concluding her statement, Al Mattar emphasized NBK's longterm dedication to sustainable initiatives, stating:"We believe that community work is an investment in the future. That's why we continue to introduce initiatives that foster generosity, awareness, and social cohesion - solidifying NBK's role as a key contributor to Kuwait's society.'

Signed strategic partnership with Astek

stc participates in 'LEAP 2025' conference in Riyadh

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced its participation in the 'LEAP 2025' conference hosted in Riyadh, KSA.

The Company's attendance at one of the largest global technology events aligns with stc's strategic objectives behind enabling digital transformation, forming strategic partnerships, and gaining access to the latest insights and trends in the market, LEAP 2025 brings together industry leaders, experts, and innovators to explore the latest advancements in digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and emerging technolo-

stc's presence at the LEAP 2025 conference reflects the Company's ongoing commitment to driving digital innovation, expanding its ICT capabilities, and strengthening its role as a key player in the region's evolving landscape. stc Kuwait CEO, eng. Muataz Aldharrab & stc Kuwait Chief Strategy Officer, Khalid Al Sudairy were present and attended the conference and actively engaged with global industry leaders, technology experts, and innovators to explore emerging trends in the tech world, exchange insights, and foster strategic collaborations. During the conference, stc established a strategic collaboration that aim to enhancing the cybersecurity and digital transformation solutions that are offered to the private and the public sectors.

Collaboration with Astek for IT Transformation

During the LEAP 2025 conference, stc entered into a strategic partnership with Astek, a global expert in IT consulting and engineering solutions, to further advance its digital transformation initiatives. The signing ceremony was attended by stc Kuwait CEO, Eng. Muataz Aldharrab and Astek Co-Founder, Jean-luc Bernard. This collaboration aligns with stc's vision of empowering enterprises with scalable, secure, and innovative IT services, helping businesses in Kuwait and the region optimize their operations and drive technological advancement.



stc team and Astek team at the LEAP 2025 conference.

With its expertise in IT engineering, digital transformation, and software development, Astek is recognized in global market research reports, including Gartner, Forrester, and IDC Market Scape, for delivering high-impact IT solutions. Through this partnership, stc aims to provide comprehensive IT services that enhance business agility, streamline operations, and create new growth opportunities for enterprises across various industries.

Driving the future of telecom and ICT solutions in Kuwait

As a telecom pioneer and ICT solutions provider, stc remains committed to delivering exceptional telecom and connectivity solutions, expanding its digital ecosystem, enhancing cybersecurity frameworks, and delivering cutting-edge IT solutions. The Company continues to invest in forming strategic partnerships with leading companies within their industries to deliver a full range of exceptional solutions



CEO Muataz Aldharrab and Astek co-founder Jean-luc Bernard during the partnership signing

and services. Participating in conferences, such as LEAP 2025, offers valuable opportunities to collaborate with industry and market leaders, supporting the Company's Key objectives, including driving the digital transformation in Kuwait and enriching the lifestyle of its custom-

PBC and **CCIAP** host key meetings with Kuwait stakeholders

Arab-Portuguese Chamber strengthens economic ties with Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: The Portuguese Business Council Kuwait (PBC) is pleased to announce the successful completion of the Arab-Portuguese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIAP) business mission to Kuwait. This strategic initiative aimed to enhance economic, investment, and trade relations between Portugal and Kuwait, reinforcing a growing partnership between both

With Portugal recognized as a hub of quality, innovation, and talent, and Kuwait pursuing economic diversification under Vision 2035, both countries stand to benefit from deeper co-

The delegation was led by Mr. Nuno Anahory, Executive Board Member of CCIAP, and organized in close collaboration with Mr. António Azevedo Campos, President of the Portuguese Business Council in Kuwait. Together, they provided a strong platform for Portuguese businesses to connect with Kuwait stakeholders, facilitating key discussions on investment and economic collaboration.

Summary of the Mission

The delegation, composed of over 12 Portuguese companies from key sectors including energy, real estate, investment funds, construction, cybersecurity, tourism, security services, and industries, visited Kuwait from February 18 to 20, 2025. This visit coincided with the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Portugal and Kuwait, a testament to



Photo during the meeting.

the enduring mutual respect and co-

operation between the two nations. During the mission, numerous opportunities were explored, and several Kuwait companies expressed strong interest in partnering with Portuguese enterprises. The discussions focused on trade, infrastructure development, and investment-driven innovation, opening new pathways for economic collabo-

Key Highlights of the Mission

■ Reception at the White Palace: The delegation was honored with a reception hosted by His Excellency Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah at the White Palace, where discussions centered on Kuwait's commitment to innovation and sustainability.

■ Meeting with Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI): Under the coordination of Mr. Firas M. AlOda, the delegation engaged in productive discussions with KCCI. The focus was on strengthening partnerships, trade and economic ties.

■ Engagement with Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA): The delegation met with His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah Sabah Humoud Al-Sabah. Assistant Director General for Investment Operations at KDIPA. Discussions highlighted Kuwait's strategic initiatives to attract highvalue investments and create a business-friendly environment for international enterprises.

Warba Bank hosts cultural festivities for travelers at Kuwait Airport.

Warba Bank celebrates Kuwait's national holidays at T4 Airport

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: As part of its commitment to social responsibility and its dedication to sharing the community's joy during Kuwait's national holidays, Warba Bank organized a series of events at Terminal 4 (T4) at Kuwait International Airport. The festivities included a traditional "Ardha" performance, as well as the distribution of gifts to travelers and hospitality services throughout the day.

Speaking of the initiative, Dr. Mohammad Barakat as Chief Marketing and Corporate Communication Officer, said: "At Warba Bank, we take pride in being actively present during national celebrations and sharing these special moments with the community. The initiative reflects our commitment to strengthening pride in our nation and adding a festive touch for travelers. It embodies our core values and social responsibility while honoring our Kuwaiti heritage and history. By distributing gifts, providing traditional hospitality, and showcasing cultural performances, we continue our journey of spreading joy during national holidays, reinforcing our deep-rooted values and dedication to preserving national identity."

Barakat emphasized the success of these events, saying: "Travelers gathered in the departure hall to enjoy the cultural performances, which beautifully showcased Kuwait's rich heritage. The distribution of souvenirs demonstrated Warba's appreciation for its customers, while our hospitality services added an element of delight to the travel experience. The celebratory spirit of the national holidays was re-

flected in every detail of these events." He added that this initiative underscores the bank's commitment to fostering national culture and enhancing its institutional role in engaging with various segments of society. It also aligns with Warba Bank's broader strategy of strengthening community connections and participating in significant national occasions.

Commitment to Social Responsibil-

Through this initiative, Warba Bank reaffirms its ongoing role in strengthening community cohesion. Its commitment to social responsibility is one of the fundamental pillars of its corporate culture. The bank continuously strives to develop initiatives that integrate different segments of society and actively participate in national celebrations, reinforcing its role in serving the community and supporting Kuwait's national development.



ABK wishes Kuwait a Happy National and Liberation Days

'Digital services available'

ABK announces branch closures for National and Liberation Day

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) extends its greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Al-Sabah, as well as the government, people, and residents of Kuwait on the occasion of Kuwait's National and Liberation Day.

ABK discloses that its branches will be closed from 25 to 27 February 2025 to resume operations on 2 March 2025. During this time, ABK's digital branch in Al Khiran Mall will be functional to service customers from 10 a.m. to 10

operational readiness to serve customers 24/7 via its various digital platforms. This includes Online Banking via eahli.com, the ABK mobile app, as well as the Bank's call center Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 and its ATM network.

Markaz records total revenue of KD 20.31 mln for 2024

Assets Under Management of KD 1.41 bln

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" (KSE: Markaz, **Reuters:** MARKZ.KW, **Bloomberg: MARKAZ:** KK) reported its financial results for 2024 with a Total Revenue of KD 20.31 million with a decrease of 23%, as compared to KD 26.32 million in 2023.

The net profit attributable to shareholders of Markaz was KD 4.46 million, compared to KD 4.15 million in the same period last year, and earnings per share was 9 fils for the year ended 31 December 2024. The Board of Directors has recommended a dividend of 7fils per share (Subject to the AGM ap-

Mr. Diraar Yusuf Alghanim, Chairman at Markaz stated: In 2024, GCC economies showed resilience, with the MSCI GCC Countries Domestic Index up 5.9%. Kuwait outperformed with the All Share Index rising 8.0% and the Main 50 Index soaring 24%, driven by strong investor interest in mid-cap and small-cap stocks. Oil prices contributed toregional fiscal stability, while governments policies and investments have focused on economic diversification. The GCC average projected real GDP growth for 2024 is 1.4%, driven by economic diversification and infrastructure investments. The global economic environment in 2024 presented a blend of opportunities and challenges. Global GDP growth is projected at 3.2%, bolstered by easing inflation in developed economies. Emerging markets benefited from gradual improvements in supply chains and labor markets. However, geopolitical uncertainties and tariff-driven measures pose



Diraar Yusuf Alghanim, Chairman at Markaz

significant risks to sustained growth. Looking ahead, we are optimistic about the region's prospects and our capacity to capitalize on growth opportunities and deliver enduring value for our stakeholders.

Mr. Ali H. Khalil, Markaz's CEO, stated: "Markaz's Asset Management fees for 2024 were KD 8.73 million as compared to KD 7.17 million for the previous year. Investment Banking and Advisory fees for 2024 were KD 1.08 million as compared to KD 0.84 million for 2023, an increase of 29%. The year 2024 held special significance as we celebrated our 50th anniversary, a testament to decades of sustained growth through innovation and trust. Understanding that our clients' success is tied to our own, we prioritize enhancing the client experience to reinforce our market leadership.Our equities team capitalized on these opportunities across multiple funds and portfolios; our equity mutual funds MÎDAF and Forsa Funds outperformed the bench-

Markaz's real estate investments in the GCC region are characterized by operational efficiency, leading to optimal rental rates, high occupancy and



Ali H. Khalil, Markaz's CEO

collection ratios. These factors have significantly contributed to the income and returns of the Markaz Real Estate Fund (MREF) and the Markaz Gulf Real Estate Fund (MGREF), a private placement fund.

Our international real estate portfolio has performed well despite expanding capitalization rates and higher-than-expected interest rates. We have successfully sold projects in Europe and the United States. Markaz is now focusing on high-potential opportunities under the current market conditions, including leveraged senior debt in multifamily and industrial development projects in the U.S. and Europe.

The investment banking team demonstrated its innovative capabilities by successfully executing a KD 100 million bond program for the Commercial Bank of Kuwait and introducing the region's first KD-denominated convertible bond. Advisory services, including M&A, restructuring strategies, and feasibility studies, addressed complex financial structures for corporations and family-owned businesses.By focusing on creating long-term value, we aim to align our strategies with market dynamics and client needs, providing



Abdullatif W. Al-Nusif, Managing Director, WMBD at Markaz

consistent growth and meaningful out-

Mr. Abdullatif W. Al-Nusif, Managing Director, Wealth Management and Business Development at Markaz, stated: "Markaz Assets Under Management (AUM) increased by 16 % to reach KD 1.41 billion as of December 31, 2024. Despite market complexities, our strategic role as investment advisors enabled us to seize market opportunities effectively, as exemplified in our continued ventures into Private Equity, Private Credit, and Local Fixed Income in secondary markets. We strengthened relationships with leading local and regional institutions while expanding our client base.

All these efforts led to Markaz being recognized by reputable organizations including Global Finance, EMEA finance, Euromoney, and MENA Banking Excellence, and winning (9)prestigious awards in asset management, investment banking, real estate, digital solutions, and innovation. Our goal is to provide our clients with the best innovative investment solutions that achieve their financial objectives, and we are committed to delivering high-

UK and Kuwait strengthen investment ties at FDI conference

Kuwait hosts 2025 Foreign Direct Investment Conference

LONDON, Feb 22, (KUNA): The Foreign Direct Investment Conference in 2025: Insights and Trends Shaping the Future of Investment, organized by the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) in cooperation with the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA), kicked

Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadiq Marafi, Kuwait's Ambassador to the United Kingdom Bader Al-Munaikh, Assistant Director General for Business Development at the KDIPA and Vice-Chairman of the Steering Committee of the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) Mohammad Mulla Yagoub, Head of the Kuwait Investment Office in London Abdulmohsen Al-Mukhaizeem are taking

part in the conference. Also participating are: Director for Investment Affairs at the British Department of Business and Trade John Edwards, and CEO of WAIPA Ismail Ersahin, in addition to a number of senior officials and financial and business experts from various countries around the world.

In his inaugural speech, Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadiq Marafi said the conference is being held at a time full of challenges but at the same time holds great opportunities.

"I recall with great pride the foreign policy of the State of Kuwait after independence, which combined diplomacy with investment," adding that Kuwait's

strategic vision "planted the seeds of friendship" centuries ago, which grew in the European continent.

"I proudly announce that Kuwait's investments in the United Kingdom have grown by more than 400 percent in the past twenty years," he disclosed. Ambassador Marafi stressed that the United King-

tourism destinations for Kuwaitis, who are also among the largest real estate owners in the country. He said that despite the economic and geopolitical challenges in various parts of the world, "we aim

to achieve a rebalancing in a way that protects our

dom was and still is one of the best investment and

For his part, Director for Investment at the British Department of Business and Trade John Edwards told KUNA that the Kuwaiti economy is undergoing a transformation to innovative and clean energy in-

"We work closely with the Kuwaiti government to identify sectors of interest in which we have expertise to cooperate in them" he said.

Participants in the conference discussed ways to attract high-quality investments to Europe through European investment promotion agencies in line with sustainable development goals and national economic strategies.

The first session explored emerging opportunities for foreign direct investments in the innovation and sustainable investment sectors to reach a comprehensive understanding of the current direct investment dynamics around the world, while the second session examined the strategies and trends that shape financing investments with a focus on political funds and

The conference sessions included exclusive roundtable discussions for investment promotion agencies with the aim of finding cooperation strategies to address regional challenges facing investment in addition to strengthening partnerships.

The conferees also reviewed the expectations of global direct investment in the current year, most notably the continued growth of the services, communications, renewable energy, semiconductors, and industrial transformation using artificial intelligence.

The World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) was founded in Geneva in 1995 with the aim of enabling investment promotion agencies to work more effectively to achieve sustainable economic development and enhance the flow of direct investment.

The Association is responsible for building international networks that facilitate dialogue between governments and the private sector. It also provides training platforms and international conferences such as the World Investment Conference, which gives its members the opportunity to learn about emerging global trends and formulate investment policies in line with these developments.

Concluding the 10-week mentorship program, and as part of its Innovation and ESG strategies

B honors winners of its H.I. Innovation Program with a grand closing ceremony

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) successfully concluded its ground-breaking H.I. Innovation Program, announcing the winners at a grand closing ceremony. The event, held at Courtyard Kuwait City - Al Raya Ballroom, brought together university students, industry leaders, and banking professionals to celebrate innovation, creativity, and the future of financial solutions in Kuwait, The ten-week program, held in partnership with VISA, SIA Partners and five local prestigious universities, exemplifies KIB's dedication to nurturing young talent and promoting a culture of innovation within the community in which it operates. This initiative directly supports the Bank's social responsibility efforts as part of its overarching Environmen-

tal, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategy.

The ceremony featured a judging panel with distinguished industry experts, including Mohamed Reyad, Country Head from Visa, Roberto Wyszkowski, Partner & Growth and Innovation Team Leader from SIA Partners, Mohamed El Shareef, General Manager of the Digital Innovation and Data Intelligence Department at KIB, Abdullah Al Awadi, General Manager of Strategy Department at KIB, and Fahad Al Bader, General Manager of the Operations Department at KIB.

The much-anticipated announcement of the winning projects captivated the audience, as they showcased exceptional creativity, strong feasibility, and a transformative impact on the banking sector. The winners, which included Abdulrahman Almutairi, Jana Hadwan, Noor Tahat and Nour Mansour from the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), impressed the judges with their ground-breaking project, Murshid, a cutting-edge solution designed to elevate customer engagement at KIB.

The event's stage design mirrored the grandeur of international competitions, featuring an impressive panel setup. The audience of 100 guests witnessed a night of engaging presentations, insightful discussions, and inspiring success stories. A highlight of the ceremony was the Student Journey Video, showcasing the participants' hard work, dedication, and growth throughout the program. The professionally produced film captured key moments, behind-the-scenes footage, and testimonials, leaving a lasting impression on

Commenting on the event, El Shareef said: "The creativity and ingenuity demonstrated by the participants were truly remarkable, and we are proud to have provided a platform for these future leaders to shine. Their achievement underscores KIB's commitment to fostering young talent and driving forward-thinking innovation in the financial industry. The H.I. Innovation Program reflects the Bank's dedication to empowering young minds, and cultivating a forward-

thinking culture within Kuwait's banking sector. The H.I Innovation Program spanned over a period of ten weeks, allowing teams from the five participating universities, including Australian University, American University of Kuwait, Gulf University for Science & Technology, Kuwait College of Science & Technology, and College of Business Administration - Kuwait University, to solve realworld challenges faced by the banking sector. Designed to





H.I. Innovation Program - Second Place Winners



H.I. Innovation Program – Jury

bridge the gap between academia and the business world, the program offered a unique prospect to develop practical skills and gain valuable industry experiences. The students had the opportunity to work closely with innovation coaches and mentors from SIA Partners to develop innovative solutions to pressing business problems.

El Shareef noted that the H.I. Innovation Program stands as a testament to KIB's unwavering commitment to progress, serving as a dynamic platform to empower the next generation of innovators, cultivate forward-thinking mindsets, and deliver sustainable financial solutions that evolve with customers' ambitions. By empowering Ku-



H.I. Innovation Program – All participating university students with their cash prizes.

wait's future trailblazers and fostering ground-breaking ideas, the Bank is reinforcing its role in driving a more sustainable and resilient financial ecosystem in Kuwait, thus strengthening its position as one of the leaders in the Islamic banking sector.

El Shareef added: "The H.I. Innovation Program reflects our deep commitment to developing future banking solutions and fostering a culture of innovation both within and beyond the Bank. We take great pride in the program's achievements, as it provides participants with a valuable opportunity to bring their ideas to life while serving as a platform for deeper engagement with the next generation of innovators.

The students have demonstrated exceptional capabilities in presenting innovative solutions that address the challenges facing the banking sector, reinforcing our vision of enhancing sustainable banking and elevating service excellence."

It is worth noting that KIB remains committed to supporting the next generation of financial innovators through initiatives that encourage entrepreneurship, technological advancement, and strategic problem-solving. With the success of this year's H.I. Innovation Program, the Bank looks forward to continuing its mission of driving meaningful change in the banking industry, in line with its main slogan

Leveraging advanced Al-powered robotics and automation solutions

Zain teams up with Smooth Logistics to streamline its logistics operations

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Zain is teaming up with Raha, the rapidly growing logistics technology company in Kuwait. Through this collaboration, Raha's subsidiary, Smooth Logistics, will support Zain's logistics operations, leveraging its expertise in advanced AI-powered robotics and automation solutions to optimize storage, shipping, and delivery, ultimately enhancing customer experiences.

The partnership was officially announced at Smooth Logistics' headquarters in Al-Ardiya, attended by Zain Kuwait's CEO Nawaf Al-Gharabally, Chief Commercial Officer Meshal Al-Kandari, Chief Enterprise Business Officer Hamad Al-Marzouq, and Raha's Co-Founder and CEO Saleh Al-Tunaib, alongside executives and teams from both companies.

Through this collaboration, Smooth Logistics will support Zain's logistics operations, encompassing product storage, shipping, and delivery with the highest standards of quality and efficiency. These operations will be carried out using AÎ-powered robotic solutions within Smooth Logistics' state-of-the-art facility in Kuwait, which is among the most advanced in the logistics sector.

Commenting on the partnership, Nawaf Al-Gharabally said: "We are excited about this new collaboration with our partners at Raha, who share our passion for harnessing technology to enrich customer experiences and integrate innovation into our operations. We take pride in selecting a Kuwaiti company led by exceptional national talents who have built a remarkable success story in the tech logistics sec-

He added: "Enhancing our logistics operations is a crucial step in our broader efforts to integrate digital transformation across all aspects of our business, ensuring an enriched customer experience that meets their expectations and aligns with our strategic vision to become a leading provider of digital and technological innovations.'

Al-Gharabally further stated: "We look forward to delivering new levels



Nawaf Al-Gharabally and Saleh Al-Tunaib with executives from both companies.

Nawaf Al-Gharabally:

- "Enhancing logistics a key step toward realizing our vision of embracing digital transformation and enriching customer expe-
- "Proud to select a Kuwaiti company led by national talents who built an inspiring success story in the tech logistics sector Saleh Al-Tunaib:
- "We value Zain's trust and look forward to achieving shared successes that support its ambitions and contribute to the advancement of the logistics sector'

with us, and we look forward to achieving mutual successes that support their goals and contribute to the evolution of the logistics industry."

Leveraging Smooth Logistics' pio-

neering capabilities and expertise, Zain will, for the first time, introduce a onehour delivery service for most areas in Kuwait-a groundbreaking achievement in the country's telecom sector.



Robotics and automation solutions contribute to enriching customer experiences.

This service will add significant value to the online shopping experience via the Zain app and website.

Raha aims to redefine traditional warehousing with its advanced 4,000-square-meter facility, which operates entirely through robotic and automated systems and houses over 15,000 storage locations.

The automated systems employed by Raha are distinguished by their precision, efficiency, and flexibility, handling all logistics tasks-from order reception and storage to packaging, shipping, and final delivery to customers in record time. This approach minimizes human error, reduces costs, and enhances operational fluidity, ultimately driving customer satisfaction.

The facility was designed with sustainability goals in mind, prioritizing

energy efficiency and the use of ecofriendly packaging materials. This aligns with Zain's sustainability strategy, which focuses on reducing carbon emissions and minimizing environmental impact.

Since its launch in 2022, Raha has rapidly grown into a multi-sector company specializing in automation and digitization. Smooth Logistics offers cost-effective storage, fulfillment, and last-mile delivery solutions, leverag-ing robotics to enhance efficiency and reduce costs.

Meanwhile, btr.tech is a local consulting and integration firm that helps businesses across various sectors design warehouses, optimize operations, and implement end-to-end solutions incorporating software and robotics. Raha's mission is to simplify automation and make it accessible to all.

'Our Traditions Always Bring Us Together' Ramadan initiative

of efficiency and flexibility in the ser-

vices we offer to our customer base in

Kuwait. Additionally, this partnership

will enhance the quality of our overall

operational processes, and we are ea-

ger to explore the opportunities it will

create to elevate customer satisfaction

are proud of this partnership with Zain,

which reflects our commitment to pro-

viding advanced logistics solutions

He continued: "At Smooth Logis-

tics, we are redefining the concept of

logistics services through automation

and robotics, allowing us to achieve

unparalleled operational efficiency,

reduce delivery times, and enhance

Al-Tunaib concluded: "We greatly

value Zain's trust in choosing to work

customer experiences.'

powered by the latest technologies."

Saleh Al-Tunaib commented: "We

and drive business excellence."

Gulf Bank launches Ramadan program to foster community unity

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: As the holy month of Ramadan approaches, Gulf Bank introduces its special program,"Our Traditions Always Bring Us Together", offering a variety of charitable, social, and sports activities aimed at promoting humanitarian and social values, bringing joy and benefit to the community

Mrs. Najla Aleisa, Chief Marketing Officer at Gulf Bank, stated: "As part of our commitment to reinforce social sustainability, we have developed a comprehensive Ramadan program featuring charitable, social, and sports initiatives, supported by Gulf Bank's volunteer team, 'Sawa'ed Al-Khaleej.

She further emphasized that Gulf Bank has declared 2025 the "Year of Giving," highlighting generosity as a fundemental humanitarian value. are committed to dedicating our time, resources, and efforts to preserving our cherished traditions under the theme 'Our Traditions Always Bring Us Togeth-

she added The Ramadan program includes: **Iftar Meal Distribution**

As part of its Ramadan initiatives, Gulf Bank will distribute Iftar meals over 20 days, providing support to those in need who may face challenges in securing a meal after long hours of fasting.

"Machlat Ramadan" Grocery Package Distri-

As part of its Ramadan initiatives, Gulf Bank, in collaboration with its partners, will distribute "Machlat Ramadan" (Ramadan grocery packages) over four days before and during the holy month. This initiative reflects the spirit of generosity and encour-

ages community participation in charitable giving.

"Joy Land" Initiative for Underprivileged

In support of underprivileged families, Gulf Bank is taking part in the "Joy Land" initiative, providing essential household items and Eid clothing to families with limited income. This initiative seeks to enhance their well-being during Ramadan by meeting their basic needs and bringing joy to their celebra-

Encouraging Sports and a Healthy Lifestyle

Gulf Bank's Ramadan initiatives go beyond charitable giving, incorporating sports activities that promote health and fitness within the community. The Bank plans to organize various sporting events to encourage individuals to stay active and maintain a healthy lifestyle during Ramadan. These activities aim to inspire people to prioritize their well-being, especially during a month that brings shifts in daily eating habits.



Naila Aleisa

Empowering SMEs Through "Naqsat Al-

Gulf Bank continues its commitment to fostering innovation and driving sustainable economic growth. Through "Naqsat Al-Khaleej," the Bank will support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) by providing them with opportunities to showcase their businesses, gain visibility, and access valuable resources that contribute to their growth and success.

Gargee'an Celebrations for Children Gulf Bank will celebrate Gargee'an with special festivities, bringing joy to young Neo account holders and embracing one of Ramadan's most cherished traditions. To extend the spirit of giving, dedicated celebrations will also be held over two days for children with disabilities and orphans, creating unforget-

table moments of happiness. **Astronomical Ramadan Crescent Sighting**

In a special initiative, Gulf Bank will partner with a renowned astronomer to offer the public a firsthand experience in sighting the Ramadan crescent. This event will provide a deeper understanding of the astronomical aspects of moon observation during the holy month.

Ramadan Graish for Media Partners

In appreciation of the media's vital role, Gulf Bank will host a special Graish gathering to honor journalists and media representatives. This event aims to foster stronger relationships and recognize their contributions in highlighting the Bank's Ramadan initiatives.

Community Iftar Gatherings

As a gesture of appreciation for institutions that contribute to community growth, Gulf Bank will

Najla Aleisa:

- "We take pride in being the bank closest to the community and remain committed to upholding social sustainability stand-
- We dedicate our time, resources, and efforts to preserving our traditions under the theme "Our Traditions Always Bring Us Together.'
- Distribution of Iftar meals to those in need over 20 days, along with Ramadan Machla packages for the community
- Organizing sports activities to promote a healthy lifestyle and encourage fitness
- Supporting small businesses through "Nuqsat Al-Khaleej" and celebrating Gargee'an with children.

host Community Iftar Gatherings at various workplaces. This initiative recognizes organizations that play a vital role in supporting society while fostering a sense of unity and collaboration.

Annual Employee Ghabga

Gulf Bank values its employees as its most valuable asset. To honor their dedication, the bank will host its Annual Employee Ghabga, providing an opportunity to celebrate their hard work and foster

"Awaidna" - A Celebration of Tradition

Continuing its annual tradition, Gulf Bank has released a special Ramadan song, "Awaidna". This year's song beautifully weaves together Kuwait's national, religious, and social celebrations, honoring the country's National Day, Liberation Day, and the timeless Ramadan traditions cherished by generations. This initiative highlights Gulf Bank's enduring connection to Kuwaiti society, reflecting its commitment to being "Always

Mrs. Aleisa concluded by stating, "We take great pride in being the bank that is closest to the community and remain committed to launching impactful initiatives that foster social connections, empower small businesses, and promote a healthy lifestyle throughout the holy month of Ramadan.'



Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait achieves third consecutive five-star Forbes

'Luxurious stays with scenic views'

Four Seasons Kuwait spa achieves 5-star Forbes status for third year

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya has become the first and only hotel in Kuwait to achieve the Forbes Five-Star Award for both its Hotel and Spa operations for three consecutive years. Awarded its third maximum ten-star rating by Forbes on 12 February 2025, the Hotel's latest achievement further emphasizes its leadership role in the Arabian Gulf.

Forbes Travel Guide (FTG) is the only independent global rating system for luxury hotels, restaurants, spas and ocean cruises.Launched over 60 years ago, its internationally renowned awardsare based on an assessment by anonymous inspectors according to 900 objective criteria; its winners exemplify excellence in hospitality, from authentic experiences to unparalleled amenities.

At Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya, resort-like spaciousness, lush park views, and rooftop dining offer business and leisure guests a unique alternative for a Kuwait City stay. Four Seasons' iconic service and the city's largest guestrooms are complemented by an array of luxurious experiences, including the award-winning Spa, a fourth-floor city-view infinity pool, and Al Soor Lounge—affectionately known as 'La Chocolaterie of Kuwait'-where guests can indulge in exquisite handcrafted chocolates and pastries. The Hotel is also home to different signature restaurants, including the newly opened Li Beirut, an elegant Lebanese dining destination, as well as Sintoho, Dai Forni, and Elements, each offering distinct culinary journeys from Pan-Asian flavors to Italian delicacies. Adding to the Hotel's exceptional offerings, guests can enjoy the exclusive Cigar Lounge, a sophisticated retreat for connoisseurs, and the dedicated Kids' Club, ensuring memorable experiences for younger guests.

Guests seeking connection to Kuwaiti culture and hospitalityare rewarded with elegant Middle Eastern architecture and a mesmerising art collection. The city's not-to-be-missed malls and souks are just a few minutes' drive away, while the vast expanse of Kuwait's largest green space, Al Shaheed Park, is directly opposite.

In addition to its exemplary Hotel operations, Four Seasons also achieved Five-Star Forbes status in 2025 for the third consecutive year in Kuwait for its Spa. An elegant and calming retreat with curved architecture and neutral tones, it unites globally-inspired therapies with natural products to create a healing haven. Experiences flow from the purifying power of a traditional Moroccan Hammam to Wellness Rituals inspired by ancient Greek psammotherapy. The only spa in the city to have both indoor and outdoor pools, its resort-like ambience is further heightened by six air-conditioned poolside cabanas for special occasion dining.

"We're thrilled to see the care and focus of our Hotel and Spa teams recognised by Forbes for a third year running," comments General Manager of Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait, Martin Kipping. "Our dedication to merging five-star luxury with responsible hospitality is part of our vision for the future. This accolade fires us up to continue looking forward and pioneering new ways to immerse guests in Kuwait's wonders while protecting our natural

environment." To discover the enduring Forbes Five-Star luxury hospitality experience at Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Buri Alshava.

visit www.fourseasons.com/kuwait/ to book online.



Activities that encourage exercise during Ramadan.



Ramadan magazine distribution.



Distribution of Iftar meals.



Part of last year's Gargeean celebration

GCC economies to outpace global growth in 2025, GDP set to double

ABU DHABI, Feb 22, (Xinhua): The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) economies will outpace global growth in 2025, with the region's gross domestic product (GDP) growth expected to double, said a report released Friday by the First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB).

In its 2025 Global Investment Outlook report, the FAB, the largest bank of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), forecast that GCC economies will outpace global growth in 2025, with

the region's GDP growth expected to double from 2.1 percent in 2024 to 4.2 percent in 2025, while the UAE's growth rate is projected to rise from 4.5 percent to 5.6 percent. According to the report, titled "Shap-

ing the Future of Investments: Artificial Intelligence and the Interest Rate Environment," the GCC's economic resilience will be supported by strategic investments, diversification and robust expansion in the non-oil sector.

Features



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2025

Wellness blogger's scam still haunts Australia years later

Netflix series on Gibson's cancer hoax sparks fresh outrage

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Feb 22, (AP): A decade after wellness influencer Belle Gibson admitted she didn't have terminal brain cancer, which she claimed was cured by the healthy lifestyle that made her famous, her story has inspired a new Netflix series - and fresh outrage in Australia about the case's lack of resolution.

Authorities said this week they're still pursuing the disgraced Instagram star for unpaid fines, fueling ongoing ire among Australians about one of the country's most brazen online scams - an episode that drew attention to the destructive harms of false health claims on social media.

Apple Cider Vinegar, Netflix's dramatic retelling of Gibson's story released this month, doesn't recount what happened after it was revealed in 2015 that she wasn't sick. In real life, she never faced criminal charges.

But in 2017, Australia's federal court fined her 410,000 Australian dollars (\$261,000), which she had raised for charity and failed to donate. The consumer watchdog in the state of Victoria is still trying to recover the funds, a spokesperson told The Associated Press.

Gibson's healthy recipe app, The Whole Pantry, had 200,000 downloads in one month from the Apple store in 2013. She claimed proceeds from the app and her cookbook - published by a Penguin imprint - would be donated to charities and to the family of a child with cancer. Only 2% of the total was donated and Gibson was found

to have breached consumer law. A court ordered her to produce the remaining funds and barred her from making health claims.

In a letter to the court, Gibson said she was in debt, didn't have a job and couldn't pay the costs.

actions to enforce the debt owed by Annabelle Natalie Gibson (Belle Gibson) under court order," said a statement from the agency that was supplied on Wednesday.

The statement did not say if any of the money has been recovered. Authorities have raided Gibson's home twice in attempts to seize assets, but they didn't publicly divulge

The AP tried to reach Gibson for comment but didn't receive a response. She hasn't spoken publicly in years and wasn't involved with, or paid by, the creators of the Netflix

Unresolved

Jacinta Allan, the premier of Victoria, said this month she was "disappointed" the case remains unresolved. But

the authorities "won't let up," Allan told reporters.

Journalist Richard Guilliatt, who in 2015 was the first to report that Gibson was lying, said the lack of legal consequences still fuels "vitriol" toward the erstwhile influ-

"The thing remains sort of like an open wound," he said. "What she has suffered is just incredible public humiliation. There's a part of me that thinks people are just going to have to let it go at some point.'

Gibson's book publisher paid a \$30,000 (\$19,000 US) fine in the civil case for failing to fact-check her claims.

While Gibson hasn't faced more charges, her case had other repercussions. Australia's code governing therapeutic health claims was dramatically overhauled in 2022 and breaches can now be punished by millions of dollars in

"Consumer Affairs Victoria has continued to undertake fines - changes some analysts attribute in part to Gibson's

Paid testimonials for such goods are now prohibited, and anyone claiming health expertise cannot endorse

"This would have applied to the therapeutic claims that Belle made," said Suzy Madar, a Sydney-based partner at the law firm King & Wood Mallesons.

Apple Cider Vinegar has drawn praise for its skewering of online wellness culture - and criticism from Australians involved in the real-life events it recounts. The series is billed as a "true-ish story, based on a lie," and Gibson is the only real person the show purports to depict.

But Queensland man Col Ainscough, whose wife and daughter - also a wellness influencer - both died of cancer decried the production in a statement this month, because its characters included a family with a different name whose story appeared to parallel his own.

The show was "insensitive and clearly profit-driven," Ainscough said.

"Behind the TV stories, behind the dramatization, are real people who have had their lives devastated by the actions of this individual," Allan, the state premier, told

reporters. But the case still holds fascination as one of Australia's most "bizarre and flagrant" online scams, reporter Guil-

"I like to think that it really was a wake-up call for a lot of people," he said. "I hope it's had an impact in terms of people's gullibility about accepting advice on very serious health conditions online."



Belle Gibson arrives at the Federal Court in Melbourne, Australia, June 20, 2019. (AP)

Variety

SANTA MONICA, Calif.: Oscar nominees like Mikey Madison, Demi Moore and Sebastian Stan are to make a stop the by beach Saturday for the Film Independent Spirit Awards. The annual awards ceremony is the shaggier, more irreverent sister to the Academy Awards, celebrating the best in independent film and television.

Here's everything you need to know. The Film Independent Spirit

Awards (sometimes casually referred to



Moore

many years, show, the put on by nonprofit organization Film Independent, took place the

as the Indie Spirits) have been celebrating the best in independent film for 40 years. For

recently shifted timing away from that busy weekend. Awards are voted on by Film Independent Members, a group that includes filmmakers, industry leaders and passionate fans. The awards limit eligibility to productions with budgets of \$30 million or less, meaning more expensive productions like "Wicked" and "Dune: Part Two" are not in the running.

day before the Oscars but it's

added in 2021. The Spirit Awards will be held on Saturday in Santa Monica, California, in a tent next to the beach. The show

Television categories were

begins at 5 p.m. ET. The Spirit Awards will be streamed live on IMDb and Film Independent's YouTube channels.

"Saturday Night Live" alum Aidy Bryant is returning to host for the second year.

Oscar front-runner "Anora" is one of the most nominated films of the night, as is Jane psychological Schoenbrun's horror "I Saw the TV Glow." Both got six nominations, including best feature and best director.

Also nominated for best feature film were RaMell Ross adaptation of Colson White-head's "Nickel Boys," Greg Kwedar's incarceration drama "Sing Sing" and Coralie Fargeat's body horror "The Substance." (AP)

SAO PAULO: Lady Gaga has confirmed that she will perform a free concert on Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana Beach

"I've been dying to come perform for you for years and was heartbroken when I had to cancel years ago because I was hospitalized," Gaga said Friday on social media.

In 2017, she canceled a performance at Rock in Rio for medical reasons. At the time, she apologized and said she needed to focus on her health.

"I am now coming back and I feel better than ever and am working so hard to make sure this show is one you will never forget," she added.

Gaga's concert on the beach follows Madonna's free performance there in May. The "Queen of Pop" drew an estimated 1.6 million people to Copacabana Beach, one of the world's most famous shore-

Rio Mayor Eduardo Paes, who was re-elected last year to a four-year term, has pledged to bring a major international concert to the city every May.

"I don't have tickets for the Lady Gaga show! It's open and free!" he joked on X while sharing Gaga's announcement.

Film



This image released by The Avenue shows Cooper Hoffman, left, and Christoph Waltz in a scene from 'Old Guy.' (AP)

Waltz and Hoffman's clash doesn't spark in hit man movie

'Old Guy' has style, but it's no bull's-eye

LOS ANGELES, Feb 22, (AP): A boomer hit man is given a nightmare final assignment to train his own Gen Z replacement in Simon West's lifeless action-comedy "Old Guy."

Christoph Waltz's Danny Dolinski is the one at an unwelcome crossroads in the film. He's only partially healed from a hand injury that's rendered him dependent on pills and unable to aim a gun as well as he used to. Dolinski also seems to be in the throes of a full crisis: We meet him not on the job, or even in flashback to his pre-injury glory, but out clubbing. The next morning, Dolinski emerges in a bathrobe to gaze proudly upon the several much younger women who have spent the night.

But a room full of scantily clothed model-types who seem to be there willingly is only a temporary balm for poor Dolinski. While he might still be a viable specimen for the 20-something party girls of London, his game does not hold the same appeal in the workplace. Soon he'll be getting the dreaded "we're going younger" talk from his boss, and she's talking about him. not his love interests. This is a guy who is certain he's got a lot left to give in the assassin game, and not as a mentor to a "hitman prodigy," as Cooper Hoffman's character Wihlborg is

Is a familiar conceit like the wise veteran and the cocksure

newcomer tired or a classic? Well, it's all in the execution. And "Old Guy," stylishly filmed though it may be, is not one of the better attempts, likely hampered by the script from Greg Johnson. Generational clashes should be easy enough comedic fodder for a screenwriter and two capable actors, but here it lands with a thud. One likes to drink! The other doesn't even like to be around alcohol! The more serious ethical questions about hitman etiquette are similarly inelegant. Take this gem from Wihlborg: "Where I come from one does what one needs to do to survive. That includes killing a kid."

Prodigy

Hoffman, so perfect leading "Licorice Pizza," is not served well by this script, which never quite justifies why he's such a prodigy at such a young age and doesn't give him or Waltz any room to play off one another in a natural way. Waltz also can't seem to choose a lane with Danny, an eccentric hedonist with a soul who doesn't think it's necessary to kill kids on the job. He's also working with his normal accent which is all well and good until the movie very unnecessarily introduces his Irish

And because action movies of this variety need a woman, Lucy Liu, who deserves much, much better than this (they all do, but mostly her), goes along for the ride. Her character Anata is the glamorous manager of a Soho karaoke bar that might also be a front for a brothel, but that's never really explored. What is deemed important here is that she's Dolinski's longtime confidante, and tags along on their mission to Belfast for...wait for it...a date. It's a very strange little subplot in which Anata does go to this date only to be broken up with. The guy she's been seeing is not connected to the larger plot in any way, except as the narrative push to have her ultimately fall in Dolinski's

West is an action and studio system veteran behind "Con Air," "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" and various Jason Statham vehicles. There's lots of shoot-em-up action and bullets to the head for anyone looking for that, but not much more to hang on to. "Old Guy" feels very of this moment in the fact that it looks good and has a good cast and yet can't seem to deliver something that's either entertaining or meaningful. But unlike so many of its peers, this one amazingly was not made by a streamer.

"Old Guy," a The Avenue release in limited theaters and on VOD Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for 'language, violence, some drug use." Running time: 93 minutes. One and a half stars out of four.



Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck arrive at the world premiere of 'Air' on March 27, 2023, at the Regency Village Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

Star couple avoids public court battle

Lopez and Affleck are officially divorced

LOS ANGELES, Feb 22, (AP): Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck officially became divorced and

A Los Angeles Superior Court judge approved their divorce settlement on Jan. 6, and declared that it would take effect on Feb. 21, after California's required six months passed since Lopez filed to dissolve their two-year-old marriage. The document said they settled through mediation in September, avoiding the kind of drawn-out court fight that other celebrity couples have gone

Lopez now drops the Affleck from her legal name. Most of the financial details were kept private, but neither star will pay the other spousal support, and they have no children together so custody is not an issue.

The superstar pairing married in July 2022. Lopez filed for divorce in August 2024. The filing said they had separated more than a year earlier

It was their second stint as a couple. In the early 2000s, they met, fell in love, got engaged and starred together in the infamous "Gigli" and "Jersey Girl" in 2004. They split up that same year, blaming in part the pressure of the public

But to the joy of many fans and perhaps the doubt of others, they got back together two decades later and got married.

Affleck divorced Jennifer Garner, with whom he has three children, in 2018. Lopez has been married four times and has twins with singer Marc Anthony.

Image Awards celebrates Black excellence, Altadena heroes

NAACP Awards to honor Kamala Harris, the Wayans Family

LOS ANGELES, Feb 22, (AP): The 56th NAACP Image Awards will celebrate the achievements of trailblazing entertainers, athletes and writers of color, recognizing their impact on culture and beyond.

Former Vice President Kamala Harris will be honored Saturday evening during the ceremony in Pasadena, California, where she will receive the prestigious Chairman's Award. The Wayans family will be inducted into the NAACP Awards Hall of Fame.

Here is what you need to know about the awards show, including how to watch or stream live, entertainer of the year nominees and more details on featured honorees.

The Image Awards have a couple of agendas: Paying tribute to Black excellence in entertainment and culture while honoring Altadena residents impacted by the recent Los Angeles wildfires.

The ceremony begins at 8 p.m. Eastern, 5 p.m. Pacific at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, where several awards and performances will be handed out during the livestreamed

Comedian-actor Deon Cole will host the ceremony, which will be telecast on BET and simulcast on CBS. The show will also be available live on BET Her, VH1, MTV, MTV2, Pop, TV Land, Logo, Comedy Central, Smithsonian.

Former Vice President Kamala Harris is to receive the NAACP 's Chairman's Award.

Harris, defeated by Donald Trump in last year's presiden-



Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., appears on stage at the 50th annual NAACP Image Awards on Saturday, March 30, 2019, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

tial election, was the first woman and the first person of color to serve as vice president. She had previously been a U.S. senator from California and the state's attorney general.

In a statement, Harris was called a "force of change" by Leon W. Russell, chair of the NAACP's national board of directors. He said the show will celebrate her "relentless dedication to justice, equality, and the betterment of our so-

Other winners of the Chairman's prize have included former President Barack Obama, the late Rep. John Lewis and the late actor Ruby Dee.

The Wayans family, whose impact on film, TV, sketch and stand-up comedy has shaped Hollywood on and off screen, will be inducted in the NAACP Awards Hall of Fame.

Keenen Ivory Wayans, Damon Wayans Sr., Marlon Wayans, Shawn Wayans, Kim Wayans and Damon Wayans Jr. will each be recognized.

Some of the Wayans' credits include the sketch comedy series "In Living Color," created by Keenan Ivory Wayans in 1990 and Damon Wayans starred in the 1995 comedy "Major Payne."

Keenan Ivory Wayans also directed the 2000 slasher spoof "Scary Movie," written by Marlon and Shawn Wayans, who also wrote and starred in "White Chicks" in 2004. Fatherson duo Damon Wayans and Damon Wayans Jr. currently co-star in the CBS sitcom "Poppa's House.

Damon Wayans Jr. has acted in two of the most critically acclaimed comedies in recent years: "Happy Endings" and "New Girl." Kim Wayans, a comedian, actor and director, also received praise for her work in the 2011 drama "Pariah."

"Poppa's House" is nominated for an NAACP Award, as are Damon Wayons and Damon Wayons Jr. for their acting on the show. Marlon Wayans' guest appearance on Peacock's "Bel-Air" is also up for an award.

The top nominees for the coveted entertainer of the year honor includes Kendrick Lamar, Cynthia Erivo, Keke Palmer, Kevin Hart and Shannon Sharpe.

Lamar won over the masses for his rap battle with Drake, leading to chart-topping diss tracks including "Not Like Us," which won him five Grammys. He headlined the Super Bowl halftime show earlier this month.

Erivo made her presence felt in her Oscar-nominated performance in "Wicked." She'll be the host of the upcoming Tony Awards.

Sharpe, an NFL Hall of Famer, became an influential voice in media with his podcast "Club Shay Shay" and "Nightcap" with Chad Ochocinco Johnson.

Hart showed off his comedic talents during "The Roast of Tom Brady" and starred in "Lift and Borderlands."

Palmer starred in the buddy comedy "One of Them Days," which debuted No. 1 at the box office last month. She won

an Emmy for her hosting efforts on NBC's "Password." Dave Chappelle will be honored with the president's award for his "thought-provoking humor," according to Derrick Johnson, NAACP president and CEO.

Chappelle will be the first comedian to receive the honor. Past recipients include Jay-Z, Lauryn Hill, Usher, Rihanna and John Legend.

DJ D-Nice will honor music legend the late Quincy Jones, and Grammy winner Ledisi will perform alongside the Adam Blackstone Band.



Pop singer and composer Shakira performs during her 'Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran,' or Women Don't Cry Anymore, world tour at the Metropolitano stadium in her hometown of Barranquilla, Colombia, Thursday, Feb. 20. (AP)

Fender's pop-rock soars on new album

McRae, pop's new queen in the making

LOS ANGELES, Feb 22, (AP): She can sing. She can dance. She's mastered a sultry gaze. She can write a smutty phrase. Is Tate McRae the new princess of dirty, breathy pop? (Sorry, Britney Spears. A new Gen Z star approaches.)

The "hardest working Canadian recording artist" award must surely go to McRae in 2025, who at age 21 has released her third studio album, "So Close to What," and is gearing up for a world tour.

A trained dancer, McRae first garnered attention in 2016 when she was one of the finalists on the 13th season of "So You Think You Can Dance." She's added songwriting and singing to her resume since then, hoping to become a full-blown pop star. And on "So Close to What," she makes a convincing effort. She just needs to find the tune that will propel her to higher echelons.

The generous, 15-track album offers an array of serviceably sexy pop songs that harken back to the early 2000s, but mostly skew modern. (Truth be told, the more she looks back, the better the track.) The standouts are the seductive ones that lure the listener in with an earworm chorus, the ones that recognize a good beat and are not afraid to use it: "Sports car," "Purple lace ..." and the brassy "It's ok I'm ok" among

"Miss possessive," also the name of her upcoming tour, starts the album in force with a great choppy hook. "Re-



Tate McRae at the MTV Video Music Awards in Elmont, N.Y., on Sept. 11, 2024. (AP)

volving door" and "Means I care" both energetic pop bops - are enhanced by dancehall production.

A duet with McRae's boyfriend, The Kid LAROI, "I know love," is contemporary romance with its trappy hi-hats and nonchalant en-

The album's verve starts to wane toward the last tracks like in the soft, casual "Green Light," or "Nostalgia," which breaks out the acoustic guitar and lets McRae really showcase her

Has she taken the crown of pop prin-

cess from Spears with this album? Not quite. But she's close.

As its title "People Watching" suggests, v spends the bulk of his third studio album putting his observations about others - their histories, their futures, their troubles, their hopes - to music. The concept is simple. The results are anything but.

Written by the English singer-songwriter over two years, the album's 11 pop-rock tracks reveal a tender, strongwilled and observant lyricist. They also show off Fender's skills as a musician and co-producer, capable of tying together instrumental threads into rich productions that enliven his stories. None of that is news to his fans, who have already sold-out tour dates ahead

of the album's release. Like the best of his previous releases, the project's titular opening track is anthemic and robust. Its Springsteenstyle makes you want to move, or at least, shout along with Fender. That energy is achieved through a fastpaced and meticulously arranged production: Guitar and piano are layered over strings. Metallic cymbals punctuate the chorus, cut by a saxophone solo. The drumbeat is steady but quick, standing in for Fender's racing heart. "I can't stop running," he sings, "I see the whole town fall.

That town, his home of North Shields, England, serves as inspiration throughout the album.

On "Crumbling Empire," atop grooving electric guitar, Fender appears to describe his family and the systems they were failed by: "My mother delivered most of the kids in this town/Mv stepdad drove in a tank for the crown," before summarizing his album in a few lines: "I don't wear the shoes I used to walk in/But I can't help but thinking where they'd take me/In this crumbling empire."

He speaks of specific struggles, but his observations are built upon the understanding that pain is always universal. On "Something Heavy," he offers reprieve: "Everybody here's got, something heavy/I'll shoulder it a while if you just want a night off."

The album closes with "Remember My Name," a tribute to Fender's late grandparents. It is written from the perspective of his grandfather as he cared for Fender's grandmother, who had dementia. Absent the upbeat guitars and drum beats that accompany much of the album, Fender's vocals are strikingly crisp. Featured instead is the muffled, nostalgic sound of horns, performed by Northeast England's Easington Colliery Band.

The song's chorus is tight but powerful. "Humor me/make my day/I'll tell you stories/kiss your face/and I'll pray/you'll remember/my name,' Fender sings as his grandfather, his voice soaring with aching emotion. Closer to his roots here than anywhere else on the album, his people watching is complete.

Matar, who stood for the verdict,

criminal negligence against connection



according to a ruling obtained by The Associated Press on Thursday. In its decision issued Wednesday, the Argentine federal appeals court

ordered the other two defendants in the case to remain in custody. They are facing prosecution on charges they supplied the famed British boyband star with narcotics.

The ruling drops charges against three key defendants: Rogelio Nores, an Argentine businessman with US citizenship who had accompanied Payne during his trip in Buenos Aires; Gilda Martin, the manager of the Casa Sur Palermo Hotel where Payne died on Oct. 16; and Esteban Grassi, the hotel's main receptionist.

The charge of negligent homicide carries a sentence of one to five years in prison in Argentina.

A toxicology report from tests taken after an autopsy revealed that Payne, 31, had alcohol, cocaine and a prescription antidepressant in his system when he fell from the balcony. (AP)

Obituaries

B.I.G.'s mother dies

Jerry Butler, legendary soul singer, dies at 85

NEW YORK, Feb 22, (AP): Jerry Butler, a premier soul singer of the 1960s and after whose rich, intimate baritone graced such hits as "For Your Precious Love," "Only the Strong Survive" and "Make It Easy On Yourself," has died at age

Butler's niece, Yolanda Goff, told The Associated Press that Butler died Thursday of Parkinson's disease at his home in Chicago. A longtime Chicago resident, Butler was a former Cook County board commissioner who would still perform on weekends and identify himself as Jerry "Ice Man" Butler, a show business nickname given for his understated style. Butler, a

member of

the Rock and

Roll Hall of

Fame and a

nee, was a

voice for two

three-time

Grammy Award nomi-



major music hubs: Chicago and

Philadelphia. Along with childhood friend Curtis Mayfield, he helped found the Chicago-based Impressions and sang lead on the breakthrough hit "For Your Precious Love," a deeply emotional, gospel-influenced ballad that made Butler a star before the age of 20. A decade later, in the late '60s, he joined the Philadelphia-based production team of Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff, who worked with him on "Only the Strong Survive," "Hey Western Union Man" and other hits. His albums "Ice on Ice" and "The Ice Man Cometh" are regarded as early models for the danceable. string-powered productions that became the classic "Sound of Philadel-

Butler also was an inspired songwriter who collaborated with Otis Redding on "I've Been Loving You Too Long," a signature ballad for Redding; and with Gamble and Huff on "Only the Strong Survive," later covered by Elvis Presley among others. His other credits included "For Your Precious Love," "Never Give You Up" (with Gamble and Huff) and "He Will Break Your Heart," which Butler helped write after he began thinking about the boyfriends of the groupies he met on the road.

"You go into a town; you're only going to be there for one night; you want some company; you find a girl; you blow her mind," Butler told Rolling Stone in 1969. "Now you know that girl hasn't been sitting in town waiting for you to come in. She probably has another fellow and the other fellow's probably in love with her; they're probably planning to go through the whole thing, right? But you never take that into consideration on that particular night."

The son Mississippi sharecroppers, Butler and his family moved moved north to Chicago when he was 3, part of the era's "Great Migration" of Black people out of the South. He loved all kinds of music as a child and was a good enough singer that a friend suggested he come to a local place of worship, the Traveling Souls Spiritualist Church, presided over by the Rev. A.B. Mayfield. Her grandson, Curtis Mayfield, soon became a longtime collaborator (Mayfield died in 1999.)

Voletta Wallace, the dedicated mother of the late great rapper The Notorious B.I.G. and protector of his legacy, died Friday morning. She was 78.

County Monroe Thomas Yanac confirmed her death Friday to The Associated Press, saying she died at her home in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, after a stint on hospice care. She died of natural causes.

A representative for the estate of The Notorious B.I.G. did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Notorious B.I.G., one of the rap's greatest performers, was shot to death at age 24 in Los Angeles in 1997. The case remains unsolved. He was survived by his wife, the musician and actress Faith Evans, and his two children, Christopher Jordan Wallace and T'yanna Dream Wallace.

Wallace was a dedicated keeper of the legacy of her son, born Christopher Wallace. When he first emerged on the scene as one of rap's most distinctive talents with songs that expertly detailed street life in Brooklyn, she labeled his music "noise."

Since his death, his gift took on a new meaning for her. She told AP in 2017, 20 years after his death, "I remembered my son said, 'Don't listen to my music.' And I never listened to his music. I heard it on the radio and it sounded good, because it was clean. But I said, 'You know what, I have to. I have to listen to that music.' And that's what I did."

"I cried so much that day just listening to the music. I remember I sat, I stood. I rested my head on the stereo and I just cried like a baby. And that was therapy for me. And I said, 'Oh my God - that was a talented young man to put those words together.' He had a beautiful voice. I love his voice,' she continued.

Wallace launched the Christopher Wallace Memorial Foundation following her son's death, an organization that provides educational resources for children. In 2003, she honored mothers of other musicians who died untimely deaths - Aaliyah, Lisa "Left Eye" Lopes, Tupac Shakur, Jam Master Jay, Big Pun, Big L and Freaky Tah - at "B.I.G. Night Out," a benefit for the foundation.

"It is our way of saying, 'Keep your head up," Wallace told AP at the time. "It's the foundation's way just to let these parents know that we love them."



Voletta Wallace poses for a portrait on Aug. 17, 2017, in New York.

Variety

NEW YORK: One of the attorneys for Sean "Diddy" Combs in his sex trafficking case wants to quit the hip-hop mogul's defense team.

Defense lawyer Anthony Ricco filed notice on Thursday in Manhattan federal court that he no longer wants to represent Combs, writing "under no circumstances can I continue to effectively serve as counsel.'

Ricco, one of six attorneys representing Combs, did not offer any details about the decision. The court must first sign off on his decision to leave the case.

Combs, 55, has pleaded not guilty to sex trafficking charges lodged against him after his September arrest. He remains incarcerated without bail, await-

Ricco said he had discussed leaving the defense team with Combs' lead at-

torney and added that the move would not cause a delay in Combs' upcoming trial. (AP)

MAYVILLE, N.Y.: A New Jersey man was convicted Friday of attempted murder for stabbing author Salman Rushdie multiple times on a New York lecture stage in 2022.

Jurors delivered the verdict after deliberating for less than two hours, also finding Hadi Matar, 27, guilty of assault for wounding a man who was on the Chautauqua Institution stage with Rushdie at the time.

Matar ran up to Rushdie as he was about to speak on Aug. 12, 2022, and stabbed him more than a dozen times before a live audience. The attack left the 77-year-old prizewinning novelist blind in one eye.

Rushdie was the key witness during seven days of testimony, describing in graphic detail his life-threatening injuries and long and painful recovery.

looked down but had no obvious reaction when the jury delivered it. As he was led out of the courtroom in handcuffs, he quietly uttered, "Free Palestine," echoing comments he has frequently made while entering and leaving the trial. (AP)

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina: A court in Argentina dropped charges of

three of the five people indicted with the death of Liam Payne, the former One Direction singer who fell from a third-floor hotel balcony in Buenos Aires October,



The Conversation

'Not a silent killer'

Recognizing ovarian cancer symptoms key to 'survival'

By Barbara Goff

University of Washington

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

Ovarian cancer is the most deadly of gynecologic tumors. Fewer than 40% of those diagnosed with ovarian cancer are cured, and approximately 12,810 people in the US die from the disease every year.

For the past 25 years, scientists have tried to identify a screening test to detect ovarian cancer in its earliest stages, when the chance of cure is high. Unfortunately, multiple clinical trials with hundreds of thousands of participants have failed to identify an effective way to screen for ovarian cancer. In fact, the US Preventive Services Task Force gave ovarian cancer screening a grade of D in 2018, meaning it recommends against periodic screening because it doesn't improve survival and can prove harmful to patients.

Because no effective screening test currently exists, 70% of people with ovarian cancer are diagnosed at advanced stages, when chances of cure are poor. Around 60% to 90% of people with stage one or two cancer that stays around the ovaries and pelvis are disease-free five years after diagnosis, compared with only 10% to 40% of those with stage three or four cancer that has spread through the abdomen and beyond.

Chance

But even those with advanced disease have a higher chance of being cured if complete surgical removal is still possible. This makes early diagnosis all the more important for overall survival.

Without screening tests, many physicians wrongly assume that early diagnosis for ovarian cancer isn't possible. As a gynecologic oncologist who treats hundreds of ovarian cancer patients each year, I was frustrated by these late diagnoses, and wondered if better recognition of its symptoms could help clinicians and patients identify ovarian cancer earlier.

Ovarian cancer has historically been called a "silent killer," because clinicians thought its symptoms were undetectable. Patients were often diagnosed so late that doctors thought nothing could be

But there have been many studies over the past 20 years demonstrating that ovarian cancer does have early warning signs. My colleagues and I conducted one of the earliest studies in 2000. Our survey of 1,700 people with ovarian cancer found that 95% of patients reported noticeable symptoms three to 12 months before diagnosis. The most common symptoms were pain in their pelvis and abdomen, increased frequency and urge to urinate, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly, and bloating or abdominal distension.

Studies

Importantly, people with both advanced- and early-stage disease reported similar types of symptoms. Subsequent studies from multiple researchers further confirm that patients with even earlystage ovarian cancer experience frequent symptoms.

We also found that providers often misdiagnosed ovarian cancer as another condition. When we asked patients what their doctors told them was the cause of their symptoms, 15% had their symptoms attributed to irritable bowel disease, 12% to stress, 9% to gastritis, 6% to constipation, 6% to depression and 4% to some other cause. Thirty percent were given treatment for a different condition. And 13% were told there was nothing wrong.

One major issue has been distinguishing ovarian cancer symptoms from those of common gastrointestinal and urinary conditions. In another study, my team and I found that patients with ovarian cancer have symptoms with a recent onset and occur more than 50% of the month.

To facilitate early detection of ovarian cancer, my team and I compared the symptoms ovarian cancer patients experienced with those of patients without ovarian cancer. We developed an index that identified six important symptoms of ovarian cancer: bloating, increased abdominal size, feeling full quickly, difficulty eating, pelvic pain and abdominal pain. Symptoms needed to occur more than 12 times a month but to have lasted for less than a year. (AP)



Participants at the 24th Kuwait Ophthalmology Conference.

KUNA photo

Ophthalmology conference helps boost training, skills

Kuwait makes remarkable progress in ophthalmology, eye care: Dr. Al-Awadhi

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi confirmed that Kuwait has achieved remarkable progress in the field of ophthalmology and eye surgery through the support of the wise leadership, tremendous efforts of national medical staff and continuous cooperation with specialized international centers.

In his speech at the opening of the 24th Kuwait Ophthalmology Conference organized by the Ophthalmology Departments Council in cooperation with Kuwait Ophthalmology Association on Thursday, Al-Awadhi affirmed that this cooperation resulted in remarkable achievements which had a deep impact on human resource development and the improve-

ment of training and continuing education programs. He said ministry focused on ophthalmology and eye surgery, which led to the opening of new eye departments in Jahra and Capital governorates, increasing the total number of such departments to six in various governorates, providing the highest standard of therapeutic and surgical services.

He affirmed the provision of the latest medical devices and advanced therapeutic technologies, in addition to the interest in developing the skills of medical staff through training and continuing education programs. He added the conference confirms the importance of this approach and its role in strengthening cooperation with regional and international medical institutions, as it contributes to the development of health services provided to the

On the other hand, Chairman of the Organizing Committee for the conference Dr. Ahmed Al-Foudari stressed the importance of the conference in gaining more experience and innovation in the field of ophthalmology with the presence of the most brilliant ophthalmologists, researchers and healthcare professionals from all over the world.

He said: Our common mission includes development of eye care, explore pioneering research and improve the quality of life for millions of patients who rely on us for their vision and well-being. The conference continues for three days and reflects the commitment to promote scientific progress, professional development and ensuring that the people we serve receive the highest level of care.

He also pointed out that the conference is an opportunity to fortify regional and international cooperation in the field of ophthalmology, as it opens the way for exchanging expertise and building scientific and medical partnerships that serve the development of health services in Kuwait and the region. He stated that the aim is to enable doctors and specialists to acquire new skills and enhance their knowledge through intensive scientific sessions and workshops that focus on the most accurate and latest developments in eye surgeries.

'He is not out of danger'

Largest outbreak in 30 years

Sepsis a threat in pope's Measles outbreaks spread in pneumonia battle: Vatican US, cases surge to nearly 100

ROME, Feb 22, (AP): The Vatican

ratory infection that doctors say remains touchand-go will keep him hospitalized for at least another week. Francis slept

well

carried on with its Holy Year celebrations without the pope Saturday, as Pope Francis battled pneumonia and a

over-

night, Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni

main threat facing the 88-year-old Francis would be the onset of sepsis, a serious infection of the blood that can occur as a complication of pneumonia. As of Friday, there was no evidence of any sepsis, and Francis was responding to the various drugs he is taking, the pope's medical team said in their first in-depth update on the pope's

"He is not out of danger," said his personal physician, Dr. Luigi Carbone. "So like all fragile patients I say they are always on the golden scale: In other words, it takes very little to become unbalanced.'

Francis, who has chronic lung disease, was admitted to Gemelli hospital on Feb. 14 after a weeklong bout of bronchitis worsened.

Glaucoma screening

Foreign Body removal

Diabetic Retinopathy Screening

NEW YORK, Feb 22, (AP): The measles outbreak in rural West Texas has firmed cases.

grown to 90 cases across seven counties, the state health department posted online Friday, and 16 people are hos-In neighboring eastern New Mexico, the measles case count is up to

nine, though state public health officials said Thursday there's still no evidence this outbreak is connected to the one in Texas.

Measles is a highly contagious disease. Here's what you should know about how to protect yourself against measles, as well as what's happening in Texas and New Mexico.

The West Texas cases are concentrated in Gaines County, which has 57 infections, and Terry County, north of Gaines, where there are now 20 con-

Dawson County, to the east of Gaines, was new to the count with six. Yoakum County has four and Lubbock, Lynn and Ector counties have a case each.

Texas state health department data shows the vast majority of cases are among people younger than 18: 26 in kids younger than 4 and 51 in kids 5-17 years old. Ten adults have measles and three cases are "pending" an age determination. The Ector County Health Department told the Odessa American its case was in a child too young to be vaccinated.

State health officials have said this outbreak is Texas' largest in nearly 30

Fahaheel.

Tel:+965 2391 9020

www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw

Kenya launches immunization campaign to tackle polio virus NAIROBI, Feb 22, (Xinhua): Kenya's the disease from Ethiopia and Eritrea

Ministry of Health has launched a fiveday polio immunization campaign in four northeastern counties, targeting over 800,000 children under 11 years of age.

Mary Muthoni Muriuki, principal secretary in the Ministry of Health, said the campaign, launched on Friday, follows an outbreak of poliovirus in Ethiopia near the border with Kenya in October 2024.

"A subsequent round of polio immunization campaign will take place in April 2025 in these four counties, which have been found to be most at risk for disease transmission," Muriuki told journalists in Nairobi, the capital of

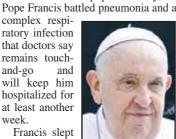
She noted that Kenya has stepped up measures to interrupt transmission of

due to the high cross-border movement of communities in the region. The official said the children will be

given two doses of oral polio vaccine regardless of previous immunization

"We want to reassure the public that all vaccines used in the country are safe, effective, and have undergone rigorous testing. Receiving multiple doses of polio vaccine will not harm your child, but will provide additional immunity to your child against the disease," Muriuki said.

Polio is a highly infectious disease caused by poliovirus, which can infect a person's spinal cord, leading to paralysis or even death, according to the



Pope Francis

said in a brief early update Saturday. But doctors have warned that the



To advertise in this page please call: 69994428 or E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com





Shiffrin finishes outside top 30 in first run of World Cup giant slalom won by Brignone

Von Allmen edges Odermatt in Swiss podium sweep of WC downhill

CRANS-MONTANA, Switzerland, Feb 22, (AP): A first Swiss sweep of a World Cup men's downhill podium in 29 years. A teammate cleared of cancer. It was a stellar day for the home team.

World champion Franjo von Allmen led a 1-2-3 result on home snow Saturday at the first World Cup downhill since winning his first career gold medal two weeks ago.

Von Allmen rode out a late scare getting unbalanced after landing the final jump to finish 0.13 seconds ahead of team leader Marco Odermatt. Alexis Monney, the worlds bronze medalist, was again third trailing Von Allmen

The standout Switzerland speed team has won five of the six World Cup downhills this season and placed runner-up in all six. The last time Swiss men swept a World Cup downhill podium was in 1996 at nearby Veysonnaz

when Bruno Kernen won. When the Swiss national anthem played at the victory ceremony, Von Allmen, Odermatt and Monney took off their caps to reveal matching buzz-cut hair after the team-bonding haircuts they all had at the worlds held at Saalbach, Austria.

Switzerland threatens an era of downhill domination ahead of the 2026 Milan-Cortina d'Ampezzo Olympics. Odermatt is the oldest at 27 in an event where many racers typically peak in their 30s.

The Swiss trio also showed mastery of the Nationale course at Crans-Montana which will host the next world championships in 2027.

Mikaela Shiffrin is not yet competitive in her tentative return to racing in giant slaloms. Federica Brignone is currently close to unbeat-

In just her second GS race Saturday three months after a serious crash, Shiffrin did not qualify for a second run for the first time since 2012 by placing outside the top 30.

Shiffrin finished 2.50 seconds off the firstrun lead set by Alice Robinson with more than 30 faster racers ahead of her who advance to the second run in the afternoon.

Shiffrin had finished 25th in Brignone's victory Friday in her first giant slalom since suffering severe trauma to her oblique muscles and a deep puncture wound during a GS crash in Killington, Vermont in November when she was within sight of a 100th career win.

Brignone made it back-to-back wins on home snow Saturday, nine days after taking gold in giant slalom at the world championships in Saalbach, Austria.

The 34-year-old Italian was exceptional in the second run to extend her lead in the overall World Cup standings in pursuit of a second

Mavericks 111, Pelicans 103

In Dallas, Kyrie Irving scored 35 points, P.J. Washington Jr. had 20 of his

24 points in the first half and the Dallas

Mavericks beat the New Orleans Peli-

Irving hit 11 of 22 shots from the

floor, hitting 5 of 12 3-pointers, and all

Washington, a 6-foot-7 power forward, returned to a Dallas lineup

whose three centers are all out with

injuries after he missed the last three

games before the All-Star break with

an ankle sprain. Zion Williamson

scored 29 points for New Orleans, and

Trey Murphy III had 20. The Pelicans

Heat 120, Raptors 111 OT

In Toronto, Tyler Herro scored 10 of

his 28 points in the fourth quarter and overtime, Andrew Wiggins added 25

points and the Miami Heat snapped a

four-game skid by beating the Toronto

Raptors .
Miami's Bam Adebayo had 19

points and 12 rebounds, and Heat

guard Davion Mitchell scored 16

points against the team that traded him

Duncan Robinson scored 14 points

In the fourth and final meeting of the

Pistons 125, Spurs 110

In Austin, Cade Cunningham had 25

points and 12 assists and keyed a 19-0

run as the Detroit Pistons won their

fifth straight game, 125-110 over the

during the run that started during the

final minute of the first half and carried

rebounds and Tobias Harris scored 22

for Detroit. Malik Beasley scored 16,

including four 3-pointers. He's made

29 shots from 3-point range in his last

Jalen Duren had 21 points and 15

Cunningham scored seven points

season between the Heat and Raptors,

Miami became the first road team to

as Miami won for the first time since

earlier this month.

Feb. 5 at Philadelphia.

San Antonio Spurs.

over into the second half.

have lost 11 of their last 12.

cans for their third straight victory.

eight of his free throws.



The winner Italy's Federica Brignone celebrates after an alpine ski, women's World Cup giant slalom, in Sestriere, Italy. (AP)

Stalwarts may head the clear-out

Man City facing rebuild

Warriors blow out Kings



Detroit Pistons guard Cade Cunningham (2) tries to score against San Antonio Spurs center Charles Bassey (28) during the first half of an NBA basketball

East-leading Cavaliers rout Knicks

SACRAMENTO, Calif., Feb 22, (AP): Buddy Hield and Moses Moody had 22 points each and the Golden State Warriors beat the Sacramento Kings 132-106 on Friday night.

Brandin Podziemski added 21 points, and Stephen Curry had 20 points as role players stepped up for the Warriors.

DeMar DeRozan led the Kings with 34 points and Domantas Sabonis finished one assist shy of a triple double with 14 points, 14 rebounds and nine

assists. The Warriors got off to a hot start in the second quarter and led by 20. They were 11 of 23 from deep in the first half to take a 68-53 lead at halftime. Golden State maintained a 100-83 lead heading into the fourth.

Markelle Fultz, the No. 1 overall pick in 2017, scored eight points in his debut with the Kings after signing with them last week.

Cavaliers 142, Knicks 105 In Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell scored 27 points, Evan Mobley added 21 and the Cleveland Cavaliers bullied the New York Knicks from the start, winning 142-105 in a matchup of two of the Eastern Conference's

top teams. Only the Cavs looked elite, winning their sixth straight and improving the NBA's best record to 46-10. Cleveland has won 34 games by double digits.

Jalen Brunson scored 26 points and Karl-Anthony Towns 23 for the Knicks, who beat Chicago in overtime on Thursday in their first game back from the All-Star break.

New York couldn't use a back-toback as any excuse as the Cavs won in Brooklyn a night earlier. It was the Knicks' most-lopsided loss this season.

Thunder 130, Jazz 107 In Salt Lake City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 21 points and the



Dallas Mavericks guard Kyrie Irving, left, works against New Orleans Pelicans center Yves Missi (21) in the first half of an NBA basketball game in Dallas. (AP)

West-leading Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Utah Jazz for their eighth victory in nine games. Chet Holmgren added 20 points for

the Thunder. Jalen Williams had 18 points, and Isaiah Hartenstein grabbed 13 rebounds. John Collins scored 26 points for

Utah, and Keyonte George added 20. Walker Kessler finished with 19 rebounds, and Isaiah Coller had 12 as-

Grizzlies 105, Magic 104

In Orlando, Ja Morant scored 10 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter and Jaren Jackson Jr. blocked a driving floater by Orlando's Paolo Banchero in the final second to give the Memphis Grizzlies a 105-104 win over the Magic on Friday night.

Desmond Bane, who finished with 16 points and seven rebounds, provided the Grizzlies with their margin of victory with a free throw with 45.2 seconds remaining. Memphis' Santi Aldama missed two free throws with 10.7 seconds left before Banchero's failed final drive

Bucks 104, Wizards 101

In Washington, Kyle Kuzma scored 19 points in his return to Washington, and the Milwaukee Bucks overcame Giannis Antetokounmpo's foul trouble to beat the Wizards.

Kuzma was traded from Washington to Milwaukee earlier this month. Khris Middleton went to the Wizards in that deal, and he finally played for his new team for the first time, scoring 12 points. Marcus Smart - acquired by Washington from Memphis - also made his Wizards debut and scored

The game came down to a desperation 3-point attempt by Middleton in the final seconds that missed badly.

out of reach. The dream of winning another Champions League is over after a two-legged humbling by Real Madrid before even the

dynasty.

Big changes, it seems, are now necessary. "It's so demanding," the City manager said. "Teams are quicker, faster and stronger, and we cannot handle it right now." Most despairing for Guardiola are the injury issues that have rocked his squad all season. Rodri, City's midfield anchor and most important player, damaged his ACL in September and is out for the season. City's four center backs - Ruben Dias, John Stones, Manuel Akanji and Nathan Ake - have each had long periods out. Kevin De Bruyne looks to be past his best after big injuries and didn't even come off the bench in the one-sided 3-1

Premier League title is realistically

sion this season Guardiola didn't name names when he spoke about certain players not being robust enough to handle an increasingly packed schedule of games every three or four days. But players like Stones, De Bruyne, Ake and even Jack Grealish look to be at risk, along with those in their 30s - like Ilkay Gundogan, Bernardo Silva and Mateo Kovacic - who have struggled with the physicality of matches this sea-

loss at Madrid on Wednesday that

shone a huge light on City's regres-

"We have to sit down with the doctors, physios, the players, their agents and be clear that some of them cannot sustain every three days," Guardiola said. "Every month or two months playing every three or four days - this is the reality.

"It's one more year and then a World Cup. And we have already a lot of players who cannot sus-



Manchester City's head coach Pep Guardiola gestures during the Champions League playoff second leg soccer match be-tween Real Madrid and Manchester City at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

tain what we have done in the past, every week, playing in different competitions, traveling, without any problems. You (ask) me where am I concerned and it's just that. The quality is there. But there's a lot of quality we cannot use because of the injuries." With games being added to the schedule, Guardiola knows it's going to get worse. City's campaign this season contains the newly expanded Club World Cup which runs from mid-June to mid-July.

"For many, many years, we have been talking about it. ... More than 50 games is too much for the players, it's too much for the human beings, the body cannot sustain it. We arrive at 65, 70 games and in the end, look what happens. It's not just Man City, it's all the clubs. Madrid had a lot of problems with injuries, too. In the future, it will be getting worse and worse and that's why I say I'm concerned." The injuries keep coming for Guardiola, too. Stones, who was hurt early against Madrid on Wednesday, might require surgery on an injured quadricep and be out for around two-to-three months - a similar length of time Akanji will miss after a leg injury sustained in the first leg against Madrid.

Erling Haaland missed the second leg in Madrid because of a knee injury and is a doubt for the Premier League game against Liverpool on Sunday.

Shaidorov makes history

SEOUL, South Korea, Feb 22, (AP): Mikhail Shaidorov produced a season-best score in the free skate on Saturday to become the first skater from Kazakhstan to win the Four Continents title since Denis Ten in 2015.

Skating at the same venue where Ten won, Shaidorov held a 12-point lead after the short program and was equally impressive in the free skate, landing four quadruple jumps and three triples for 190.37 points for an overall total of 285.10. Cha Jun-hwan of South Korea was second with 265.02 points followed by Jim-

my Ma of the United States with 245.01. The 20-year-old Shaidorov, who took part in lessons Ten held in Kazakhstan, earned his first International Skating Union title and first medal at the Four Con-

"This gold medal means a lot to me," Shaidorov said. "Ten years ago it was Denis Ten who won the first Four Continents gold medal for Kazakhstan here in Seoul and now I was able to return this medal to our country.'

Performing to "Moonlight Sonata" and "Take On Me," Shaidorov opened with a superb triple axel, single Euler and quad salchow combination that set the tone for his routine.

He followed with a quad lutz and a quad toeloop before adding another quad toe-triple toe combination later in his routine.

When he routine was over, Shaidorov collapsed to the ice in happiness. "The emotions are overwhelming," Shaidorov said. "It is very meaningful also

for Kazakhstan and it is in memory of Denis."

Ten was stabbed to death during a carjacking in Almaty in July 2018. Cha was fourth after the short program and turned in a spectacular free skate

with a season's best score of 185.78 to grab the silver medal before the home fans. The South Korean skater started his routine with a quadruple salchow. His next element was supposed to be a quad toeloop but he could only manage a double, but that was the only major mistake for the 2022 Four Continents champion.

Public Notice

The public is hereby notified that Jocelyn Israel Lozada has filed with the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines, State of Kuwait, a Migrant Petition for Change of First Name of her son in the Report of Birth with the Embassy on 18 February 2025 under Registry No. 2017-4140136. The First Name of child should read as ANDREW JAMES JR. instead of ANDREW JR.

Any person having knowledge and/or claiming interest or may be adversely affected by said petition, file his written opposition with the Philippine Embassy within ten (10) working days.

Girona coach Michel focuses on Real players

MADRID, Feb 22, (Xinhua): Girona coach Michel Sanchez says he would rather not focus on referees ahead of his side's La Liga visit to play Real Madrid on Sunday.

The Santiago Bernabeu Stadium is likely to have a pressure cooker atmosphere against referee Cuadra Fernandez on Sunday after Real Madrid were held to a 1-1 draw away to Osasuna

That game saw referee Jose Luis Munuera Montero give a clear penalty against Madrid, as well as sending Jude Bellingham off for swearing at him. Bellingham has been suspended for two games, while Real Madrid's complaints about refereeing decisions against them has reached a crescendo.

Munuera Montero was forced to close his social media accounts after receiving online insults and threats against himself

and his family, and the referee's business interests even came under investigation, before the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) declared he had no conflict of interest between those and his position as a referee. It's hard to see how Cuadra Fernandez can avoid being affected when he officiates Real Madrid against Girona, but Michel said he would rather focus on Real Madrid's attacking talents than the referee.

For Rent Villa with Seaview Next to the Beach We have Stores,

Buildings for Stuff **Work Shops** All kind of **Real Estate**

weet Home Real Estate Company

Change Name I, HUSSAIN ALI, holder of

Permanent Address house Flat No 303, Sarkar Castle 3rd Floor, Chimbai Road, Saint Andrews Church, Bandra, PO: Bandra West, Sub District: Andheri DIST: Mumbai Suburban, Mahatashtra, PIN Code: 400050 Do hereby Correct my Name. Given Name: HUSSAIN KUTBUDDIN

BHADSORAWALA

Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr attends the national days celebration at Embassy of Kuwait in Switzerland



Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr with Ambassador Ziad Al-Mishaan, Monika Schmutz and other attendees of the celebration.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr Al-Sabah, Chair of the Kuwaiti and Asian Aquatics federations, visited the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in Switzerland during his stay there to join the celebrations marking the 64th Independence Day and 34th Liberation Day of Kuwait.

According to a press release, Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr was warmly received by the Ambassador of Kuwait to the Swiss Confederation Ziad Al-Mashaan.

During the visit, Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr, both in person and on behalf of the Board of Directors and all members of the Asian Water Games, extended his heartfelt congratulations and blessings to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah

Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and the government and people of Kuwait on the occasion of the national holidays celebrating both Kuwait's independence and liberation.

In his congratulatory message, Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr said all members of Kuwait's sports movement take this occasion to renew their pledge of loyalty to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait.

He prayed to God Almighty to preserve Kuwait, its leadership, and its people, and to keep Kuwait secure and safe under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir (may God protect him, and grant him good health and well-being).

Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr said, "This cherished memory, along with the pride and glory it carries, is a precious moment for everyone. It serves as a reminder of the lessons and values that inspire us to work toward a better future, as well as look forward to the



Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr, Kuwait's Ambassador to Switzerland Ziad Al-Mashaan, and Monika Schmutz

future with determination, optimism, hope, and unified efforts. Together, we can build a proud and progressive

He affirmed that the directives of His Highness the Amir serve as a roadmap for advancing sports in a way that achieves the progress and development of the beloved homeland for the benefit of all Kuwaiti citizens.

Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr explained that the generous care of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, along with his continuous directives to prioritize the welfare of athletes, has placed a great responsibility on those overseeing the sports movement. This challenge requires hard work to provide all necessary support and overcome obstacles through a comprehensive strategy aimed at advancing Kuwaiti sports, restoring its former glory, and ensuring Kuwait's flag is proudly raised in continental and international sports



Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr presents a souvenir to Assistant Foreign Minister of Switzerland Monika Schmutz.

Passion, politics & patriotism meld, Pakistan and India clash

Cricket's fiercest rivalry

NEW DELHI, Feb 22, (AP): It is a sports rivalry like no other in the world.

When India and Pakistan face off in Dubai on Sunday, the cricket contest will be amped up by so much more - the 78 years of bitterness between the two arch rival nations, the heightened political hostilities, and the patriotic zeal of hundreds of millions of people.

Cricket-mad nations India and Pakistan are competing in the game's 50-over format for the coveted eight-nation Champions Trophy tournament that began on Wednesday in Pakistan. While six national teams have travelled to Pakistan for the tournament, India has refused to go there by leveraging its strong influence on International Cricket Council, the game's global governing body.

Indian cricket authorities have offered no formal statement about refusing to play in Pakistan, but some officials have suggested that the decision was based on security concerns. India will play all its matches - including the one against Pakistan - at a neutral venue in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

In both India and Pakistan, cricket has become a symbol of national identity and every clash grabs the attention of more than a billion fans. And Sunday's match comes at a time when relations between the two neighbors have hit a new low.

That animosity largely stems from the two countries' dispute over Kashmir, a restive Himalayan region over which they have fought two wars. Nuclear-armed rivals each administer part of Kashmir, but both claim the territory in its entirety.



Indian cricket fans, their bodies painted in the colors of the national flags of India, right and Pakistan,left, pose for photograph in Ahmedabad, India. (AP)

Compounding the territorial dispute are heightened tensions stemming from the deadly 2008 Mumbai attacks that India blamed on Pakistani militants, a charge Islamabad denies.

And sporting relations inevitably ebb and flow with the politics. Bilateral cricket ties have remained suspended since 2008, and the two national teams have only played each other in global events where they are always paired together in a group to ensure there is a contest between them.

Even though the Indian team has not travelled to Pakistan since 2008, Pakistan played in India in 2023 during the World Cup, including before a hostile crowd at a cricket stadium named after Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

arendra Modi. So-called "cricket diplomacy" has occasionally thawed out relations but that hasn't been the case under Modi. His Hindu nationalist government has taken a tough stance on resuming friendlier cricket ties with Pakistan with many senior ministers saying Indian team

won't play in the country.

Dozens of people in India and disputed Kashmir have also faced police complaints and sometimes even jail for cheering for the Pakistani team.

"Cricket is the strongest currency in the eyes of this government which they have used to instigate resentment and anger against Pakistan," said Sharda Ugra, an Indian sports writer. Ugra said while the fans of the two countries are eager to watch the two nations play more often, the contest "has been held hostage to ugly politics."

In sheer numbers, viewership for the India-Pakistan match dwarfs the Super Bowl in what Ugra calls the "greatest sports rivalry in the world" bar none.

When the two sides played against each other in 2023 in India, the estimated viewership - on cable television and streaming services - was around 400 million. In comparison, this year's Super Bowl averaged a 127.7 million across all platforms in the U.S.

Organizers expect similar numbers for Sunday's contest that will be played at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. And it's a guaranteed windfall as tickets for the game sold out within minutes while billion-dollar broadcast deals have been hammered out.

Media in both the countries are cashing in too. Pakistani and Indian TV news channels are providing wall-to-wall coverage. In recent weeks, TV commercials in both countries used patriotic fervor to poke fun at each other.

Local authorities and private companies in both the countries have announced that they would set up giant screens in some city centers and inside shopping malls.

For many fans, this clash holds

more value than any other sporting event in the world - and they want more of it.

In India's western city of Mum-

In India's western city of Mumbai, cricket coach Anil Sawant plans to watch the game at a clubhouse along with his friends on a giant screen.

"These matches should take place often," 57-year-old Sawant said, as his students honed their skills during practice at the city's Shivaji Park ground - a favorite for cricketers of all ages.

Kuwait's ice hockey legend Al-Ajmi bows out with spectacular farewell

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Kuwaiti ice hockey star Ahmed Al-Ajmi has officially retired from the sport, marking the end of an illustrious career during a farewell match between Kuwait and the "Gulf Stars." The exciting encounter, held at the Winter Games Club Hall, ended with the Gulf Stars securing an 8-7 victory.

The retirement festival was held under the patronage of former Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Ahmed Al-Shahoumi, who was represented by his son, Khalifa Ahmed Al-Shahoumi.

The event drew a distinguished audience, including the honorary president of the Winter Games Club, Sheikh Jaber Bandar Al-Sabah, along with the club's chairman, board members, and a large gathering of athletes and fans. Their presence highlighted the deep appreciation and respect Al-Ajmi has earned throughout his career, as he closed a remarkable chap-

ter of dedication and success on the ice.

Khalifa Al-Shahoumi praised Al-Ajmi as a veteran and inspirational figure in Kuwaiti ice hockey, emphasizing that his achievements will continue to inspire future generations. He also reaffirmed his father's



Al Ajmi presents a commemorative shield to Khalifa Al Shahoumi.

commitment to supporting Kuwaiti athletes across various sports, stating that honoring Al-Ajmi was a fitting tribute to his immense contributions to the national team.

Fahid Al-Ajmi, Chairman of the Winter

Games Club, echoed this sentiment, acknowledging Ahmed Al-Ajmi's vital role in shaping Kuwaiti ice hockey. He expressed confidence that Al-Ajmi's legacy will remain a cornerstone in the sport's history in Kuwait.

Saudi Arabia edges China in U20 Asian Cup quarterfinals

SHENZHEN, Feb 22, (Xinhua): Substitute Amar Alyuhabi scored a last-minute goal as host China fell 1-0 to Saudi Arabia in the quarterfinals of the 2025 AFC U20 Asian Cup on Saturday, missing out on qualification for the 2025 FIFA U20 World Cup in Chile.

In the 95th minute, Alyuhabi fired a right-footed shot from a tight angle, beating the goalkeeper into the bottom right corner after connecting with a cross from Talal Haji.

China dominated possession with 59%, but the

young squad struggled to convert chances, including a missed penalty in the second half.

Head coach Dejan Djurdjevic fielded China's strongest lineup, while Saudi Arabia made a surprising decision to bench several key starters, including Rakan Alghamdi, Haji, and Ziyad Alghamdi

ghamdi.

In the 30th minute, Wang Yudong came close to breaking the deadlock, but his right-footed shot struck the far post.

Wang later won a penalty for China in the 59th

minute, but Liu Chengyu's effort from the spot was denied by the Saudi goalkeeper.

As the match entered the final 30 minutes, Saudi Arabia brought on several substitutes, including Alyuhabi and Haji, who combined for the last minute winning goal

last-minute winning goal.

According to U20 Asian Cup regulations, the top four teams of the tournament qualify for the 2025 FIFA U20 World Cup, which will take place in Chile from September to





Participants patiently wait for the start signal of the Kuwait Sports Day activities at the

Sports

Kuwait Sports Day kicks off with a successful bicycle race, walkathon



His Highness the former Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Sabah Al-Salem and the Minister of Information are among the participants.



Participants getting ready for the bicycle race.



Photos by Mohamed Morsi Approximately 20,000 competitors of all genders, including champions with special needs participated in Kuwait Sports Day.

Minister Al-Mutairi gives the official signal to start competition

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: As part of the Kuwait Sports Day activities and with strong participation from individ-

Al-Mutairi gave the official signal to start the competition in the presence of

uals of all ages, a bicycle race and a walkathon kicked off on Saturday morning at Jaber Bridge, reports Al-Seyassah daily. Minister of Information and State Minister for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman

The walkathon in progress.

President of the Kuwait Sports for All Federation Mahmoud Abul who is a member of the Supreme Organizing Committee for Kuwait Sports Day.

Former Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Sabah Al-Salem took part in the bicycle race for the second consecutive year, along with former Minister and MP Dawood Marafie

The bicycle race covered a distance of 20 kilometers, and the walkathon

The number of participants in the walkathon and bicycle race reached approximately 20,000 competitors of all genders, including champions with spe-



Participants preparing for action.

cial needs.

Al-Mutairi said Kuwait Sports Day plays a major role in raising awareness about the importance of sports, and sends a positive message from Kuwait to promote a safe and supportive environment for engaging in sports and physi-

Meanwhile, Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development and Activities at the Ministry of Education Maryam Al-Enezi stated that the Ministry of Education participated for the second consecutive year in the Kuwait Sports Day walkathon, with 4,500 students from various educational zones.



The bicycle race in progress.

Kuwait Club maintains top spot as Al-Arabi secures narrow win

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Kuwait Club maintained its lead in the Zain Premier League after securing a valuable 3-1 victory over Al-Salmiya in the 16th round, keeping a two-point advantage over its closest competitor, Al-Arabi, who narrowly defeated Al-Yarmouk

Kuwait Club now has 43 points, having successfully overcome the "Sky Blues" in a pivotal match, despite playing most of the game with 10 men following a red card to defender Amin Abu Al-Fath . Kuwait Club sent a clear message: the top spot and the title won't be easily relinquished, and Al-Arabi will need to work hard to take the lead.

Al-Arabi, however, was determined not to let its earlier setback derail its title hopes, with a late goal in the 68th minute to keep its ambitions alive for



Kuwait Club players celebrate their victory over Salmiya.

United rallies to draw at Everton after late VAR drama

a championship that has eluded it for

As the league progresses, the competition is heating up. With Qadsia (29 points), Al-Salmiya (27 points), and Al-Fahaheel (25 points) ensuring their places in the Premier League, the battle for the sixth spot intensifies. Teams like Al-Tadamon (17 points), Kazma (15 points), Khaitan (11 points), and Al-Nasr (9 points) are all vying to avoid relegation and secure their place

in the top league.
Al-Tadamon, after a 2-0 defeat to
Al-Fahaheel, still controls its own fate, while Kazma, following a 1-0 loss to Khaitan, needs Al-Tadamon to slip up. For Al-Nasr and Khaitan, their hopes hinge on defeating both Al-Tadamon and Kazma in the final two rounds.

At the bottom of the standings, Yarmouk remains in last place. Despite their commendable performance against Al-Arabi, they now face an uphill battle to rearrange its strategy and make a push in the remaining six matches if it is to stay in the Premier



The Kuwaiti players preparing for the opening match against UAE.

Kuwait gears up for tough UAE encounter in Veterans Gulf Cup

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 22: Kuwait will take on the UAE at 7:45 pm in the second round of Group One in the Gulf Cup for Veterans, which Kuwait is hosting until Wednesday. In the same group, Qatar will face Oman at 4:45 pm, while Group Two will feature Yemen against Saudi Arabia at 6:15 pm and Bahrain against Iraq at 9:15 pm. All matches will be held at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium.

Wael Suleiman, former star of Kuwait and Al-Jahra Club and head of the Kuwaiti Veterans team delegation, anticipates fierce competition among the eight participating teams in pursuit of the tournament's inaugural title. In a press statement, he

format, which was initiated by Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi as part of the national holiday celebrations. Suleiman emphasized Kuwait's

praised the tournament's competitive

ambition to claim the tournament's first title, noting that it coincides with the Gulf tournaments, including the upcoming "Gulf 27" in Saudi Arabia. He highlighted the efforts of the Blues' technical staff, led by veteran coach Mohammed Ibrahim and assistant Hani Al-Saqr, alongside team manager Mohammed Binyan and administrators Ali Mahmoud and Adel

LONDON, Feb 22, (AP): Manchester United rallied from two goals down before benefitting from a last-gasp video-review call to draw 2-2 at Everton in the Premier League on Saturday.

Uruguay midfielder Manuel Ugarte grabbed the 80th-minute equalizer for United with his first goal at club level in four years, eight minutes after Bruno Fernandes started the visitors fightback at Goodison Park by curling in a free kick.

United had been on course to slip

to a third straight loss - and ninth defeat in 15 league matches since Ruben Amorim took charge in November - after first-half goals by Beto and Abdoulaye Doucoure for resurgent Everton.

There was a late scare for United when Everton was awarded a penalty for what appeared to be a foul by Harry Maguire on Ashley Young, who fell to the ground dramatically under pressure from Maguire and Matthijs de Ligt in

the third minute of stoppage time. Following a video review, on-field referee Andrew Madley was advised to view the incident again on the pitchside monitor and he changed his initial decision.

"I think it was a soft penalty, it was clear," Amorim said.

Everton faded halfway through the second half and United took advantage, though the comeback doesn't mask the big problems facing Amorim as he looks to get the fallen English giant up the standings from its current embarrassing position of 15th place.

"We need to survive this season and then we can think ahead," Amorim said.

Everton extended its unbeaten run under David Moyes, a former United manager who returned for a second spell at Goodison Park last month, to six league games.

Ugarte's last club goal was for Portuguese team Famalicao in February 2021 so he was an unlikely scorer for United, which produced another largely inept display.

ARAB 🕈 TIMES

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IN FREE KUWAIT Published by: Arab Times Publishing House

Editor-in-Chief

Editorial Office: Tel: 24826912 - Airport Road, Shuwaikh P.O. Box: 2270, 13023 Safat, Kuwait E-mail: arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com **Advertising:**

Tel: **99659717 - 50232062** E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com **Annual Subscriptions:**

Individuals KD 30 Companies and Official Departments KD 45

Airmail charges extra for overseas

AHMED AL JARALLAH