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Amiri Diwan announces reception for well-wishers at Bayan Palace

## Amir extends Ramadan greetings to citizens, residents

KUWAIT CITY, March 1, (KUNA): The Amiri Diwan on Thursday conveyed His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's congratulations to the citizens and residents of the country on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the gracious Al-Sabah Family will receive well-wishers in Ramadan's first and second days from 7:30 p.m. at the gracious Al-Sabah Family's Diwan at Bayan Palace.

The guests are advised to enter the palace via the gate of the (late) Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahad bin Abdulaziz's road.

The Amiri Diwan prayed for the top leaders and expressed hope the blessed month would recur with all goodness for the Arab and Muslim nations.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a message of congratulations from His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on the occasion of the fasting month of Ramadan.

In his cable 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 expressed sincere greetings to His Highness the Amir, wishing him, the Kuwait people as well as the Arab and Muslim worlds a blessed Ramadan filled with pious deeds and blessings from Allah Almighty.

In response, His Highness the Amir expressed similar sentiments to His Highness the Crown Prince, praying to Allah Almighty to bestow blessings of prosperity and welfare on the people of Kuwait as well as the Arab and Muslim worlds.

On Friday, His Highness the Amir also received greetings from senior Sheikhs on the advent of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

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His Highness the Amir



His Highness the Crown Prince



### Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

## Stop 'Mawaed Al-Rahman'; use them to help imprisoned debtors

WE yesterday witnessed the advent of the holy month of Ramadan, and we wish many happy returns to everyone.

On this occasion, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the issue of food waste during this blessed month. Allah Almighty says in the Holy Quran: "Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful." (Sura Al-Isra, verse 27).

On the other hand, there are many aspects where one can spend in ways that are a source of blessed reward from Allah Almighty.

However, it seems that the focus is misdirected this month, especially when considering the so-called 'Mawaed Al-Rahman', which have recently become more about bringing prestige to the one who donates meals than seeking reward and recompense from Allah. This is especially concerning when we know that, across the Islamic world, half of each meal is wasted every day during Ramadan.

In Kuwait, more than four hundred thousand tons of food are thrown away annually. Meanwhile, around 931 million tons of food go to waste every year across the Islamic world.

On the other hand, there are tens of thousands of debtors who, out of urgent necessity, are forced to take loans but suffer greatly to repay their debts. These in-

dividuals often find no one to help them. Donate to them instead of spending money on preparing tables to serve meals to the needy - meals that often do not reach those in need.

The UAE found a solution to this predicament during the holy month of Ramadan through the generous donation of the Vice President of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid to the "100 Million Meals" campaign, which aims to feed the poor and needy in 20 countries. In addition, popular local donation campaigns were launched to help pay off the debts of those in financial distress.

Saudi Arabia announced that approximately 700 million Riyals are wasted annually on group Iftar tables. As a result, the government issued a statement proposing that these funds be redirected to help debtors settle their debts and be released from imprisonment penalties resulting from financial cases.

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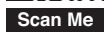
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KUNA photo

Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah during a surprise inspection tour on Friday, visiting several cooperative societies across various governorates.

### Al-Huwailah urges co-ops to uphold market stability

Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah conducted a surprise inspection tour on Friday, visiting several cooperative societies across various governorates to assess their preparations for Ramadan.

In a press statement, Al-Huwailah emphasized the ministry's commitment to ensuring the availability of high-quality food products and monitoring Ramadan offers to safeguard consumer needs. She reaffirmed that cooperative societies

must adhere to ministry regulations to maintain market stability and protect shareholders and consumers.

During her tour, Al-Huwailah engaged with citizens, gathering feedback on co-op services and reinforcing the ministry's dedication to continuous improvements. She concluded by affirming that on-the-ground monitoring will persist to enhance food security and ensure the best services throughout the holy month. (KUNA)

## DOMESTIC WORKER RECRUITMENT DISRUPTED BY NEW ETHIOPIAN SALARY RATES

# 'Only seasoned Filipino workers for Kuwait'

Al-Dakhnan pushes for clearer Philippine worker hiring guidelines

By Fares Al-Abdan  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: Head of Kuwait Union of Domestic Workers Offices Khaled Al-Dakhnan says the domestic worker issue is an important issue for Kuwaiti society, as nearly every household employs a domestic worker.

In an interview with the daily, Al-Dakhnan explained that domestic worker recruitment from Ethiopia was suspended after the Ethiopian government issued a decision to impose a new salary structure, which violates the previously agreed terms. This new salary rate is specific to Kuwait and is the highest in the Gulf region.

Al-Dakhnan attributed the decision to irresponsible statements made by individuals without legal authority or experience in recruitment, as they called for salary increases without understanding the potential consequences.

He further emphasized the need to hold accountable those who make such declarations without a legal basis.

Al-Dakhnan revealed that the total number of domestic workers in Kuwait exceeds 400,000, with around 3,000 new domestic workers being recruited every month.

He stressed that Kuwaiti law is one of the best in terms of worker protection, a fact recognized and praised by exporting countries, adding that the union has made consistent efforts to resolve this issue from the start, and that the government has worked to remove all obstacles.

Continued on Page 4

## Kuwait faces urgent need for improved water management

By Fares Al-Abdan  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: Head of the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) Mission to Kuwait and the Gulf States, Amira Al-Hassan, highlighted the responsible and sustainable use of water as one of the greatest challenges facing Kuwait.

She gave this statement during an interactive meeting hosted by the Swiss Ambassador to Kuwait Tiziano Palmelli at his residence. The meeting, which was regarding the importance of sustainable water usage in Kuwait, was held in the presence of the Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sonmez, the Director General of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation Patricia Danzi, as well as a number of Kuwaiti businessmen, academics, and experts from the private sector.

Continued on Page 4

### Infrastructure backbone of any nation: Minister Al-Mashaan

Kuwait continues road maintenance in Egaila

By Mohammed Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan announced the continuation of major maintenance work in Egaila based on the new contracts.

She affirmed the ongoing implementation of road maintenance projects in all areas, with a strong commitment to ensuring quality and meeting international standards.

In a press statement, the minister highlighted that road maintenance plays a major role in enhancing economic and social development and improving the quality of life, in line with the strategic vision "New Kuwait 2035".

Al-Mashaan explained that infrastructure is the backbone of any nation, as it supports the comprehensive and integrat-

ed development of the country, and takes into consideration both economic and urban aspects. Infrastructure is not limited to just physical facilities but is the foundation for progress and prosperity. Investing in infrastructure drives economic growth, improves quality of life, and supports sustainable development. Road maintenance is not merely superficial repairs, but rather an investment in safety, efficiency, and sustainability. Infrastructure is vital for any country aiming for progress and prosperity.

In a related context, Maintenance Supervisor for Ahmadi Governorate's First Zone "Contract 15" Abdullah Al-Kandari said the ministry's teams are present in block 4 to monitor the latest developments in the new contracts for major

Continued on Page 4

### Ramadan Timings

Iftar ..... Sunday ..... 17:49  
Imsak ..... Monday ..... 04:52

8 NBK Wealth Group CEO joins 'Future of Asset Management Middle East' panel discussion

9 KFH hosts Private Banking & Wealth Management Reception

## Kuwait submits plea to ICJ on Israel's violations in Palestine

KUWAIT CITY, March 1, (KUNA): Kuwait's Foreign Ministry and diplomatic mission in The Hague submitted a written plea to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) seeking an advisory opinion on Israeli occupation commitments towards presence and activities of the UN, international organizations and third countries in Palestine, mainly for providing main services, and development and humanitarian aid to Palestinians and their self-determination right.

The move taken on Friday is compatible with the UN General Assembly Resolution No. 232/29 adopted in New York on December 19, 2024.

In a news statement, the Ministry said Kuwait's pleading revealed Israeli occupation's violation of the UN Charter and agreements, calling for the safety of the UN staff, and protecting its agencies and facilities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), including East Jerusalem.

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A displaced Palestinian woman cooks in a sprawling tent camp adjacent to destroyed homes and buildings in Gaza City, Gaza Strip, Saturday, March 1, 2025 during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. (AP)

### Newswatch

#### Mishref house blaze injures seven people

KUWAIT CITY, March 1, (KUNA): At least seven people were injured in a fire at a house in Mishref District near Kuwait City on Saturday, said Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), adding the blaze was controlled.

Mishref and Al-Bidaa fire-fighting teams evacuated the house and fought the fire until it was put out, the KFF noted in a statement.

Those injured were handed to medical emergencies, it said.



15 Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr meets Kuwait's diplomatic corps in Geneva

## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	04:55	Asr .....	15:19
Sunrise ..	06:15	Maghrib ..	17:48
Zohr .....	12:00	Isha .....	19:04

# Local

## Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** Mild with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-35 km/h.

**By Night:** Cold with light to

## Weather

moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	19	09
Kuwait Airport	19	09

Abdaly	19	03
Bubyan	19	05
Jahra	19	09
Failaka Island	20	10
Salmiyah	17	12
Ahmadi	17	07
Jal Aliyah	18	06
Nuwaisib	18	08

# Amir congratulates citizens, residents

Kuwaiti embassies mark national days worldwide



The Kuwaiti Embassy in Greece celebrates national holidays.



The diplomatic mission of the State of Kuwait to Australia celebrates national holidays.



The Kuwaiti Embassy in Tanzania celebrates national holidays.

**KUWAIT CITY, March 1, (KUNA):** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Wednesday congratulated the nationals and foreign residents in the State of Kuwait on the country's 64th National Day and 34th Liberation Day.

He appreciated the lofty patriotic sentiments and the festive moods showed by the citizens during these two dear national occasions.

His Highness the Amir also appreciated the great efforts to ensure the safety of the celebrations made by the security services of the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defense and the National Guard Corps.

He thanked the standing committee on national days, the Ministry of Information and Culture, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, Kuwait Fire Force and Kuwait Municipality for the neat preparations for, and extensive media coverage of, the celebrations which reflected the civilized nature of State of Kuwait.

His Highness the Amir recalled the selfless sacrifices offered by the great martyrs of Kuwait in defense of the liberty and safety of the homeland,

praying for the Almighty Allah to lodge their souls in Paradise.

He thanked the leaders of the GCC countries and other friendly countries for sharing with the State of Kuwait the joy of the national celebrations which showed the depth of the friendly state-to-state and people-to-people relationships.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on Wednesday congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as well as the nationals of, and foreign residents in, the State of Kuwait on the country's 64th National Day and 34th Liberation Day.

He recalled with great pride the selfless sacrifices offered by the great martyrs of Kuwait in defense of the liberty and safety of the homeland, praying for the Almighty Allah to lodge their souls in Paradise, according to a statement from his diwan.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished Kuwait more progress and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir.

Meanwhile, Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) extends its warmest congratulations and blessings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad

**C**ongratulations on your freedom and the courage your nation continues to display in defending your unique identity as an oasis of integrity in a troubled region.

As someone who spent over four months in hiding from Iraqi forces after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, I share your agony and elation.

I am also reminded of the courage and decency of ordinary Kuwaitis who resisted the occupation with their indomitable spirit of independence ... many of whom paid with their lives.

In a very real sense the seeds of your liberation had already been sown from the earliest days of Kuwait by a people who hungered for freedom. Those seeds must continue to be sown in a pride of nationhood, and more importantly in every individual who shares in the privilege of being exactly who they are - Kuwaiti.

**Tadeusz A.W. Karwecki**

Former Managing Editor of the Arab Times

Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and to the Kuwaiti people on the occasion of the 64th National and 34th Liberation Days, wishing the country security and safety.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio congratulated the State of Kuwait, leadership and people on Tuesday, marking the occasion of the 64th National and 34th Liberation Days.

In a press release, Rubio said "on behalf of the United States of America, I extend congratulations to His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and to the Kuwaiti people on Kuwait's February 25 National Day and February 26 Liberation Day."

The Kuwaiti embassies in Australia and Sweden have held celebrations marking the 64th and 34th anniversaries of the country's National Day and Liberation Day respectively.

In Australia, the Kuwaiti Embassy organized a reception in the capital, Canberra, marking the occasions, which was attended by many Australian officials, Arab and foreign diplomats, representatives of international organizations and Kuwaiti students.

Addressing the event, the embassy's Deputy Charge d'affaires Thamer Al-Khuraimi congratulated 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 government and people of Kuwait on the country's national festivals.

He recalled to memory the historical role played by Australia in the liberation of the State of Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion in 1991, while commending deep relations between both countries.

In Sweden, the Kuwaiti Embassy held a reception on the occasion of Kuwait's National and Liberation Days. Several Sweden officials and accredited ambassadors and diplomats were present at the meeting.

The Kuwaiti Embassy's Deputy Charge d'affaires Counselor Abdullah Abu Sheiba conveyed heartfelt congratulations and greetings to the Kuwaiti political leadership on the national celebrations.

On this occasion, the Kuwaiti diplomat remembered with much pride the martyrs who had sacrificed themselves for the sake of the dear homeland.

The embassies of Kuwait in Kazakhstan, South Africa, Kenya, and Bosnia and Herzegovina celebrated on Tuesday the 64th National and 34th Liberation Days.

In Astana, the embassy of Kuwait held a ceremony in the presence of Kazakhstan's First Deputy Foreign Minister, Akan Rakhmetullin, alongside a number of government and non-governmental officials, and heads of Ku-

waiti charities operating in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Rakhmetullin congratulated Kuwait and its people on the national occasion, praising Kuwait's active role in the region, alongside the strong relations between the two countries.

Kuwait Ambassador to Kazakhstan, Dr. Omar Al-Kandari 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-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and to the Kuwaiti people, wishing them more prosperity.

He highlighted the strong relations between both countries, since establishing diplomatic relations 32 years ago, praising the cooperation in various fields and stressing the importance to develop them further.

In Pretoria, the embassy of Kuwait held a similar celebration in the presence of government officials, ambassadors, and a number of personalities.

In a similar speech, Kuwait Ambassador to South Africa, Salem Al-Shebli, congratulated His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince, alongside Kuwait and its people, expressing his pride in Kuwait's achievements.

He praised the deep-rooted relations between both countries, and the cooperation in various fields, especially within the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC).





# رمضان كريم

## Ramadan Kareem

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## Traffic rules fail in absence of culture to respect laws!

"MOST of the embassies of developed Western countries published a definition for their citizens, and instructions about road warfare in Kuwait, meaning, reckless driving, violating traffic laws and using mobile phones while driving, such that comprehensive instructions were announced on the websites of foreign embassies," Dr. Khaled Ahmad Al-Tarrah wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Kuwait changed after the imposition of strict and costly traffic laws, but recklessness remained the same due to the prevalence of a culture of violating laws even by roaming taxis, private and public buses!"

"Drivers of transport buses, including government company buses, drive at a terrifying and suicidal speed. They defy the traffic rules, regulations and laws at a remarkable speed. Buses stop wherever and whenever the bus driver wants, even after updating the traffic laws, installing cameras, and the establishment of a traffic monitoring operations room!"

"The number of roaming taxis is more than the flies and insects. In all seasons, they roam around the streets and regions of Kuwait. The honorable brother Abdullah Al-Fares talked about them before his retirement from the Ministry of Interior. He even exposed them in a press interview, stating that most, if not all, of the sponsors and owners of roaming taxi companies are traffic police, and military and civilian personnel in the ministry. The roaming taxis continue to crowd people even in front of their homes!"

"How many pedestrian bridges are there in Kuwait?"

"I am certain that the number is not consistent with the areas and streets, so cars do not stop at pedestrian crossings even though it is a traffic violation, but the culture of 'wasta' or the Kuwaiti language of mercy is prevalent in this small country!"

"Some pedestrian crossing bridges are frighteningly high; while others are closed and air-conditioned, but their number is very limited."

"The congestion on the streets sometimes encourages walking and crossing the streets in the summer months that are not hot, or when the temperature is not boiling, to shorten the distances, but crossing in itself, for example from Shamiya to Kaifan and -Khalidiya to Yarmouk, is considered a suicidal adventure!"

"There are no pedestrian traffic signals, and if there are, no one abides by them, so the individual who is crossing fears falling from the bridges of death that are supposed to be for pedestrians!"

"In health centers, the instructions encourage walking for the healthy and the sick, but who guarantees life after or before crossing the streets?"

"Definitely, if we think about putting radical government solutions, this means, for example, closing the country, and putting up signs, 'Kuwait is under maintenance!'"

"Do we have options and government solutions from the ministries of Public Works, Interior, Health and Information for safe crossing, not crossing to death?"

"It is clear that the root of the problem is not in the absence of traffic laws, but in the absence of a culture of respecting laws, and the absence of harmony in the official media, with the Ministry of Interior."

"Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi has had the pen lifted from him. He has been immune even from permissible criticism, perhaps, because of his ministerial seniority, and perhaps, because he was not subjected to parliamentary interrogations before the dissolution of the National Assembly or the harshness of press criticism!"

### Also:

"'Zuhairiya Al-Haddadi', written by the late Al-Nahham, Uncle Hamad bin Fahd bin Hussein -- may Allah have mercy on him, in response to the King of Iraq Ghazi's demand for Kuwait at the time," Kuwaiti writer Tariq Idris wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Zuhairiya says at the beginning: 'Kuwait is the abode of morning, written by the guardian

From the time of Adam and it is written for our sheikhs

Hebel, you who want Kuwait and demand

Hebel will sacrifice his opinion and demand

This is for it, Mohammad, the Prophet demanded

In the rule of a sheikh who possesses the throne, it is written.' "These verses, which were revived a few days ago by His Highness Sheikh Mohammad Al-Sabah with the creative singer Khalid bin Hussein during the Sheikh Jaber Bridge Sports Day, brought back the spirit of sacrifice and redemption for Kuwait, the homeland that its people have redeemed since the era of its inception and establishment of the pledge of allegiance to Sheikh Sabah bin Jaber I in 1756.

"The Zahrat of the late Uncle Hamad bin Hussein confirms this deep loyalty in the conscience and hearts of all the people of Kuwait, with all its noble and kind meanings and words, and the extent of the loyal Kuwaiti people's adherence to the legitimate rule of Al-Sabah.

"It was a surprise that Sheikh Mohammad Al-Sabah met with singer Khalid bin Hussein to revive this national Zahrat, with all its meanings -- a clear message of the value of the art of 'Al-Haddadi' in enhancing the love and loyalty of the people of Kuwait to the honorable ruling family throughout history; as well as their loyalty to their rulers through generations that succeeded each other in Kuwait -- whether rulers or ruled, so that this part of the Zahrat confirms: 'In the rule of a sheikh, the throne is written.'

"From here, we say and confirm, and even praise what the late Al-Nahham, Uncle Hamad bin Fahd bin Hussein, said. We establish it in our hearts and consciences. We adhere to it until our last breath, generation after generation.

"Yes, we all repeat: 'Kuwait is the abode of the morning, written by the guardian

From the house of Adam, and it is written for our sheikhs.'

"We say that the verses of this Zahrat should be written in gold, memorized and repeated; because they express the true national spirit. The official media and all media outlets should build these immortal verses, and employ them through various media and communication means, in order to instill them in the minds and consciences of our present and future generations, as intended by those who wrote them, and sang them in 'Tanziliyya' style -- a skillful blacksmithing art that is repeated and memorized by all those who adhere to the arts of the authentic sea, the heritage of the grandfathers and fathers.

"You have been creative, His Highness Sheikh Mohammad. Artist Khaled has been creative in this national stance, by choosing this wonderful Zahrat whose verses are appropriate for these glorious days, especially the days of liberation and independence.

"May Allah protect our wise leadership, and the Amir of determination and resolve, His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince. May Allah protect Kuwait and its loyal people from all harm and evil.

"Praise Allah. May Allah have mercy on our righteous martyrs, and hasten the release of the remains of our martyrs who are prisoners in Iraq. Amen, O Lord."

— Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh



Dr. Al-Tarrah



Fireworks lit up Kuwait marking the National and Liberation days.

KUNA photos



The First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior visits the General Administration of the Coast Guard and praises the efforts of its men.



Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, inspects the security procedures for national holiday celebrations at a number of locations.

## Security men win leadership praise for maintaining order

Fireworks, air shows adorn national celebrations

**KUWAIT CITY, March 1, (Agencies):** First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah praised on Monday the effort by the Coast Guard General Directorate chiefs in performing their duties efficiently.

This came in a statement by the Ministry of Interior following a visit by Sheikh Fahad Al-Yusuf to the Coast Guard to see its mobile command unit and to enhance readiness and security systems.

He praised the technically developed capabilities of the Coast Guard, which will enhance their personnel to carry out tasks effectively, especially during maritime emergencies, and directed continued development and readiness to protect territorial waters.

Meanwhile, some 6,800 security forces deployed across major streets and roads nationwide on Tuesday are setting a precedent for noble behavior as Kuwaitis mark national celebrations amid a palpable sense of glee.

Fireworks lit up Kuwait from north to south celebrating the National and Liberation days. Citizens and residents joined the celebrations in huge numbers.

While their presence goes beyond applying the rule of law, the sheer acts of generosity they have exhibited towards their compatriots, including looking out after the elderly and those with disabilities, typify the principle of human altruism.

In another development, the Kuwaiti Army Air Force and the Interior Ministry's helicopter unit held an aerial show at Kuwait Towers on Tuesday as part of the Kuwaiti Security Military Exhibition, celebrating the 64th National Day and 34th Liberation Day.

Fighter jets, including Typhoon and F-18 Hornet, along with the Interior ministry's helicopters performed rapid low-altitude maneuvers, captivating the crowd, adding that the display highlighted Kuwait's air force vigilance, while helicopters carrying national flags add to the patriotic celebrations.

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf, accom-

panied by the Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic and Operations Affairs, Major General Yousef Al-Khudda, inspected several security points last week including the security point at Al-Khairan Mall, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Assistant Undersecretary for Public Security Affairs Major General Hamad Al-Munifi received Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf, who was briefed on the security distribution inside Al-Khairan Mall, the mechanism for the deployment of the security forces, and their role in handling emergency situations.

Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf also inspected the security point at Mubarakia Market, where he was informed about the procedures followed by security personnel in dealing with the public, and the deployment of these personnel according to the plan to secure the national celebrations for ensuring safety and security for all.

Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf concluded his tour with a visit to the Kuwait Security exhibition, where the Ministry of Interior, along with other military institutions, had participated in various sectors.



Kuwait Fire Force brings the boat people to safety.

## People rescued as sinking boat salvaged by firemen

**KUWAIT CITY, March 1:** Firefighters from the Shuaiba Port Marine Rescue Center salvaged a boat that was sinking due to seawater leak inside it on Wednesday afternoon off the coast of Abdullah Port.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force, the boat was towed, and the people on board were rescued and handed over to the relevant authorities.

## Youth held carrying drugs

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, March 1:** Security forces arrested a young citizen in Ahmadi Governorate for the possession of narcotics.

According to a security source, the support patrol roaming around the governorate noticed a young man in an abnormal condition. Upon questioning him, it became clear that he was in possession of an undisclosed quantity of narcotics. He was arrested immediately and referred to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD).

Meanwhile, land customs officers arrested an expatriate who tried to smuggle 100 cherry cigarettes through Abdally border, reports Al-Rai daily. When questioned about the cigarettes, the expatriate stated that they were for personal use.

Customs officers confiscated the items and the expatriate was referred to the concerned authorities for legal action.

## Bonus disbursed to examiners

### Secret press staff list approved

**KUWAIT CITY, March 1:** The Ministry of Education (MoE) has approved the list of employees assigned in the confidential printing presses in the six educational districts for the second semester exams, reports Al-Anba daily.

Reliable sources told the daily that the approval came after a thorough review of the list, indicating the employees are chosen according to the regulations to ensure they are the most efficient and experienced staff.

Sources disclosed that 15 employees were assigned to each educational district, affirming that Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei issued a directive to address all the obstacles these employees might face and provide them with everything they need to make sure they work in strict

confidentiality.

In another development, the Financial Sector in the ministry has started disbursing bonuses to employees in the examination control centers for literary and scientific sections for the first semester of the current academic year in compliance with the instruction of Al-Tabtabaei.

Educational sources expressed deep gratitude and appreciation to Al-Tabtabaei who personally follows up matters concerning employees in the examination control centers and guarantees the immediate disbursement of their bonuses -- not exceeding one month from the end of the first semester. They said this is considered an unprecedented move in terms of speed in disbursing such bonuses.



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## LOCAL

# Justice Ministry secures land site

## Hawally to house new Expert Affairs Department

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, March 1:** Kuwait Municipality has approved the request of the Justice Ministry to allocate a site measuring 6,000 square meters with dimensions of 100 by 60 meters in Mubarak Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber, Block Seven for the establishment of the Expert Affairs Department building in Hawally Governorate.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the Municipality's statement regarding the request, approved by its acting Director General Manal Al-Asfour. It stressed the need to provide parking spaces within the site's boundaries, submit a traffic study before licensing the building,

fulfill the requirements stated in the responses of the members of the Subcommittee for Public Facilities and Services at its meeting held on March 26, 2024 and coordinate with them before implementing the project.



Al-Asfour

This is in addition to authorizing the competent departments to modify the dimensions and area of the site by no more than the designated sizes in the event of conflict with any existing infrastructure or for regulatory reasons.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Justice submitted a letter to the director general of the Municipality on Sept 2, 2020; requesting the allocation of sites in all governorates for the establishment of an independent building for

each of these governorate's experts affairs units (Capital, Hawally, Ahmadi, Jahra and Mubarak Al-Kabeer), including the parking lots.

This is based on Ministerial Resolution No. 146/2017 on streamlining the organizational structure of the Experts Department and raising it to the level of general department, which is currently located in rented buildings that do not accommodate the new organizational structure, future vision and increasing needs; hence, the need for the establishment of an independent building in each governorate to manage the experts' affairs.

Based on prior coordination between the Ministry of Justice and the Municipality, plots were allocated in the governorates, including the Hawally Governorate measuring 6,000 square meters mentioned above.

The proposed site in Jahra Governorate is not less than 5,000 square meters; the one in Mahboulah measures 5,000 for Ahmadi Governorate, and 5,000 square meters in Abu Futaira for Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate.

Continued from Page 1

## Stop 'Mawaed

In all the Arab Gulf countries, there are many debtors who are unable to repay their debts. Some nations have addressed this issue through a vision based on the principle of "true solidarity." However, in Kuwait, the crisis continues, and some public institutions and sectors have become mere collectors for creditors. The judiciary and police have turned into debt collection agents.

Many debtors, particularly women, have fallen victim to the pressures and temptations of usurers when they were in urgent need of money for important matters like their children's education or medical treatment. Most women imprisoned for financial cases were exploited by their husbands to sign debt contracts or bounced checks. Unfortunately, many of these women end up being divorced after serving their imprisonment sentences. Wouldn't it be better to address and resolve their crisis?

In most countries around the world, issuing a bank check without sufficient funds is no longer considered a crime. However, in Kuwait, it is still classified as a crime. Recently, an "arrest warrant" was added for this offense, even though the bankruptcy law had previously abolished this provision.

Undoubtedly, this increases the suffering of those in need who are unable to repay their loans. On the other hand, many zakat payers want to ensure that their zakat reaches the right destination and is given to those truly deserving. But does this actually happen?

Zakat houses, charitable societies, and committees often do not pay enough attention to the debtors inside Kuwait. Instead, they tend to prioritize the needy abroad, and direct donations to them. Much of the funds raised by charitable societies are spent on advertising, propaganda, and the travel costs of employees working in these organizations. This is not permissible because charitable funds should not be wasted in the wrong areas, especially when there are local needy individuals who are suffering.

It is well known that zakat funds are allocated for different categories, including debtors, blood money, and the poor. Zakat should not increase the suffering of the needy.

I have said this repeatedly: The lender who offers loan to those unable to repay the loan deserves to bear the loss. This is a legal principle, as the lender must ensure that the debtor is able to repay before offering the loan.

In this regard, I would like to repeat what I wrote on April 19, 2023. It is a quotation from the Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): "Be merciful to those on earth, so that God in the heavens will have mercy upon you."

Mercy means lifting the burden from the shoulders of debtors. There is no doubt that the debtors, along with their families, will pray to God to grant long and healthy lives to those who show such great concern, and help them rid themselves of these heavy burdens.

So, at the beginning of this blessed month, the budget that is typically wasted on preparing and serving food tables should be allocated for a better and more effective purpose, which is paying off the debts of those who cannot afford it, so they can be freed from jail and can reunite with their families during Ramadan.

It is logical for all Arab countries to spend more than 5.5 billion US dollars during the 30 days of Ramadan, while the percentage of the poor in these countries has reached 52 percent?

Isn't it evident that the warning mentioned in the verse, which cautions Muslims against being "wasteful" while seeking God's reward, particularly when they direct their donations to the wrong cause, applies to us?

## 'Only seasoned

Al-Dakhnan explained that the root cause of price manipulation by some offices is the decision to set fixed prices. Neither Kuwait nor the exporting countries are concerned about this issue, as many of these countries impose higher commissions on their offices, which lead to the recruitment of less skilled and

lower-quality workers. The concerned authorities' actions against the manipulating offices are legal, and their efforts must be appreciated.

He affirmed strong support for deterring any office that violates the law, and commended the role of the workforce in this matter.

Al-Dakhnan stressed that setting fixed recruitment prices does not benefit either the sponsor or the office owner, nor does it strengthen the spirit of competition between offices, as it instead forces offices to recruit workers who may not meet the required standards.

He said only a few countries allow offices to recruit their workers, and these countries are bound to Kuwait by memorandums of understanding.

Al-Dakhnan called on the government to open recruitment to additional countries and establish new memorandums of understanding for recruitment.

Regarding recruitment from the Philippines, Al-Dakhnan confirmed that there are no issues with recruiting from the Philippines, but it is not possible to recruit an inexperienced worker who has never worked before.

He added that this is a matter specific to the Philippines, and he hopes for a clear understanding to facilitate recruitment in this regard.

Al-Dakhnan praised the Workers' Shelter Center, describing it as one of the best centers in the Middle East.

He highlighted that the center hosts domestic workers who have disputes with their sponsors until they are deported to their home countries.

Al-Dakhnan also called for the union to be involved in meetings related to the recruitment of domestic workers, affirming the importance of considering the union's opinion and experience in this field.

He expressed hope that the union would be granted additional powers to help open new countries as sources of domestic workers, as well as to raise awareness among employers about their rights and obligations.

## Kuwait submits

The step pointed to the need of forcing the Israel occupation to comply with the rules of international law and international humanitarian law, and stop its aggression on the Gaza Strip which has been facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis.

It expressed its full confidence the ICJ's attention to Kuwait's pleading and other pleadings submitted by friendly and sisterly countries, and international organizations aiming to halt measures preventing offering main services and humanitarian aid to Palestinians, and respect international organizations' rights in the OPT.

The Ministry renewed Kuwait's unwavering and principled position supporting the Palestinian cause and all international efforts seeking to help Palestinian people get all their legitimate rights, according to the statement.

Elsewhere, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva Naser Abdullah Al-Hayen urged the international community to shoulder their responsibility for protecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

In an interactive dialogue with UN High Commissioner for Human Rights during that 58th session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), Ambassador Al-Hayen stressed the importance of immediate cessation of hostilities and the occupied Palestinian territories and guaranteeing unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance.

He expressed profound concern over the persistence of the occupying power (Israel) in committing serious violations of the provisions of the International Humanitarian Law and the UN Charter.

The situations in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank bear the hallmarks of unprecedented atrocities, large-scale destruction of infrastructure and forcible eviction of civilians, most recent of which was in Jenin refugee camp, Ambassador Al-Hayen pointed out.

Reiterating rejection of using double standards in dealing with humanitarian issues, he reaffirmed Kuwait's principled stand in support of the establishment of an independ-

ent state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital city within the borders of June 4, 1967, as per the provisions of the relevant UN resolutions and the Arab peace initiative.

## Kuwait faces

Al-Hassan affirmed that Kuwait is one of the most water-scarce countries globally, as it relies heavily on desalination to meet its needs.

She said the unsustainable consumption patterns have contributed to a huge increase in per capita water consumption, making Kuwait one of the highest in the world, insisting that improving water resource management is vital not only to meet current needs but also to protect the environment and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

Al-Hassan explained that reliance on desalination requires high energy consumption and has significant environmental impacts, including greenhouse gas emissions and the disposal of brine generated during the desalination process. Excessive groundwater extraction threatens its long-term availability and quality, increasing the risk of irreversible depletion. Also, rapid urban expansion exacerbates these issues, and this calls for the urgent need for integrated urban planning that prioritizes water conservation.

Meanwhile, the Director General of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation Patricia Danzi affirmed that global challenges are impacting water security.

She explained that Switzerland has abundant water resources but it still relies heavily on imported water, making sustainable water management at the international level a strategic necessity. Switzerland has extensive experience in managing transboundary water resources and actively promotes dialogue between riparian countries in the Middle East and Central Asia through the "Blue Peace" initiative. This initiative aims to build trust and enhance cooperation through training and scientific research.

In addition, the Swiss Ambassador to Kuwait Tiziano Palmelli said, "We can all learn from one another. This platform aims to promote dialogue on the importance of sustainable water use. Through open dialogue, we can raise awareness, improve behaviors, and establish better practices, especially in a region where water is scarce."

He stressed the urgent need to improve water use and management. Ambassador Palmelli shared a personal experience, revealing that water consumption in his home has decreased by 40 percent compared to before, a change that is clearly reflected in the reduced water bills.

## Kuwait continues

road maintenance, adding that the work involves laying a five-centimeter-thick layer of asphalt.

In addition, Saleh Al-Habbaj from the Maintenance Engineering Sector urged citizens and residents to stay informed through the General Traffic Department regarding upcoming road closures to avoid traffic congestion.

## Amir extends

The cables were sent from His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

In the cable, they expressed sincere greetings and congratulations on the advent of Ramadan, hoping that the holy occasion would return for many years to come.

His Highness the Amir, in his reply cables, thanked the officials for their sincere wishes and returned their Ramadan greetings, wishing them and the Kuwaiti people more welfare and progress.

Additionally, His Highness the Amir exchanged congratulatory ca-

bles with Arab and Muslim countries' leaders on the holy month of Ramadan.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received greetings from senior Sheikhs on the advent of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

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His Highness the Crown Prince Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah exchanged on Friday greetings on the advent of the Holy Month of Ramadan with Arab and Muslim leaders.

His Highness the Crown Prince prayed to Allah Almighty for the return of this joyous occasion on the Arab and Muslim worlds for many years to come under conditions of prosperity and further blessings.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah congratulated 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, the Kuwaiti people and residents, on the holy month of Ramadan.

In a statement to KUNA, the minister regarded the fasting month as an opportunity to promote the values of tolerance, togetherness, goodness and giving, wishing Kuwait more development and both Arab and Muslim worlds further unity and prosperity.

Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, extended his warmest 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, as well as to the Kuwaiti people and all residents on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

In a statement to KUNA on Friday, Al-Mutairi highlighted Ramadan as a valuable opportunity to reinforce the ideals of tolerance and solidarity within the community.

He urged everyone to embrace the months deep significance to foster the principles of kindness and generosity that are hallmarks of Kuwaiti society.

Kuwaiti Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei extended his best wishes 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 His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on the advent of the month of Ramadan.

In a press statement, Al-Tabtabaei congratulated the Ministry of Education members, leaders, teachers, students, and employees on Ramadan, appreciating their efforts to enhance the educational process in the country.

He emphasized that Ramadan is a time to renew determination and work diligently to meet the leadership's aspirations for developing the educational system and nurturing a creative generation to advance the country.

He also asked God Almighty to bless the Arab and Islamic nations with goodness and blessings during this holy month.

Kuwaiti Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait extended his warmest 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 the Kuwaiti people and all residents on the occasion of Ramadan.

## Amir congratulates Dominican Republic on Independence Day

**KUWAIT CITY, March 1, (KUNA):** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to President Luis Abinader of the Dominican Republic on the occasion of his country's Independence Day, wishing him good health and continued progress and pros-

perity for his nation and people.

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 President Abinader, extending their best wishes on this occasion.

## Morini congratulates Kuwait on Nat'l Days

**KUWAIT CITY, March 1:** The Italian Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Lorenzo Morini, congratulated the State of Kuwait on the occasion of the country's National Day and Liberation Day. HE Morini said in a statement, "In my name and on behalf of the Government and people of Italy, I am pleased to extend my warmest and heartfelt 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, to HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, to the Kuwaiti Government and the



Morini

friendly people of Kuwait, on the occasion of the celebration of the National Day and the Liberation Day."

Ambassador Morini stressed that there is great Italian interest in Kuwait, especially since Italy views Kuwait as an advanced model of stability, tolerance and democracy. He pointed to the depth of the historical relations between the two countries, which have developed into a long-term dynamic partnership in all fields, describing them as of great importance in advancing the path of bilateral relations between Kuwait and Italy to broader horizons, adding that these distinguished historical relations extend for decades to include various economic, developmental, investment, political and cultural fields. Ambassador Morini concluded his message wishing Kuwait and its people continued stability, peace and prosperity under its wise leadership.

## Kuwait Cultural Office in London hosts 'Huna AlKuwait' exhibition

**LONDON, March 1, (KUNA):** Kuwait Ambassador to the United Kingdom Badr Abdullah Al-Muneikh inaugurated a permanent cultural and artistic exhibition titled "Huna AlKuwait", a celebration of national identity, at the headquarters of the Kuwaiti Cultural Office in London on Tuesday.

The event was attended by the heads of the embassy's affiliated offices, as well as esteemed diplomats, directors of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) cultural offices, and members of prominent British cultural institutions.

Dr. Abdullah Al-Mishal, Head of the Cultural Office, expressed to (KUNA) his gratitude and appreciation to the Ministry of Higher Education for supporting this initiative, he also extended his gratitude to his colleague Dr. Hessa Al-Ajyan, the Cultural Attache and the curator, for spearheading

facilitating the exhibition.

She said to (KUNA) that the exhibition is a platform for Kuwaiti artists to share their talents with the international community, emphasizing the soft power of art in bridging cultures and deepening global appreciation for Kuwait's rich heritage.

She also extended her gratitude to the participating artists for their generous contribution of artwork.

At the heart of Huna AlKuwait lies an evocative dialogue between past and present, where themes of nostalgia and innova-



Kuwait Ambassador to the United Kingdom Badr Al-Muneikh and Dr. Hessa Al-Ajyan, Cultural Attaché and Head of the Kuwaiti Cultural Office Dr. Abdullah Al-Mishal.

tion coalesce.

The exhibition features contemporary works by 14 Kuwaiti artists, offering diverse perspectives on Kuwaiti identity.

Through a blend of heritage, memory, and transformation, these works celebrate the country's architectural and cultural legacy, the beauty of its coastline, and its unique wildlife.

From delicate calligraphic compositions to bold mixed-media installations, the pieces on display serve as a bridge between tradition and modernity, illustrating the evolving artistic and cultural landscape of Kuwait.

## KRCS reaffirms relief efforts with ICRC

**RIYADH, March 1, (KUNA):** Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Ambassador Khaled Al-Maghames said Tuesday that his charity is committed to joining humanitarian efforts by helping and supporting disaster-affected people worldwide.

He made the remarks to KUNA after meeting Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Pierre Krahenbuhl on the sidelines of the Fourth Riyadh International Humanitarian Forum.

He boasted that the size, level and nature of humanitarian aid provided by the State of Kuwait, including all governmental and nongovernmental organizations, affirm its significant role in international humanitarian action to serve refugees and displaced people worldwide.

The KRCS chairman added that he had discussed with the ICRC chief existing mutual cooperation and humanitarian efforts amid ongoing global changes.



KUNA photo Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society Ambassador Khaled Al-Maghames met with Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Pierre Krahenbuhl in Riyadh.

For his part, Krahenbuhl spoke highly of the KRCS as one of the ICRC's key humanitarian partners, along with its initiatives purposed to mitigate the anguish of people hit by natural disasters and man-made crises in many countries.



KUNA photo Yemen's Minister of Education Tareq Al-Abkari inaugurated the late Abdulrahman Al-Aujan Primary School in the Governorate of Hadhramaut.

## Kuwait-funded Al-Aujan School opens in Yemen's Hadhramaut

**ADEN, March 1, (KUNA):** Yemen's Minister of Education Tareq Al-Abkari has inaugurated the late Abdulrahman Al-Aujan Primary School in the Governorate of Hadhramaut.

The project was implemented by the Response Foundation for Humanitarian Work and supervised by the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity Society as part of a Kuwaiti campaign, which has been ongoing for a decade.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Al-Abkari emphasized that the Al-Aujan School project represents a significant achievement in advancing education in Yemen and improving the learning environment.

He also expressed deep appreciation to Kuwait's leadership, government, and people for their support and contributions

to Yemen, and praised Kuwait's continued assistance to the education sector through impactful, long-term projects that have significantly improved the quality of education in the region.

For his part, Deputy Governor of Hadhramaut Governorate for the Affairs of the Valley and Desert Directorates, Amer Al-Amiri expressed gratitude to Kuwait and the family of the late Abdulrahman Al-Aujan for funding the construction of this school under the supervision of the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity.

He said that this school would serve as a major addition to the educational infrastructure in Wadi Hadhramaut, contributing significantly to the improvement of education in the region and enhancing its facilities and outcomes.

LOCAL



KUNA photo  
Acting Director General of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development Waleed Al-Baher and Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development of the Republic of Cameroon Amin Osman May after signing the agreement.

Loan aims to boost rice production

# KFAED inks KD 3mn deal with Cameroon

KUWAIT CITY, March 1, (KUNA): Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) signed a loan deal worth KD three million (around USD 9.7 million) with Cameroon to contribute to financing a rice production development project.

In a statement to KUNA, the fund said the project would lead to promoting economic and social development in three regions in Cameroon through the reclamation of roughly 5,000 hectares of farmland to develop rice production.

It added that the project would also contribute to finding marketing and distribution centers with a view to ensuring partial rice self-sufficiency, creating new job opportunities for women and youth and cutting poverty rates.

The loan agreement was signed by KFAED's Acting Director-General Waleed Al-Baher and Cameroon Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development Alamine Ousmane Mey.

## Kuwait congratulates Lebanon on parliament confidence

KUWAIT CITY, March 1, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Thursday sent a cable to his Lebanese counterpart Nawaf Salam, congratulating him on his government's winning of parliament confidence.

In the cable, His Highness the Prime Minister expressed Kuwait's welcome of this confidence, along with its solidarity with the Lebanese government in taking all measures it sees appropriate to safeguard Lebanon's independence and sovereignty, and apply all relevant international resolutions, including UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1701.

His Highness the Prime Minister also said he looks forward to promoting close cooperation between the governments of Kuwait and Lebanon in various fields in order to fulfill the ambitions of both peoples.

Humanitarian leadership celebrated at int'l forum

# Arab Red Crescent officials applaud Kuwait's ongoing aid to crisis zones

RIYADH, March 1, (KUNA): Philanthropic officials and leading workers in the humanitarian sector on Tuesday lauded the State of Kuwait's relief efforts throughout the world, aiding people in need at times of catastrophes.

Abdullah Al-Muhaidli, Secretary General of the Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Organization (ARCO), talking to KUNA during the Fourth Riyadh International Humanitarian Forum, affirmed that Kuwaiti public and private associations have been steadily providing aid to refugees and the displaced in countries afflicted with natural and human-made disasters.

The organization is following up, with admiration, on these humanitarian and relief tasks, particularly those undertaken by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, an effective member in the organization.

Mohammad Baharethah, the Executive Manager of the Yemeni relief association, "Istijaba," shed light in his address on Kuwait's diverse relief projects in his country, such as construction of villages, hospitals, water networks, roads, orphanage houses, in addition to executing programs for empowering the youth.

Baharethah seized the opportunity to congratulate the State of Kuwait on its 64th National Day and 34th Liberation Day, affirming that the Yemeni people share the Kuwaitis their joy.

For his part, Dr. Mohammad Al-Hadid, Chairperson of the Jordanian Red Crescent, lauded in remarks to KUNA the State of Kuwait's keenness on supporting humanitarian projects in the region and the world. He also hinted at the existing cooperation between the Jordanian and Kuwaiti Red Crescent associations.



KUNA photo  
Secretary General of the Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Organization Abdullah Al-Mahidli.

Kuwait has set a remarkable example on behalf of the Arab States in relieving the afflicted in the catastrophes-stricken regions, said Dr. Al-Hadid, who also expressed felicitations to Kuwait on the national occasions.

## State of Kuwait Kuwait Investment Authority - Debts Purchased for the State's Account Settlement and Management Office Announces:

<p><b>Summary Report on the Bankruptcy Proceedings and the Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>Ahmad Ibrahim Mahmoud Al-Asaad (Guarantor of Nasser Hizam Mohammad Al-Hajri, Owner of Al-Hajri Construction and Trade Establishment - Sole Proprietorship)</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 17/2011 General Debt Bankruptcy/1, dated 01/06/2011</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. The guarantor's share of the debt as at 01/08/1990, amounts to K.D 460,191.067. 2. The guarantor's share of the debt pursuant to Article 13 amounts to K.D 3,261,487.866. 3. Amounts recovered after the bankruptcy declaration ruling: None. <b>Second:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Acceptable Commercial Bank of Kuwait - Debt acquired by the State, amounting to K.D 3,261,487.866, representing the bankrupt's share of the guaranteed debt related to the bankruptcy of Nasser Hizam Mohammad Al-Hajri, owner of Al-Hajri Construction and Trade Establishment (Sole Proprietorship), in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993.</p> <p><b>Summary Report on the Bankruptcy Proceedings and the Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>Kuwait and Alexandria Exchange Company W.L.L.</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. in Case No. 200/2004-General Debt Bankruptcy/1, dated 28/06/2005</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. The outstanding debt as at 01/08/1990 amounts to: K.D 376,480.645 2. The debt in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: K.D 1,599,237.926 3. The amounts recovered after the bankruptcy declaration ruling amount to: K.D 10,049.586 <b>Second:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Acceptable 1. Commercial Bank of Kuwait - Debt acquired by the State amounting to K.D 1,599,237.926, in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993. 2. Bahrain Arab International Bank - Debt amounting to \$809,989.23, as per the bank's letter dated 22/02/2016 and its annexes, based on a Debt Restructuring and Settlement Agreement and Share Pledge Contract dated 14/06/1988, excluding legal interest and expenses.</p> <p><b>Summary Report on the Bankruptcy Proceedings and the Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>National Automobiles Manufacture and Trade Company (NAMTCO) K.S.C</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 267/2003 - General Debt Bankruptcy, dated 09/03/2004</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. The outstanding debt as at 01/08/1990 amounts to: K.D 12,379,532.386 2. The debt in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: K.D 46,031,348.425 3. The amounts recovered after the bankruptcy declaration ruling amount to: K.D 737,394.312 <b>Second:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Acceptable 1. Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait - Debt acquired on behalf of the state amounting to K.D 46,031,348.425, in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993. 2. Commercial Bank of Kuwait - Debt acquired on behalf of the State amounting to K.D 1,747,805.856, representing the company's share of the guaranteed debt for the Arab Transport Vehicle Manufacturing Company, in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993. <b>Third:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Excludable 1. End-of-service indemnity provision amounting to K.D 3,488,000, as per the financial statement prepared by the Public Prosecution; however, no supporting documents validate the debt. 2. Other creditor balances and payables amounting to K.D 39,100,000, as per the financial statement prepared by the Public Prosecution; however, no supporting documents validate the debt. 3. Receivables from related parties amounting to K.D 125,705,000, as per the financial statement prepared by the Public Prosecution; however, no supporting documents validate the debt.</p> <p><b>Summary Report on the Bankruptcy Proceedings and the Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>Sheikh/ Khalifa Al-Abdullah Al-Khalifa Al-Sabah</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 97/2002 - General Debt Bankruptcy/1, dated 22/04/2003</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. Outstanding debt as at 01/08/1990 amounts to: K.D 395,026,322.294 2. Debt in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: K.D 1,102,182,384.671 3. Amounts recovered after the bankruptcy declaration ruling amount to: K.D 34,120,017.151 <b>Second:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Acceptable 1. Kuwait International Bank - Debt acquired on behalf of the State amounting to K.D 1,102,182,384.671, classified as personal debt, in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993. 2. Gulf Bank - Debt acquired on behalf of the State amounting to K.D 1,942,750.288, representing the bankrupt's share of the guaranteed debt for the National Gulf Contracting Company, in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993. 3. Hussain Maki Al-Juma - Debt amounting to K.D 391,071.340, based on the ruling issued by the Court of Cassation in Case No. 336/1999/3, dated 16/02/2002. Note: The total amount due under the aforementioned ruling was K.D 590,365,000, part of which has been settled, leaving the remaining balance as stated. <b>Third:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Excludable 1. The Circle Investment Group - Debt amounting to K.D 4,209,141,000, as recorded in the financial statement prepared by the Public Debt Protection Authority for the creditor company. However, no supporting documents validate the debt. 2. MASS Equipment Company - Debt amounting to K.D 2,867,000, based on the judicial liquidator's report for MASS, which is a bankrupt company. The liquidator was contacted for supporting documents, but in a letter dated 18/02/2018, he confirmed that no official documents exist to validate the debt. 3. Kuwait Aluminum Extrusion Company - Debt amounting to K.D 7,333,333, based on the company's letter dated 24/09/2024. However, since this debt arose after the bankruptcy declaration ruling, the creditor is excluded from the group of creditors.</p> <p><b>Summary Report on the Bankruptcy Proceedings and the Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>Hafiz Amer Hafiz Guarantor of: Mohammad Saleh Marafie Trading &amp; Contracting Co. W.L.L.</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 208/2004 - General Debt Bankruptcy (1), dated 26/04/2005</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. The guarantor's share of the debt as at 01/08/1990 amounts to: K.D 1,622,972.639</p>	<p><b>Summary Report on the Bankruptcy Proceedings and Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>Al-Haditha Trading &amp; Contracting Co. (Sheikh/ Mohammad Al-Khalifa Al-Sabah &amp; Partner) W.L.L.</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 140/2005 - General Debt Bankruptcy dated 27/12/2005.</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. Outstanding debt as at 01/08/1990: K.D 2,280,425.828 2. Debt in accordance with Article 13: K.D 10,455,363.499 3. Amounts recovered after the bankruptcy declaration: None <b>Second:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Acceptable * Burgan Bank - Debt acquired by the state amounting to K.D 10,455,363.499, in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993. <b>Third:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Excludable * Al-Jir International General Trading Co. - K.D 8,649.968, based on the company's letter dated 15/05/2006, attached with the court ruling in Case No. 2046/1988 - Commercial First Instance/12, dated 16/10/1988, and the appeal ruling in Case No. 17/11/1988 - Commercial Appeal/1, dated 12/12/1988. However, no evidence was provided regarding any executive actions that would interrupt the statute of limitations from the date of the claim until the date of submitting the debt inclusion request, in accordance with Article 118 of the Commercial Law.</p> <p><b>Summary Report on the Bankruptcy Proceedings and Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>Al-Khalifa Contracting &amp; Trading Co. (Mohammad Khalifa Al-Adhbi Al-Sabah &amp; Partner) W.L.L.</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 139/2005 - General Debt Bankruptcy, dated 27/12/2005</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. Outstanding debt as at 01/08/1990: K.D 7,263,778.520 2. Debt in accordance with Article 13: K.D 33,297,112.601 3. Amounts recovered after the bankruptcy declaration: None <b>Second:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Acceptable 1. Burgan Bank - Debt acquired by the State amounting to K.D 33,297,112.601, in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993. 2. The Global Joint Financial and Commercial Business Company - K.D 16,600,000 based on the letter submitted by the creditor's representative dated 09/05/2006, attached with the court ruling in Case No. 1865/2002 - Commercial First Instance /2, dated 30/11/2002, and a certificate confirming no appeal dated 23/02/2003, excluding legal fees and expenses. <b>Third:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Excludable * MASS Equipment &amp; Trading Co. - K.D 1,167/750 based on the report of the court-appointed liquidator of MAS, which is a bankrupt company. The liquidator was contacted to provide supporting documents verifying the validity of the claimed debt, but in his letter dated 18/02/2018, he confirmed that no official documents exist to substantiate the claim.</p> <p><b>Summary Report on Bankruptcy Proceedings and Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>Athari Construction Materials Co. (Mohammad Khalifa Al-Sabah &amp; Partners) W.L.L.</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 134/2005 General Debt Bankruptcy dated 27/12/2005.</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. Outstanding debt as at 01/08/1990: K.D 7,446,767.347 2. Debt in accordance with Article 13: K.D 33,639,491.650 3. Amounts recovered after the bankruptcy declaration: None <b>Second:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Acceptable 1. Burgan Bank - Debt acquired by the State amounting to K.D 33,639,491.650, in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993. 2. The Global Joint Financial and Commercial Business Company - K.D 178,325/293 based on the letter submitted by the creditor's representative dated 09/05/2006, attached with the court ruling in Case No. 1871/2002 - Commercial First Instance/6, dated 30/11/2003, and a certificate confirming no appeal dated 06/05/2006. Additionally, legal interest of 7% is applicable from 09/12/2001 until the bankruptcy declaration ruling, excluding legal fees and expenses. <b>Third:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Excludable * Paribas OBU Bank - K.D 577,524/428 based on the letter submitted by the bank's representative dated 07/05/2006, attached with the Court of Appeal ruling No. 1086/1990 - Commercial Appeal/4, dated 17/11/1992. However, no evidence has been provided to demonstrate any legal action interrupting the statute of limitations from the date of the claim until the date of the debt inclusion request, in accordance with Article 118 of the Commercial Law.</p> <p><b>Summary Report on Bankruptcy Proceedings and Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>Athari Transport, Automobiles Import, and Export Company (Mohammad Khalifa Al-Sabah &amp; Partners) W.L.L.</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 136/2005 dated 27/12/2005.</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. The outstanding debt as at 01/08/1990 amounts to: K.D 3,279,077.139 2. The debt in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: K.D 15,009,561.955 3. Amounts recovered after the bankruptcy declaration: None <b>Second:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Acceptable 1. Burgan Bank - Debt acquired by the State amounting to K.D 15,009,561.955, in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993. 2. Gulf Investment Company - K.D 155,739,730, based on the letter submitted by the creditor's representative dated 08/05/2006, attached with the court ruling in Case No. 1553 / 1993 - Commercial First Instance/6, dated 21/01/1995, and the Court of Appeal ruling No. 278/1995, dated 13/11/1995, along with a certificate issued by the General Department of Execution dated 08/05/2006. In addition, legal interest at 7% is applicable from 19/07/1993 until the bankruptcy declaration ruling, excluding legal fees and expenses. 3. The Global Joint Financial and Commercial Business Company - K.D 34,271/000 based on the letter submitted by the creditor's representative dated 09/05/2006, attached with the court ruling in Case No. 1864/2002 - Commercial Full/1, dated 16/11/2002, and a certificate confirming no appeal dated 11/03/2003, excluding legal fees and expenses.</p> <p><b>Summary Report on Bankruptcy Proceedings and Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>Mohammad Saleh Marafie Trading &amp; Contracting Co. W.L.L.</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 208/2004, dated 26/04/2005</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. Outstanding debt as at 01/08/1990: K.D 3,591,935.015 2. Debt in accordance with Article 13: K.D 14,137,366.186 3. Amounts recovered after the bankruptcy ruling: K.D 251,669.785</p>	<p><b>Summary Report on Bankruptcy Proceedings and Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>Saleh Abdul Samad Mulla Jumaa Ahmad</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 68/2007 - General Debt Bankruptcy/1, dated 23/04/2008</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. Outstanding debt as at 01/08/1990: K.D 12,214.000 2. Debt in accordance with Article 13: K.D 12,214.000 3. Amounts recovered after the bankruptcy ruling: K.D 503.103 <b>Second:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Acceptable 1. Industrial Bank of Kuwait - Debt acquired by the State, amounting to K.D 12,214.000, in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993. 2. Kuwait Automotive Trading Company - K.D 9,325,700 based on the letter submitted by the company, dated 08/09/2008, along with the certificate issued by the General Department of Execution at the Ministry of Justice, for the remaining amount under Payment Order No. 42/1993, issued on 17/01/1993. 2. Kuwait Finance House - K.D 364.990, based on the letter submitted by the bank, dated 11/03/2009, along with Payment Order No. 36200/2004, issued on 24/07/2004, excluding legal fees and expenses. 3. Commercial Facilities Company - K.D 14,767.640 based on the letter submitted by the company, along with Payment Order No. 704/1999, issued on 26/04/1999, excluding legal fees and expenses. 4. Gulf Bank - K.D 19,664.028 based on the letter submitted by the bank, dated 12/03/2009, along with Court of Appeal Ruling No. 1816/2002 - Commercial/1, issued on 15/12/2002, including interest but excluding legal fees and expenses. <b>Third:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Excludable 1. Hassan Ahmad Al-Kandari - K.D 10,250,000, based on the letter submitted by the creditor's representative, dated 27/05/2009, along with Payment Order No. 3654/2008, issued on 06/10/2008. Since the debt arose after the bankruptcy ruling, it does not qualify to be included among the group of creditors. 2. Burgan Bank - K.D 1,253.393, based on the letter submitted by the bank, dated 22/06/2009. However, supporting documents validating the debt have not been submitted.</p> <p><b>Summary Report on the Bankruptcy Proceedings and the Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>Abdul Redha Mohammad Dawood Madouh</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 58/2003 - General Debt Bankruptcy, dated 07/10/2003.</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. Outstanding debt as at 01/08/1990: K.D 310,296.000 2. Debt in accordance with Article 13: K.D 822,466.654 3. Amounts recovered: K.D 18,579.322 <b>Second:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Acceptable Commercial Bank of Kuwait - Debt acquired by the State, amounting to K.D 822,466.654, in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993. <b>Third:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Excludable 1. United Commercial Group for Exchange Operations - K.D 11,515,000, as per the financial statement prepared by the Public Prosecution and the Experts Department report. However, the company did not submit a request to include its debt in the Authority's review, as required under Article 105 of Law No. 71 of 2020. 2. Yusef Marikhan Awadh - K.D 5,213.000 as per the financial statement prepared by the Public Prosecution and the Experts Department report. However, the company did not submit a request to include its debt in the Authority's review, as required under Article 105 of Law No. 71 of 2020. 3. Abdulrazzaq Aidan Yusef Abdulrazzaq - K.D 2,716.000 as per the financial statement prepared by the Public Prosecution and the Experts Department report. However, the company did not submit a request to include its debt in the Authority's review, as required under Article 105 of Law No. 71 of 2020. 4. Commercial Facilities Company - K.D 1,935.000 as per the financial statement prepared by the Public Prosecution and the Experts Department report. However, the company did not submit a request to include its debt in the Authority's review, as required under Article 105 of Law No. 71 of 2020. 5. Dar Investment Company - K.D 4,133.000 as per the financial statement prepared by the Public Prosecution and the Experts Department report. However, the company did not submit a request to include its debt in the committee's review, as required under Article 105 of Law No. 71 of 2020.</p> <p><b>Summary Report on the Bankruptcy Proceedings and the Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>Abdullah Sabah Shabib Al-Fadhli Guarantor of: Saleh Abdul Samad Mulla Jumaa Ahmad</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 68/2007 - General Debt Bankruptcy/1 dated 23/04/2008</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. Her share of the debt as at 01/08/1990 amounts to: K.D 3,053,500 2. His share of the debt according to Article 13 amounts to: K.D 3,053,500 3. Collected amounts after the bankruptcy declaration total: K.D 6,691,242 <b>Second:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Acceptable 1. Real Estate Management Company - K.D 750/000 based on the financial statement prepared by the Public Prosecution and the Experts Department report. However, the company did not submit a request for debt inclusion to the Authority in accordance with Article 105 of Law No. 71 of 2020. 2. Mohammad Abdulaziz Al-Wazzan &amp; Sons Company - K.D 3,300/000 based on the financial statement prepared by the Public Prosecution and the Experts Department report. However, the company did not submit a request for debt inclusion to the Authority in accordance with Article 105 of Law No. 71 of 2020. 3. Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait - K.D 148,195/688 based on letters submitted by the bank on 27/11/2016 and 04/10/2018, attached with account statements. However, the necessary legal documents validating the debt have not been submitted. 4. Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait - K.D 1,345,728/832 based on letters submitted by the bank on 27/11/2016 and 04/10/2018, attached with account statements regarding a guarantee for Dallah Al-Khaleej General Trading &amp; Contracting Company. However, the necessary legal documents validating the debt have not been submitted. 5. Kuwait Finance House - K.D 16,002/530 based on letters submitted by</p>	<p><b>Summary Report on Bankruptcy Proceedings and Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>Abdulmohsen Ahmad Abdulaziz Al-Sanea</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 210/2003 - General Debt Bankruptcy/1, dated 18/11/2003.</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. Outstanding debt as at 01/08/1990 amounts to: K.D 160,282/038 2. Debt in accordance with Article 13: K.D 557,647/182 3. Amounts collected total: K.D 55,171/924 <b>Second:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Acceptable 1. National Bank of Kuwait - Debt purchased on behalf of the State amounting to K.D 557,647/182 in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993. 2. Gulf Bank - Amounting to K.D 264,398/802 based on bank letters dated 11/03/2019, 23/06/2010, and 13/04/2015, a formal loan agreement secured by a mortgage, and an assignment of a previous contract No. 4965 Volume/3 dated 15/11/1999, excluding statutory interest. 3. International Financial Company (Closed K.S.C.) - K.D 6,594/850 based on the company's letter dated 29/02/2004, Payment Order No. 2564/2000 dated 14/10/2000, a certificate of no appeal dated 05/02/2001, and the certificate issued by the Execution Department, including expenses. 4. International Financial Company (Closed K.S.C.) - K.D 2,609/650 based on the company's letter dated 29/02/2004, Payment Order No. 15466/2000 dated 14/10/2000, a certificate of no appeal dated 18/02/2001, and the certificate issued by the Execution Department, including expenses. 5. International Financial Company (K.S.C. Closed) - K.D 5,040/950 based on the debt submission letter dated 29/02/2004, Payment Order No. 19399/2000 dated 06/01/2001, a certificate of no appeal dated 28/07/2001, and the certificate issued by the Execution Department, including expenses. 6. International Financial Company (K.S.C. Closed) - K.D 2,452/825 based on the company's letter dated 29/02/2004, Payment Order No. 15867/2000 dated 22/10/2000, a certificate of no appeal dated 26/01/2001, and the certificate issued by the Execution Department, including expenses. 7. International Financial Company (K.S.C. Closed) - K.D 14,116/430 based on the debt submission letter dated 29/02/2004, Payment Order No. 2647/2000 dated 22/10/2000, and the certificate issued by the Execution Department, including expenses. <b>Third:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Excludable 1. International Financial Company (K.S.C. Closed) - K.D 4,819/000 based on the company's letter dated 29/02/2004, attached with a financing agreement, but the company failed to provide supporting documents validating the debt. 2. International Financial Company (K.S.C. Closed) - K.D 5,434/000 based on the company's letter dated 29/02/2004, attached with a financing agreement, but the company failed to provide supporting documents validating the debt.</p> <p><b>Summary Report on Bankruptcy Proceedings and Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>Mohammad Saleh Marafie Ali Marafie Guarantor of: Mohammad Saleh Marafie Trading &amp; Contracting Co. W.L.L.</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 208/200 - General Debt Bankruptcy dated 01/06/2011.</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. The guarantor's share of the outstanding debt as of 01/08/1990 amounts to: K.D 1,622,972.639. 2. Debt in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: K.D 6,743,381.911 3. Amounts recovered after the bankruptcy declaration: K.D 110,556.830. <b>Second:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Acceptable * Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait - Debt purchased by the State amounting to K.D 6,743,381.911 representing the bankrupt party's share of the debt guaranteed for Mohammad Saleh Marafie Trading &amp; Contracting Co. W.L.L. pursuant to Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993.</p> <p><b>Summary Report on the Bankruptcy Proceedings and the Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>Nasser Hezam Mohammad Al-Hajr Owner of Al-Hajri Construction and Trade Establishment (Sole Proprietorship)</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 17/2011 - General Debt Bankruptcy/1 dated 01/06/2011.</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. The guarantor's share of the outstanding debt as of 01/08/1990 amounts to: K.D 1,622,972.639. 2. Debt in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: K.D 6,743,381.911 3. Amounts recovered after the bankruptcy declaration: K.D 110,556.830. <b>Second:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Acceptable * Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait - Debt purchased by the State amounting to K.D 6,743,381.911 representing the bankrupt party's share of the debt guaranteed for Mohammad Saleh Marafie Trading &amp; Contracting Co. W.L.L. pursuant to Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993.</p> <p><b>Summary Report on Bankruptcy Proceedings and Provisional Debt List</b> For the Bankruptcy of: <b>Widah Ali Khazaal Guarantor of the Bankrupt /Saleh Abdul Samad Mulla Jumaa Ahmad</b> Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 68/2007 dated 23/04/2008.</p> <p><b>First:</b> Financial and Accounting Procedures 1. Her share of the debt as at 01/08/1990 amounts to: K.D 3,053,500. 2. Her share of the debt pursuant to Article 13 amounts to: K.D 3,053,500. 3. Amounts recovered after the bankruptcy declaration ruling: K.D 414,142. <b>Second:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Acceptable 1. Industrial Bank of Kuwait - Debt purchased by the State amounting to K.D 3,053/500 representing her share of the debt guaranteed for the bankrupt Saleh Abdul Samad, pursuant to Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993. 2. Public Institution for Social Security - K.D 3,432/114 based on the official letter from the institution dated 26/01/2010, stating the fees due to the institution from the bankrupt. <b>Third:</b> Debts the Authority Considers Excludable 1. Real Estate Management Company - K.D 750/000 based on the financial statement prepared by the Public Prosecution. However, the official documents validating debt have not been submitted. 2. Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait - K.D 1,345,728/832 based on the bank's letter dated 04/10/2018, attached with account statements referring to a guarantee for Dallah Al-Khaleej General Trading &amp; Contracting Establishment. However, the necessary legal documents proving the validity of the debt have not been provided.</p>
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According to the Provision of Article 111 of Law No. 71 of 2020, "The debtor and each creditor, even if his name is not included in the list of debts, may appeal to the Bankruptcy Department against debts included in the list, within ten days from the date of announcing the list.

## INTERNATIONAL

## US federal workers start to receive new email demanding accomplishments

WASHINGTON, March 1, (AP): Federal employees are starting to receive another email requiring them to explain their recent accomplishments, a renewed attempt by President Donald Trump and billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk to demand answers from the government workforce.

Originally expected to go out Saturday, the new request began landing in the inboxes of some employees late Friday. The plan to send a second round of emails was initially disclosed by a person with knowledge of the situation who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss it publicly.

The first email, which was distributed a week ago, asked employees "what did you do last week?" and prompted them to list five tasks that they completed. Musk, whose Department of Government Efficiency has been empowered by Trump with a mission to downsize agencies and eliminate thousands of federal jobs, said anyone who didn't respond would be fired. Many agencies, meanwhile, told their workforces not to respond or issued conflicting guidance.

The second email was expected to be delivered in a different way, according to the person with knowledge of the situation, potentially making it easier to discipline employees for noncompliance.

Instead of being sent by the Office of Personnel Management, which functions as a human resources agency for the federal government but doesn't have the power to hire or fire, the email was to come from individual agencies that have direct oversight of career officials.

A version of the email received late Friday by some employees at two separate agencies - with the subject line, "What did you do last week? Part II" - came from "hr@opm.gov," the same OPM address that sent the first version. Employees at a third agency received the email from an internal department address.

"Please reply to this email with approx. 5 bullets describing what you accomplished last week and cc your manager," the message read, adding that going forward, employees would be expected to submit a response each week by the following Monday at

11:59 p.m. Eastern.

It's unclear how national security agencies will handle the second email. After the first one, they directed employees not to write back because much of the agencies' work is sensitive or classified. Less than half of federal workers responded, according to the White House.

The version viewed late Friday by The Associated Press reads in part: "If all of your activities are classified or sensitive, please write, 'All of my activities are sensitive.'" That may not eliminate all security concerns given that sending an email creates a digital footprint regardless of the message's content.

A spokesperson for OPM did not immediately respond to a request for clarification Friday night.

On Wednesday, at Trump's first Cabinet meeting of his second term, Musk argued that his request was a "pulse check" to ensure that those working for the government have "a pulse and two neurons."

Both Musk and Trump have claimed that some workers are either dead or fictional, and the president has publicly backed Musk's approach.



People protest during a rally outside the Treasury Department in Washington on Feb 4. (AP)

European leaders pledge to stand by Kyiv after confrontational Oval Office meet

## US President Trump calls for 'immediate' ceasefire between Ukraine, Russia

WASHINGTON, March 1, (AP): US President Donald Trump said Friday he wants an "immediate" ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine, and warned Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to make peace or lose American support.

"That was not a man that wanted to make peace," Trump said of Zelenskyy, hours after the two had a contentious Oval Office meeting. He added, "I want a ceasefire now."

Trump said he believes that Russian President Vladimir Putin, who launched the invasion of Ukraine three years ago, is ready for a peace deal.

Zelenskyy urged the US administration to be more skeptical of the Russian leader's intentions.

Trump berated Zelenskyy for being "disrespectful" Friday in an extraordinary Oval Office meeting, then abruptly called off the signing of a minerals deal with the US that Trump said would have moved Ukraine closer to ending its war with Russia.

The astonishing turn of events could scramble affairs in Europe and around the globe. During his visit with Trump, Zelenskyy was expected to sign the deal allowing the US greater access to Ukraine's rare earth minerals and hold a joint news conference, but that plan was scrapped after the heated engagement between the leaders in front of the news media.

It's unclear what the blowup could mean for the deal that Trump insisted

was essential to repay the U.S. for the more than \$180 billion in American aid sent to Kyiv since the start of the war. And it remains to be seen what, if anything, Trump wants Zelenskyy to do to get the deal back on track.

The Ukrainian leader left the White House shortly after Trump shouted at him, showing open disdain. Untouched salad plates and other lunch items were being packed up outside the Cabinet room, where the lunch between Trump and Zelenskyy and their delegations was supposed to have taken place.

The White House said the Ukraine delegation was told to leave.

"You're gambling with World War III, and what you're doing is very disrespectful to the country, this country that's backed you far more than a lot of people say they should have," Trump told Zelenskyy.

The last 10 minutes of the nearly 45-minute meeting devolved into a tense back and forth between Trump, Vice President JD Vance and Zelenskyy, who had urged skepticism about Russia's commitment to diplomacy, citing Moscow's years of broken commitments on the global stage.

Zelenskyy's main objective going into the sit-down had been to press Trump not to abandon his country and to warn against moving too closely to Russian President Vladimir Putin. Instead he got shouted at while Trump appeared to play up the drama for the cameras.



US President Donald Trump, right, meets with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the Oval Office at the White House on Feb 28, in Washington. (AP)

Meanwhile, European leaders pledged late Friday to stand by Ukraine in the wake of the contentious Oval Office meeting between Trump, Vance and Zelenskyy, with their statements in support of their neighbor on the continent ensuring a deepening transatlantic rift.

European leaders already were shaken by Vance's speech to the Munich Security Conference two weeks ago in which he lectured them about the state of their democracy. As prime ministers and presidents across the continent scrambled to respond, they

find a path forward to a lasting peace based on sovereignty and security for Ukraine," the statement said.

The European leaders' comments Friday largely did not mention Trump or Vance, but rather sought to assure Ukraine of their support as the war with Russia enters its fourth year. Zelenskyy re-posted their comments on X, writing "thank you for your support" to each - likely a dig at the Trump administration.

During the extraordinary meeting Friday in Washington, Trump chided Zelenskyy after Vance, one of the administration's most skeptical voices on Ukraine, said he was being disrespectful for debating Trump in the Oval Office in front of the American media.

"Have you said 'thank you' once?" Vance asked Zelenskyy.

The Ukrainian president said four times during the course of their exchange that he was thankful or had already expressed his thanks.

Trump then called off the signing of a minerals deal that he said would have moved Ukraine closer to ending its war with Russia. Zelenskyy left the White House shortly after Trump shouted at him, showing open disdain. The White House said the Ukrainian delegation was told to leave.

A senior Ukrainian official said Zelenskyy spoke to French President Emmanuel Macron, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte and President of the European Council Antonio Costa after he left the White House,

describing all the conversations as "supportive" of the Ukrainian leader. The official, who is familiar with the matter, requested anonymity because he was not authorized to comment publicly.

Italy's Premier Giorgia Meloni, however, proposed "an immediate summit" between the United States and European allies "to speak frankly about how we intend to face today's great challenges, starting with Ukraine." She urged the West to stay united.

"Every division of the West makes us all weaker and favors those who would like to see the decline of our civilization," she said. "A division would not benefit anyone."

Some posts on X were directed to Zelenskyy. EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told him "your dignity honors the bravery of the Ukrainian people. Be strong, be brave, be fearless. You are never alone, dear President."

And Friedrich Merz, Germany's likely next chancellor, wrote: "Dear Volodymyr @zelenskyyua, we stand with #Ukraine in good and in testing times. We must never confuse aggressor and victim in this terrible war."

The victory for Merz's party Sunday in Germany's national election ensured that Ukraine has an even stronger supporter in the European Union's largest country. Merz during the campaign promised to unite Europe in the face of challenges from both Russia and the United States.



Firefighters battle a large fire of a derailed freight train carrying benzene, a highly flammable and toxic liquid on Feb 28, in Hustopece nad Bečvou, Czech Republic. (AP)

## Freight train derailed in Czech Republic, causing chemical fire

Czech firefighters were battling a major chemical blaze in eastern Czech Republic on Friday after a freight train derailed and carcinogenic benzene from damaged tank wagons caught fire.

The derailment took place near the station in the town of Hustopece nad Bečvou around noon local time (1100 GMT), with the fire sending thick black smoke into the air visible from a long distance. The cause of the derailment

was under investigation. No one has been injured.

The nearest houses in the town are located about 500 meters (around a quarter-mile) from the fire, but the smoke hadn't reached them.

Firefighters said that 15 of the 17 tanks in the train were on fire. Each tank contained about 60 metric tons (66 tons) of the toxic substance. They used a helicopter to contain the fire while their counterparts from neighboring Slovakia

were on the way to help.

Authorities said that no levels of dangerous substances exceeding limits have been detected in the town, but advised that residents there and in nearby towns and villages don't open their windows, and stay indoors.

Firefighters originally said that the train was carrying benzol, but later said it was benzene, which is used to make various chemical terparts from neighboring Slovakia

## UK's Int'l Development Minister Dodds resigns

LONDON, March 1, (AP): The British minister responsible for international development quit Friday in the wake of Prime Minister Keir Starmer's decision earlier this week to ramp up defense spending by slashing the foreign aid budget.

In a letter to Starmer, Anneliese Dodds resigned as international development minister and minister for women, saying there were "no easy paths" to increasing defense spending but that she disagreed with the decision to cut overseas aid, which she warned would only lead to China and Russia filling the vacuum.

On Tuesday, Starmer said the government would raise UK defense spending to 2.5% of gross domestic product by 2027 from the current 2.3%, saying Europe is in a new era of insecurity that requires a "generational response."



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer, left, and US President Donald Trump shake hands at a joint press conference in the East Room at the White House on Feb 27 in Washington. (AP)

## Russia offers to restore direct air links with United States during Istanbul talks

MOSCOW, March 1, (AP): Russia has offered the United States to restore direct air links between the two countries during the latest round of consultations with Washington, the Russian Foreign Ministry said Friday.

Russian and US diplomats met in Istanbul on Thursday to discuss normalizing the operation of their respective embassies that has been crippled by multiple round of diplomats' expulsions during previous years.

The Russian Foreign Ministry hailed the talks as "substantive and businesslike" and noted in a statement that "joint steps were agreed upon to ensure unimpeded financing of the activities of diplomatic missions of Russia and the United States on a reciprocal basis and to create appropriate conditions for diplomats to perform their official duties."

The ministry said that it also offered the US "to consider the possibility of restoring direct air traffic." It didn't add any details or possible time frame, and there was no immediate comment from Washington on the issue.

US and other Western nations cut air links with Russia as part of a slew of sanctions imposed on Moscow after it sent troops into Ukraine on Feb 24, 2022.



Journalists work outside US Consular General residence where Russian and US diplomats are meeting to discuss operation of embassies, in Istanbul, Turkey on Feb 27. (AP)

The US-Russia talks in Istanbul followed an understanding reached during US President Donald Trump's call with Russian President Vladimir Putin, and negotiations between senior Russian and US diplomats and other officials in Saudi Arabia earlier this month.

In Riyadh, Moscow and Washing-

ton agreed to start working toward ending the fighting in Ukraine and improving their diplomatic and economic ties. That includes restoring staffing at embassies, which in recent years were hit hard by mutual expulsions of large numbers of diplomats, closures of offices and other restrictions.

## German poll winner Merz and center-left rivals start sounding out possible coalition

BERLIN, March 1, (AP): Negotiators from German election winner Friedrich Merz's conservative bloc and the center-left Social Democrats started exploratory talks Friday on a possible coalition government, but were tight-lipped on the details as they launched what could be a complicated process.

Merz's Union bloc, which has led the opposition since 2021, won Sunday's election, in which the far-right, anti-immigration Alternative for Germany took second place.

The only plausible choice of coalition partner for the Union - which like other mainstream parties rules out working with Alternative for Germany - is the Social Democrats of outgoing Chancellor Olaf Scholz. They slumped to third place and their worst post-World War II result in a German parliamentary election on Sunday.

Between them, the Union and Social Democrats have 328 seats in the newly elected 630-seat parliament.



Friedrich Merz, leader of the Christian Democratic Union, CDU, (center right), smiles as he arrives for a faction meeting of the Christian Union party's lawmakers at the parliament Bundestag in Berlin, Germany on Feb 25. (AP)



Indonesia nationals who had worked at scam centers in eastern Myanmar walk into a waiting room upon arrival from Thailand, at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Tangerang, Indonesia on Feb 28. (AP)

## 84 Indonesians freed from Myanmar scam centers arrive home

Eighty-four Indonesians freed from scam centers in Myanmar arrived in Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, late Friday, part of a massive repatriation movement that is straining regional resources.

They were among more than 7,000 people being held in the Myanmar border town Myawaddy following a crackdown on the scam centers by Thailand, Myanmar and China. Two buses carrying the Indonesians arrived Thursday in the Thai border city of Mae Sot, where the passengers had health checks, and their identities were verified.

The 84 Indonesians, which included 69 men and 15 women, were brought home on three commercial

flights Friday. The first flight, carrying 38 evacuees, arrived at 8:05 p.m. local time. The evacuees, many wearing dark hoodies, red scarves, and face masks, declined to comment to the media following a briefing by Indonesian authorities.

They were escorted through a crush of reporters outside an arrival terminal at Soekarno-Hatta international airport into a waiting bus.

"They were healthy," said Judha Nugraha, the foreign affairs ministry's director for citizen Protection, who, along with Indonesian diplomats in Yangon and Bangkok had been in Mae Sot since Feb. 23 to coordinate with various parties in Thailand and Myanmar. (AP)

## Impeachment ruling nears

### Yoon defends martial law decree

SEOUL, South Korea, March 1, (AP): In a final statement at his impeachment trial, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol defended his martial law decree that plunged the country into chaos as a bid to inform the public of the danger of the opposition-controlled parliament as he vowed Tuesday to push for political reform if reinstated.

Yoon spoke at the Constitutional Court as it wrapped up arguments in his impeachment trial. The court is expected to rule by mid-March on whether to remove Yoon from office or reinstate his presidential powers.

The liberal opposition-controlled National Assembly impeached Yoon, a conservative, after his short-lived Dec. 3 martial law decree caused political turmoil, rattled its financial markets and hurt its international image. He has been separately arrested and indicted on rebellion charges in connection with his decree. If convicted, he would face the death penalty or life imprisonment.

Yoon has denied any wrongdoing and blamed the main liberal opposition Democratic Party, which obstructed his agenda, impeached many senior officials and slashed key parts of the

government's budget bill, for the political crisis. During his martial law announcement, Yoon called the assembly "a den of criminals" and "anti-state forces."

"The reason why I declared martial law was because of desperation as I could no longer neglect a do-or-die crisis facing this country," Yoon said. "I tried to inform the people of these anti-state acts of wickedness by the mammoth opposition party and appealed to the people to stop it with intense surveillance and criticism."

After declaring martial law, Yoon sent troops and police officers to the assembly, but enough lawmakers still managed to enter an assembly chamber to vote down Yoon's decree unanimously, forcing his Cabinet to lift it.

Yoon reiterated Tuesday that he had no intentions of disrupting assembly work and that deploying troops and police was meant to maintain order. But some commanders of military units sent to the assembly have testified that Yoon ordered them to drag out lawmakers to prevent them from overturning his decree.

During the hearing, Democratic Party lawmaker Jung Chung-rai said that Yoon must be dismissed as he undermined the constitution by trying to seal the assembly and suppress its authority with armed troops. Jung also said Yoon's imposition of martial law disturbed public order because South Korea wasn't in an emergency that required such a drastic step.



Yoon

## Panama and Costa Rica turn into 'black hole' for migrants, deportees from US: observers

MIRAMAR, Panama, March 1, (AP): Officials in Costa Rica and Panama are confiscating migrants' passports and cellphones, denying them access to legal services and moving them between remote outposts as they wrestle with the logistics of a suddenly reversed migration flow.

The restrictions and lack of transparency are drawing criticism from human rights observers and generating increasingly testy responses from officials, who say their actions are aimed at protecting

the migrants from human traffickers.

Both countries have received hundreds of deportees from various nations sent by the United States as President Donald Trump's administration tries to accelerate deportations. At the same time, thousands of migrants shut out of the US have started moving south through Central America - Panama recorded 2,200 so far in February.

"We're a reflection of current United States immigration policy," said

Harold Villegas-Román, a political science professor and refugee expert at the University of Costa Rica. "There is no focus on human rights, there is only focus on control and security. Everything is very murky, and not transparent."

Earlier this month, the US sent 299 deportees from mostly Asian countries to Panama. Those who were willing to return to their countries - about 150 to date -- were put on planes with the assistance of United Nations agencies and paid for by the US.

Carlos Ruiz-Hernandez, Panama's deputy foreign minister, said Thursday a small number are in contact with international organizations and the U.N. Refugee Agency as they weigh whether to seek asylum in Panama.

"None of them wants to stay in Panama. They want to go to the U.S.," he said in a phone interview from Washington. "We cannot give them green cards, but we can get them back home and for a short period of time provide them with medical and psychological support as well as housing."

Despite Trump's threats to retake control of the Panama Canal, he said Panama had not acted under U.S. pressure. "This is in Panama's national interest. We are a friend of the US and want to work with them to send a signal of deterrence."



Migrants talk with a Panamanian immigration officer in Palenque, Panama on Feb 26. (AP)

## Bangladeshi students form new political party

DHAKA, Bangladesh, March 1, (AP): Students in Bangladesh who led a mass uprising to topple former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina last summer are now diving into politics by forming the new National Citizen Party.

The aim is to create new political space in a fiercely divisive dynastic political landscape. For decades, the country's politics have been dominated by two former prime ministers and archrivals - Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia.

The announcement came Friday at a rally in front of Parliament in Dhaka, during which political reforms were promised for a country born in 1971 through a bloody war against Pakistan.

Thousands of people, mainly youths, gathered to witness the moment. Critics of Nobel Peace laureate



Students listen to their leader during the launch of the new political party called the Jatiya Nagarik Party, or National Citizen Party in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Feb 28. (AP)

Muhammad Yunus, who heads the interim government, say the new party is nothing but a "King's Party" blessed by him. But political analysts say the new platform might be able to break the decades-long traditional political power structure in the South Asian nation.

The new party has been named the Jatiya Nagarik Party, or National Citizen Party.

Nahid Islam, a 26-year-old prominent student leader, was named as the head of the party. Nine other officials - all of them student leaders who rose to prominence during the mass uprising in July and August - have been named to top positions, according to Bangladeshi media.

A 151-member committee of the party was announced during the launch.

## Philippine authorities arrest more than 400 in suspected online gambling and scam hub

MANILA, Philippines, March 1, (AP): More than 400 people, half of them from China, were arrested by Philippine authorities in a raid on a suspected online gambling and scam hub in a busy commercial district in the capital, officials said.

The 401 detained included 207 Chinese and 132 Vietnamese nationals who were arrested in a condo building in Pasay city on Wednesday night. They were suspected by Philippine authorities of involvement in illegal online gaming operations, along with cryptocurrency, romance and investment scams, according to a government report.

Other arrested suspects were from South Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar and Madagascar, according to the report. The scale of the arrests indicated how such lucrative online ventures have continued to thrive despite an order by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to law enforcers to shut them down by the end of last year.

Although a large number of online gambling outfits is believed to have relocated to other countries, including Cambodia and Myanmar, due to an ongoing crackdown in the Philippines, an unspecified number has remained in the country and ventured into an array of Internet-based scams.

There have been widespread speculation that Philippine law enforcement and regulatory officials have allowed illegal online gambling outfits to operate



This photo provided by the Philippines Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (PAOCC) on Feb 26, shows dozens of SIM cards found from a raid on a suspected online gambling and scam hub in a busy entertainment district near Manila. (AP)

in the country in the past in exchange for huge bribes.

The latest raid "stemmed from a report from a concerned citizen who has been noticing the large number of foreign nationals in the said building," the government report said.

Officials said 52 Filipinos who served as housekeeping staff and were not in-

involved in the alleged offenses were also taken from the online hub, which was shut by the Pasay city government for operating without a business permit.

Authorities seized computers, bundles of SIM cards and other electronic equipment allegedly being used by the suspects to target customers outside the Philippines, officials said.

**Also:**

**MANILA, Philippines:** Two Russian tourists died when they were swept away by strong undercurrents while scuba diving in waters south of Manila, with one believed to have drowned and the other attacked by sharks, a Philippine coast guard official said Friday.

Two other Russian tourists managed to swim back safely to their dive boat Thursday off Verde Island, a popular diving destination in the province of Batangas, Philippine coast guard provincial commander Capt. Airland Lapitan said.

The four Russian tourists traveled by boat to the waters off Verde Island from the nearby town of Puerto Galera in Oriental Mindoro province with a Filipino dive instructor. While diving, the five were swept away by strong undercurrents, Lapitan said.

Two of the Russians managed to surface with the dive instructor but the two other Russians, who were identified as **Iliya Peregudin**, 29, and **Maksim Melekhov**, 39, went missing.

## Kim expresses satisfaction over results of drills

### N.Korea conducts cruise missile tests to show N-attack capability

SEOUL, South Korea, March 1, (Agencis): North Korea said Friday it had test-fired strategic cruise missiles to demonstrate its nuclear counter-attack capability, days after it vowed to respond to what it called escalating US-led hostilities since the start of the Trump administration.

The official Korean Central News Agency said leader Kim Jong Un oversaw the missile tests off the country's west coast Wednesday. They were the North's fourth missile launch event this year and the second of President Donald Trump's second term.

The launches were designed to inform "the enemies, who are seriously violating our security environment and fostering an escalating confrontation environment," of the North Korean military's counterattack capability and the readiness of its nuclear operations, KCNA said.

Kim expressed satisfaction over the results of the drills and said the military must be fully ready to use its nuclear weapons, the report said.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement later Friday that it had detected and tracked the North Korean launches. It said the South Korean military maintains readiness to repel any potential provocation by North Korea based on the solid South Korea-US mili-



This photo provided on Feb 28, 2025, by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversees test firings of what it says are strategic cruise missiles off the country's west coast on Feb 26. (AP)

tary alliance.

Since his Jan 20 inauguration, Trump has boasted of his summitry with Kim during his first term and said he would reach out to Kim again. North Korea hasn't directly responded to Trump's overture as it continues its typical aggressive rhetoric against the US and weapons testing activities.

Many experts say Kim, now preoccupied with his support of Rus-

sia's war against Ukraine with supply of weapons and troops, won't likely embrace Trump's outreach anytime soon. They say Kim could reconsider if he doubts he'll maintain North Korea's current solid cooperation with Russia after the war ends.

Last Saturday, North Korea's Defense Ministry alleged the US and its allies were ramping up more serious military provocations target-

ing North Korea since Trump took power. It cited the recent U.S.-South Korean aerial exercise involving a US B-1B bomber and other reported activities involving US military assets. A Defense Ministry statement said North Korea will counter the strategic threat of the U.S. with strategic means.

Kim and Trump met three times from 2018-19 to discuss the fate of North Korea's nuclear program, but their diplomacy derailed due to disputes over U.S.-led sanctions on the North. Kim has since sharply increased the pace of weapons tests to expand and modernize his nuclear arsenal. Having a bigger nuclear arsenal now, experts say Kim would think he could win greater U.S. concessions if he revives diplomacy with Trump.

Kim oversaw the launching drill, saying that "it is a responsible exercise of the DPRK's war deterrence to continuously test the reliability and operation of the components of its nuclear deterrence and demonstrate their might."

"It is the responsible mission and duty of the DPRK's nuclear armed forces to permanently defend the national sovereignty and security with the reliable nuclear shield by getting more thorough battle readiness of nuclear force and full preparedness for their use," Kim added.



In this handout photo supplied by the Indian Army, a team carries out rescue operations for trapped construction workers who were swept away by an avalanche near the Mana Pass in northern Uttarakhand state in Chamoli district, India on Feb 28. (AP)

## 4 construction workers killed in northern India avalanche

At least four workers have died after an avalanche swept away a large construction crew working on a highway near India's mountainous border with Tibet, Indian army said Saturday.

The incident took place near the Mana Pass in northern Uttarakhand state on Friday, and 55 construction workers were initially trapped under snow. Rescuers pulled out 50 workers, of whom four later died, the Indian army said in a statement.

It said the search for the five remaining missing workers was continuing, with multiple teams of rescuers and military helicopters scanning the incident site. The statement did not specify the number of injured but said they were "being prioritized for evacuation."

Chandrashekhar Vashistha, a senior administrative official, said some of the workers had sustained serious injuries and were hospitalized.

Many of the trapped workers were migrant laborers who were working on a highway widening and black-topping project along a 50-kilometer (31-mile) stretch from Mana, the last village on Indian side, to the Mana Pass bordering Tibet.

"Rescue operations were slow due to heavy snowfall, and the area remained inaccessible," said Kamlesh Kamal, a spokesperson for the Indo-Tibetan Border Police. He said the rescuers had to work through several feet of snow, snowstorms and poor visibility. (AP)

## Peacekeepers carry out human rights violations in CAR: expert

BANGUI, Central African Republic, March 1, (AP): United Nations peacekeeping forces and Russian mercenaries are carrying out human rights violations in the Central African Republic (CAR), an independent investigator says.

Yao Agbetsse, a human rights lawyer and independent expert, said the UN is concerned about serious human rights violations in the region, which involve not only the Central African armed forces and their Russian allies in the Wagner Group, but also members of MINUSCA, the UN peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic.

"MINUSCA contingents are among the actors on the ground who sometimes commit violations. There have been reports of sexual abuse and exploitation by a number of contingents," Agbetsse told a news conference Thursday in Bangui, the capital.



An aerial view of Bangui, Central African Republic, is seen on March 8, 2024. (AP)

## Kuwaiti oil price rises to \$76.98 pb

KUWAIT CITY, March 1, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil barrel rose USD 1.05 to reach USD 76.98 per barrel (pb) on Friday, compared to USD 75.93 pb on Thursday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Saturday.

In international markets, Brent crude oil went down 86 cents to reach USD 73.18 pb, while West Texas crude went down 59 cents to reach USD 69.76.

# Business

Hosted by the Financial Times in Abu Dhabi

## NBK Wealth Group CEO joins 'Future of Asset Management Middle East' panel discussion

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: NBK Wealth Group CEO, Mr. Faisal Al-Hamad, took part in a panel discussion at the Future of Asset Management Middle East conference, organized by the Financial Times Group in Abu Dhabi.

The conference brought together leading executives from top asset management firms, sovereign wealth funds, and family offices across the Middle East and beyond. Featuring industry debates, intimate breakout sessions, and exclusive roundtables, the event uncovered opportunities for growth in this dynamic region amidst global economic and political shifts.

Participants underscored the significant influx of wealth into the Middle East, driven by "the great millionaire migration", fueled by favorable tax regimes and lifestyle benefits, as well as geopolitical and economic instability elsewhere. Institutions and asset management firms from all over the world are flocking to the region to capitalise on the growing wealth pool.

Discussions at the conference reaffirmed the GCC's remarkable resilience in navigating geopolitical challenges, underscoring its sustained economic growth and ability to attract investment rates above the global average. Entering a new era of investment, the GCC is propelled by robust sovereign wealth funds, large-scale domestic projects, and supportive government initiatives. Initiatives such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030, and the Dubai Economic Agenda D33 are driving economic growth and establishing the region as a premier investment destination.

Discussions also underscored the GCC's unique advantages as a global trade and investment hub. Despite its growth potential, the region poses challenges for asset management firms, including a scarcity of skilled professionals and fierce industry competition.

Participants emphasized that as governments actively promote the reshoring of assets domestically, local and international asset managers must determine how to strategically position themselves to capitalise on these growth opportunities while overcoming industry challenges.

### Panel Discussion

During his participation in the panel discussion titled "Capitalising on the Great Wealth Migration," Mr. Faisal Al-Hamad, CEO of NBK Wealth Group, highlighted that technology has evolved from a mere advantage to an absolute ne-



Photos during the 'Future of Asset Management Middle East' panel discussion.



cessity. He further noted that the wealth transfer process is not monolithic but varies significantly across client segments. On the one hand, some clients prioritize personal relationships and direct engagement in managing their assets, while on the other, a growing segment is increasingly inclined toward leveraging technology. This generational shift demands that asset management firms innovate and tailor their services to meet the distinct needs of their diverse clientele.

Regarding the impact of wealth migration to the region on the asset management and private banking sectors in the Middle East, and particularly in the GCC countries, Al-Hamad emphasized that both existing wealth and the influx of new capital would have a positive effect on the volume of assets managed by wealth management firms in the region. He highlighted that many firms would need to refine and expand their services to stay competitive and attract new clients. This is especially true as global asset management companies also seek to secure a stake in managing the existing wealth and the significant capital flowing in the region.

Al-Hamad noted that companies with a legacy of wealth management expertise, distinguished competencies in the field, and a diverse range of services that cater to the varying needs of clients are best positioned to attract new customers from the influx of wealth into the region. He further emphasized that firms with a global presence and strategic partnerships with specialized international entities would be particularly well-equipped to capitalise on these

- Al-Hamad:**
- Managing both existing financial wealth and the influx of global capital into the region demands deep local expertise.
  - In wealth management, technology has shifted from being a competitive advantage to an essential requirement.
  - At NBK Wealth, we go beyond one-size-fits-all solutions, crafting bespoke wealth management strategies tailored to each client's unique needs.
  - Many asset managers focus on mid-net-worth investors and the local wealth pool, recognizing the growing demand for tailored investment solutions in the region.

opportunities.

"At NBK Wealth Group, our brand derives its strength from the prestigious reputation of NBK Group, a regional and global leader. As the largest wealth management firm in Kuwait and one of the foremost in the region, we are uniquely positioned to provide unparalleled expertise and service in the wealth management sector," Al-Hamad said.

"We do not offer one-size-fits-all solutions. We believe in the importance of thoroughly understanding each client's unique needs and financial goals in order to craft a bespoke wealth management strategy. Our core philosophy centers around placing the client at the heart of everything we do, striving to foster strong, long-term relationships built on trust and personalized service," he added.

Al-Hamad highlighted the extensive experience of the NBK Wealth team, stating: "We offer our clients a range of exceptional benefits that guarantee an unparalleled experi-

ence, including personalized services designed to meet their unique needs and financial goals, all delivered by a dedicated team of wealth management experts."

He emphasized that NBK Wealth aspires to be the ideal partner and the foremost, trusted choice in wealth management by offering specialized, comprehensive solutions that deliver added value, create a lasting positive impact, and build a legacy for clients across generations. He also noted that the group supports its clients in navigating challenges through sound investment strategies, diversified financial portfolios, and providing investment advice grounded in a thorough analysis of current economic conditions.

Furthermore, Al-Hamad highlighted that NBK Wealth offers a comprehensive range of services, including asset management, trading, lending, deposits, and other tailored, innovative solutions for high-net-worth individuals and institutional clients. He pointed out that the group

has expanded its global presence with a robust network of integrated operations across nine cities in five countries. Additionally, NBK Wealth has formed strategic partnerships with prominent global asset management firms, such as JPMorgan Asset Management and Intervest. These partnerships enhance the group's advisory services and contribute to the development of new, cutting-edge investment solutions, further strengthening its position in the wealth management sector.

Looking ahead to the future of NBK Wealth, Al-Hamad emphasized: "We understand that change is a constant in the market, and customer needs are always evolving. As such, we place great importance on adapting to these shifts and delivering innovative investment solutions that align with the future aspirations of our clients."

Al-Hamad explained that the influx of global wealth into the region requires local expertise, as it is uniquely positioned to understand the regional markets and effectively manage this wealth. He emphasized that the GCC countries continue to be a market where relationships are paramount, playing a critical role in wealth management.

He underscored the critical importance of local partnerships, noting that global asset management firms aspiring to enter the GCC markets must forge alliances with strategic regional partners. This is especially vital in sectors such as asset management, private credit, and real estate investment, as it enables these firms to navigate the region's distinct market dynamics with expertise and precision.

Al-Hamad emphasized that new entrants to the region from asset management firms must develop a clear, focused strategy, targeting a specific customer base while establishing a solid local foundation. This approach is essential before they can successfully expand their operations across the region.

He also noted that billionaires from outside the Middle East, with well-established financial structures, may not prioritize establishing new financial relationships in the region. He also highlighted that asset managers vary in the customer bases they target, with many seeing their true opportunity in catering to mid-net-worth investors and tapping into the local wealth pool.

The panel discussion, featuring Mr. Al-Hamad, included distinguished participants such as Ms. Rasha Badawi, CEO of Barclays Private Bank UAE, Mr. Richard Elston, Group Head of Institutional at CMC Connect, and Mr. Amer Malik, Senior Executive Officer at Lombard Odier Middle East. It was moderated by Mr. Baptiste Aboulian, Group Managing Editor at FT Specialist US. The conversation centered on the impact of the wealth influx into the Middle East on the global wealth landscape, as well as the transformative role of digital solutions, especially robo-advisory services, in reshaping private banking in the region.

Participants also explored how private banks in the Middle East can integrate cultural and religious factors into their wealth management services to cater to the unique aspects of philanthropy in the region, including practices like waqf.

## Other Voices

### Global oil surplus grows

## OPEC+ losing grip on oil markets despite surplus

By Kamel Al-Harami  
Independent Oil Analyst

GLOBAL indications suggest that OPEC is no longer able to effectively manage its six million barrels of surplus oil stocks. Over the past several months, the organization has delayed its decision to increase production more than five times, even allowing some of its members to raise output. However, this increase has yet to materialize, and it is unlikely to happen by April.

With oil demand not looking promising and expected to worsen, the situation is compounded by the current U.S. administration pushing for more tariffs and tax hikes to deal with its budget deficits.

At the current price level of \$73 per barrel, OPEC is in a relatively comfortable position. While this is below the \$80 threshold needed to balance its budgets with a slight shortage, it is still an improvement over the \$70 level. However, as demand for oil remains stagnant and increased taxation potentially leads to inflation, oil consumption is expected to decrease. This makes OPEC's upcoming meeting seem unnecessary, with firm indications that no major improvements are expected in the near future.

In the coming months, a closer understanding between the U.S. and Russia could lead to more Rus-

sian oil entering the market, possibly at the expense of Iranian oil. The U.S. administration is likely to continue exerting pressure to minimize Iranian oil exports.

The overall outlook for the oil markets remains largely unchanged, with an additional surplus of oil globally, making it difficult for OPEC+ to release its six million barrels of idle daily production. With an expected increase of about 1.5 million barrels per day from the U.S., Canada, Brazil, and Guyana next year, the chances of OPEC+ being able to boost its output are highly uncertain. This also reduces the likelihood of oil prices improving.

OPEC+ is now in a tough spot, as it struggles to influence oil prices while non-OPEC oil continues to flow into the market, albeit in smaller volumes, further suppressing prices. This leaves OPEC+ with its six million barrels of unused production capacity and little return on their investments, unable to impact the market for the time being.

It appears that OPEC+ is no longer in a position to control oil markets or, more importantly, the price level. With more oil entering the market, the surplus continues to grow, which is certainly not positive news for the organization.

As a result, the current price of \$73 per barrel is likely to remain for some time, with non-OPEC oil supplies preventing OPEC+ from tapping into its surplus. These barrels will remain in storage until further notice.

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Al-Harami

## Boursa Kuwait continues growth, boosting economic diversification

Liquidity soars to KD 2.853 billion in Feb

KUWAIT CITY, March 1, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait's liquidity reached KD 2.853 billion (about USD 8.7 billion) last February, with daily exchange rate of about KD 167.8 million (about USD 516.8 million), a 84.4 percent rise, compared to January, which recorded about KD 91 million (USD 280.28 million).

According to an economic report published by AlShall Consulting Company on Saturday, the Boursa's performance was

higher in February than that of January, as the Premier Market Index rose by 4.7 percent, the Main Market Index went up by 1.1 percent, while the All Share Market Index rose by 4.1 percent and the Main Market 50 Index went up by 6.1 percent.

The liquidity rate of January and February reached KD 4.581 billion (about USD 14.10 billion), with a daily exchange rate of KD 127.3 million (about USD 392 million), a 92.4 percent rise, compared to the daily exchange of the same time period in 2024, which was about KD 66.2 million (USD 203.8 million), the report said.

Boursa Kuwait was established in April 2014. It plays a vital role in developing Kuwait stock market and creating economic diversity.

### Q8 enhances commitment to sustainable mobility with acquisition

## KPI announces full acquisition of Agriferr and ArMa

KUWAIT CITY, March 1, (KUNA): Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI) announced on Friday that it signed, through its subsidiary Kuwait Petroleum Italy KUPIT, a purchase agreement to fully acquire Agriferr and ArMa companies.

In a statement to KUNA, the KPI, known as Q8, said the two companies working in producing biogas, biomethane gas and bio-LNG in Italy.

The move is part of the company's goals aiming to achieve technologies of low carbon and sustainable energy solution, it added, expecting the process would be done in the beginning of the

upcoming fiscal year.

It is a key step to confirm the company's commitment to the guidelines strategies of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, it noted.

The acquisition is the KPI second investment in alternative energy and biofuel after acquiring a 50 percent stake in the Italian company of Eco Focus in 2024.

The move stresses strategic keenness of the company to provide varied portfolio of fuel products, the statement quoted KPI ECO Shafi Al-Ajmi.

Biogas, biomethane and bio-LNG are alternatives compatible with the company's future vision in as a sustainable mobility player in Europe, he noted.

Q8's Executive Vice President for Marketing Fadhel Al-Faraj affirmed the company's commitment to providing required support to its customers' transition toward sustainable mobility through investing in renewable energy techniques. KPI is the international arm of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation that aims to refine and market fuel, lubricants, and other various petroleum derivatives, globally.

## World Bank to establish \$1 bln reconstruction fund for Lebanon

BEIRUT, March 1, (Xinhua): Lebanese Finance Minister Yassine Jaber revealed on Friday that the World Bank is working on establishing a 1-billion-U.S. dollar reconstruction fund for Lebanon as part of the ongoing efforts to support the country's economic recovery.

His remarks came after a meeting with Ousmane Dione, World Bank Vice President for the Middle East and North Africa region.

Jaber expressed gratitude for the World Bank's ongoing assistance, describing its support as crucial for Lebanon's urgent infrastructure and reconstruction needs.

"A preliminary recovery plan was discussed with the World Bank last week, and we are working on accelerating the reforms necessary to secure its approval," said the Lebanese minister.

He added that several projects are either already approved or in the process of approval, and the priority now is to fast-track their implementation.

For his part, Dione detailed the 1-billion-U.S. dollar Lebanon Emergency Assistance Program (LEAP). The World Bank has committed 250 million dollars. The remaining funds are secured through donor partners and Lebanon's allies.

"The time factor is crucial," Dione stressed,

emphasizing the need for swift action to deliver results and meet the Lebanese people's expectations. He also underscored the importance of transparency, accountability, and digital transformation in strengthening governance.

Regarding funding conditions, Dione clarified that while the World Bank does not impose terms, it expects Lebanon to implement necessary reforms to instill confidence among investors and international partners. "This is a partnership, not an imposition. However, credibility-enhancing measures are essential to reassure investors and attract further support," he explained.





Group photo during the 'Private Banking & Wealth Management Reception'.

Panel discusses future of Islamic finance & global investments

# KFH hosts Private Banking & Wealth Management Reception

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) hosted Private Banking & Wealth Management Reception, bringing together high-net-worth clients and distinguished guests. The event was also attended by her Excellency Mrs. Belinda Lewis, His Majesty's Ambassador to Kuwait.

The event marked a significant milestone in the bank's global expansion and reaffirmed its commitment to enhancing Private Banking and Wealth Management services in the British market.

On his speech during the event that was held at the Four Seasons Hotel, Group Chief Executive Officer, Khaled Yousef AlShamlan said "It is my pleasure to welcome you to the KFH Private Banking & Wealth Management Reception. This event marks a period of significant achievement and global growth for the Kuwait Finance House Group, including the UK, a prominent financial center in Europe and worldwide and a region we know many Kuwaitis have a strong affinity."

Alshamlan began his speech by sharing some key highlights of KFH Group strong financial performance during 2024 where KFH reported historic net profit of KD 601.8 million for the year 2024, which is the highest in the Kuwaiti banking sector.

- Net financing income reached around KD 1.15 billion; an increase of nearly 18.7%.
- Total operating income reached over KD 1.6 billion, an increase of 11.6%.
- Net operating income reached over KD 1 billion, an increase of 9%

He also mentioned that KFH tops all Banks and all listed companies on Boursa Kuwait with a Market capitalization of approximately KD 13.6 billion, and that KFH was ranked among the top five Middle East banks by market capitalization in the latest S&P rankings.

He pointed out that the financial results confirm KFH's successful strategy, solid capital base, and strong operating performance.

Alshamlan indicated that KFH Group focuses on Private Banking and Wealth Management at its UK subsidiary, offering a range of Islamic banking products, including premium and business banking, residential and commercial property finance, as well as treasury and investment solutions. Soon, modern investment management services will also be introduced.

"As a leading provider of private banking and wealth management services, KFH focuses on building trusted client relationships, professionally addressing our clients' needs across all banking, investment, and advisory services, delivering tailored and exclusive solutions designed to meet their unique requirements, whether in the GCC or the UK," Alshamlan said.

He added "We are keen to maintain strong

### AlShamlan:

- KFH Group focuses on Private Banking and Wealth Management at its UK subsidiary
- KFH is actively seeking out emerging opportunities and developing new financial instruments for clients



Maryam Abaalkhail, British Ambassador Belinda Lewis, Khaled Yousef AlShamlan and Shadi Zahran.



Khaled Yousef AlShamlan.



Khaled Yousef AlShamlan and Mohammed Naser Al-Fawzan.



Khaled Al-Shamlan, British Ambassador Belinda Lewis, Ahmed Al-Fares, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr.Abdullah Meshal Al Sabah and his wife at the forefront.



Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem and David O'Loan at the forefront of the audience.

and lasting relationships with our clients while embracing change in several areas. This means dealing with evolving demands of the banking sector through modern technology and digital solutions, as well as responding to developments in the global economy and investment markets."

Alshamlan emphasized that KFH is actively seeking out emerging opportunities in new fields and developing new financial instruments, ensuring all such efforts comply fully with our Sharia and regulatory obligations.

He concluded by saying "I am confident that our experience, the talent of our people, our commitment, and our strong performance will help our clients achieve their financial goals, and, in turn, enhance our position as a world leading Islamic financial institution."

### Her Excellency Mrs. Belinda Lewis, His Majesty's Ambassador to Kuwait

On the sideline of the event, Her Excellency Mrs. Belinda Lewis, His Majesty's Ambassador to Kuwait said "KFH's exclusive event showcased the UK's expertise in Islamic finance, celebrating London's position as the capital for Islamic finance outside of the Islamic world. The bank's client-focused approach to personalized wealth management was also highlighted, as was the impressive range of banking services, including for students. I'm looking forward to seeing the new KFH and KFH Private branding growing and wish the bank every success."

### Panel Discussion

A panel discussion took place during the Private Banking & Wealth Management Reception and brought together Alexander Liddle, Deputy Group CEO Private Banking, Wealth Management and Business Excellence KFH, Philip Crawford, CEO KFH UK, Alan Higgins, Head of Investments AUB Bahrain, and Abdulla Al Ali, Chief Asset Management Officer at KFH Capital.

The panelists explored KFH's history in the UK, investment strategies, wealth management opportunities, the evolution of Islamic finance in the UK to global investment opportunities and the future of wealth management. The panelists also delved into the vision for the overall Private Banking and Wealth Management business at KFH Group and discussed the plan to enhance the investment and wealth management proposition for clients by providing exclusive, modern, Islamic Private Banking & Wealth Management offering for international clients across generations. This is supported by the extensive expertise in managing regional portfolios, equity funds, international real estate, Ijara, and trade finance, and by the extensive network that helps provide clients with access to a range of world-class, local and international shariah-compliant investment opportunities, available across multiple jurisdictions & booking centers.



Maryam Abaalkhail moderates the panel discussion alongside Philip Crawford, Alexander Liddle, Abdulla Al Ali and Alan Higgins.



Part of the Private Banking & Wealth Management Reception.



Photos during the event.

### KEO celebrates Kuwait National Day & Liberation Day

KEO International Consultants employees from its Kuwait office joined together in recognition and celebration of National Day and Liberation Day. As a company deeply committed to Kuwait and the region, KEO recognizes the significance of this day in honoring the nation's rich history, heritage, and the resilience of its people. Festivities included a celebratory lunch featuring national songs and a welcome message from Dr. Abdul Aziz Sultan, Managing Partner, along with a spirited and informative quiz testing the group's knowledge of the

history of Kuwait.

"At KEO, we are privileged to be part of Kuwait's ongoing development. This celebration is not only a tribute to the country's past, but also a testament to the future ahead," said Ali Dashti, Senior Vice President and Partner. "We extend our heartfelt wishes to our employees, partners, and the people of Kuwait for a joyous and prosperous National and Liberation Day."

### 24/7 customer service via digital platforms

## Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait unveils special Ramadan working hours for branches

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) extends its greetings to His Highness the Amir



ABK extends Ramadan greetings to Kuwait's leadership and people.

Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, as well as the government, people, and residents of Kuwait on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan, hoping it bestows an abundance of blessings.

During this time, all ABK branches will be functional from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Furthermore, the Al Khiran Mall digital branch will be functional to service customers in two shifts from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and from 8:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.

The Bank has also confirmed its full operational readiness to serve customers 24/7 via its various digital platforms.

This includes Online Banking via eahli.com, Mobile Banking through the ABK app, as well as the Bank's call center Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899

### 'Our employees are our greatest asset'

## Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait hosts Annual Open Day for employees & families

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) proudly hosted its much-anticipated Annual Open Day at Dar Shaikha Farm in Al Wafrah, bringing together employees and their families for a day of connection, joy, and camaraderie. This special event reaffirmed ABK's unwavering commitment to fostering a positive workplace culture rooted in teamwork, inclusivity, and corporate family values.

With a vibrant lineup of sporting activities, interactive games, and friendly competitions, the Open Day provided the perfect opportunity for employees from across all divisions to strengthen relationships, bond with their colleagues, and create lasting memories with their loved ones. Carefully curated to encourage collaboration and engagement, the activities underscored ABK's mission to build a strong, united workforce.

Afrah Al Arbash, General Manager of Human Resources at ABK, emphasized the significance of the event, stat-



Ms. Afrah Al Arbash, GM of Human Resources at ABK

ing, "Our employees are our greatest asset, and this Open Day was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate them. It is through such initiatives that we reinforce the strong sense of community that defines ABK, ensuring that every team member feels valued, appreci-

ated, and connected." Beyond just a day of entertainment, the event served as a powerful testament to ABK's dedication to employee well-being and engagement. By bringing together colleagues and their families outside of the workplace, ABK continues to strengthen the bonds that drive success and foster a culture of mutual support.

Al Arbash added, "At ABK, we believe that investing in our people is investing in our future. Events like these help us cultivate an environment where collaboration, appreciation, and team spirit thrive. We will continue to champion initiatives that enhance employee morale, build meaningful connections, and reinforce our values of inclusivity and togetherness." ABK remains committed to organizing regular employee engagement activities throughout the year, recognizing their vital role in boosting morale, promoting collaboration, and creating a workplace where employees feel motivated and empowered.



Photos during the event.

### New service offers zero fees

## KIB launches 'Fast Transfer' service for instant international remittances

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has announced the launch of its latest digital service, "Fast Transfer", available exclusively on the KIB mobile banking application. This new international remittance service is launched in collaboration with Visa, a world leader in digital payments, to enable the Bank's retail customers to transfer funds internationally to predefined beneficiaries' bank accounts with unmatched speed, transparency and convenience.

Through this partnership, KIB is the first bank in Kuwait to enable Fast Transfer based on the Visa Direct Account Capability platform for its customers. By integrating Visa Direct Account Capability, KIB's "Fast Transfer" service ensures that beneficiaries receive the full remitted amount without any deductions, providing a seamless and reliable experience. With support for 40 international destinations, the service offers instant transfer capabilities in many countries, ensuring funds are delivered in record time. KIB's vision for this service is to raise the cross-border payment standards in Kuwait through competitive foreign exchange rates, real-time transaction tracking capabilities, and zero hidden costs or beneficiary deductions, all from the convenience of a mobile banking app.

Highlighting the significance of this launch, Mohamed Atef Elshareef, General Manager of Digital Innovation and Data Intelligence at KIB stated: "Our new 'Fast Transfer' service reflects KIB's commitment to redefining digital banking experiences. With the integration of Visa Direct, our customers can now experience international money transfers with exceptional speed, transparency, and reliability. This represents yet another step in KIB's mission to empower customers with innovative banking solutions that cater to their daily needs."

Meanwhile, Othman Tawfeeq, General Manager of the Retail Banking Department, said: "Our focus has always been on empowering our customers with convenient, secure, and cost-effective digital solutions, and the launch of 'Fast Transfer' is a testament to KIB's strategy of putting customer-centric innovation at the heart of everything we do. We strive to strengthen our relationships with all customer segments and enhance financial inclusion through advanced technologies that deliver speed and transparency in transactions, solidifying KIB's position among the leaders in innovative financial solutions."

In his turn, Fahad Al-Bader, General Manager of the Operations Department at KIB, stated: "The launch of the swift transfer service is a significant step toward enhancing operational efficiency at KIB. We have focused on streamlining international transfer processes by leveraging the latest technologies to ensure speed and accuracy. Our commitment to continuous innovation allows us to enhance the quality of banking services, deliver add-



Mohamed Elshareef, General Manager of Digital Innovation and Information Intelligence, Othman Tawfeeq, General Manager of Retail Banking at KIB, and Samir El Ouahabi, Business Development Manager at Visa Direct.



After announcing the launch of the new service, Visa honors KIB.

ed value, strengthen customer trust, and meet evolving needs in an increasingly dynamic financial landscape." From his side, Mohamed Reyad, Visa's Country Manager for Kuwait, said: "We are excited to see KIB become the first bank in Kuwait to use Visa Direct Account capability to deliver the enhanced remittance experience a growing number of consumers seek. With Kuwait among the largest source markets of remittances globally, this partnership will help reinforce Kuwait's position as a leader in global remittances while supporting the government's innovation agenda. We look forward to similar collaborations with our local partners so more consumers in Kuwait can enjoy a better remittance experience." The new service is available to all KIB retail customers. Customers can access the "Fast Transfer" feature via the KIB mobile banking app under the International Transfers section. With plans to expand its corridor network reach and include additional destinations and currencies in the future, KIB continues to solidify its position as a leader in digital banking innovation.

### About KIB

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is a bank that operates according to the

Islamic Shari'ah, based in the State of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank focuses on offering a next-level customer experience under the slogan: "Bank for Life".

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

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

## Oscar-winner actor and his wife may have been dead for days or weeks, sheriff says

# Gene Hackman and his wife tested negative for carbon monoxide

SANTA FE, N.M., March 1, (AP) — Preliminary autopsy results didn't determine how Oscar-winner Gene Hackman and his wife died at their home in Santa Fe, New Mexico, but did rule out that they were killed by carbon monoxide poisoning, the sheriff leading the investigation said Friday.

The condition of the bodies found Wednesday indicated the deaths occurred at least several days earlier and there was no sign of foul play.

At a news conference, Santa Fe County Sheriff Adan Mendoza said the initial examination by the medical examiner showed no sign of carbon monoxide, a colorless and odorless gas produced from kitchen appliances and other fuel-burning items. When it collects in poorly ventilated homes, it can be fatal.

Mendoza also said an examination of the 95-year-old Hackman's pacemaker showed it stopped working on Feb. 17, which means he may have died nine days earlier.

Hackman was found in an entryway. His wife, Betsy Arakawa, 65, was found in a bathroom on her side.

A space heater was near her head, and pills were scattered next to an open prescription bottle on the counter. Investigators said the heater likely was pulled down when she fell.

Whether the pills or other drugs were a factor won't be known until toxicology tests are completed in the coming weeks.

Carbon monoxide can be ruled out since it can dissipate from the environment but not from a body, renowned medical examiner Dr. Michael Baden said.

Examiners will look to test blood and urine, if available, but also could turn to an oily fluid that typically accumulates in lung and abdominal cavities, and samples of muscle and brain, to help determine the causes of death.

Dr. Philip Keen, the retired chief medical examiner in Maricopa County, Arizona, said the moment when a pacemaker stops working could mark the point when a person dies, but not always.

"If your heart required a pacemaker, there would certainly be an interruption at that point - and it might be the

hallmark of when the death occurred," Keen said. "But it's not necessarily because some people get a pacemaker to augment things, not necessarily replace things."

The initial autopsy also found no external trauma to either body. Dr. Victor Weedn, forensic pathologist, said there are plenty of reasons a body could be found on the ground without any sort of bumps or bruises, including if they simply lay down due to feeling unwell.

### Planned

Investigators planned to comb through the couple's phones and monthly planners and reach out to family members, neighbors and workers from the gated community to figure out the last time anyone saw or spoke to Hackman or Arakawa.

The couple was a "very private family," Mendoza said, making it challenging to piece together a timeline.

Authorities do not believe the home had any surveillance cameras, he said. Investigators who searched the



Actor Gene Hackman arrives with his wife, Betsy Arakawa, for the 60th Annual Golden Globe Awards in Beverly Hills, Calif., Sunday, Jan. 19, 2003. (AP)

home retrieved medication that treats high blood pressure and chest pain,

thyroid medication, Tylenol, and records from medical diagnostics testing, court records filed Friday showed.

Detectives wrote in a search warrant affidavit that investigators thought the deaths were "suspicious enough in nature to require a thorough search and investigation."

No gas leaks were discovered in or around the home.

A maintenance worker who showed up to do routine work at the house could not get inside and called a security worker who spotted two people on the ground, Mendoza said.

The worker called 911 and told an operator he did not know if they were breathing.

He and another worker later told authorities that they rarely saw the homeowners and that their last contact with them had been about two weeks ago.

Hackman was among the most accomplished actors of his generation, appearing as villains, heroes and anti-heroes in dozens of dramas, comedies and action films from the 1960s until his retirement in the early 2000s.

He was a five-time Oscar nominee who won best actor in a leading role for "The French Connection" in 1972 and best actor in a supporting role for "Unforgiven" two decades later. He also won praise for his role as a coach finding redemption in the sentimental favorite "Hoosiers."

He met Arakawa, a classically trained pianist, at a California gym in the mid-1980s. They moved to Santa Fe by the end of the decade. Their Pueblo revival home sits on a hill with views of the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

In his first couple of decades in New Mexico, Hackman was often seen around the state capital and served on the board of trustees for the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum from 1997 to 2004.

Aside from appearances at awards shows, Hackman was rarely seen in the Hollywood social circuit in recent years.

Hackman had three children from a previous marriage. He and Arakawa had no children but were known for having German shepherds.

### Obit

#### Cop storyteller

## Bestselling writer Wambaugh dies

LOS ANGELES, March 1, (AP) — Joseph Wambaugh, who wrote the gripping, true-crime bestseller "The Onion Field" and numerous gritty but darkly humorous novels about day-to-day police work drawn from his own experiences as a Los Angeles police officer, has died at 88.

A family friend, Janene Gant, told The New York Times that Wambaugh died Friday at his home in Rancho Mirage, California, and the cause was esophageal cancer.

The prolific author, who initially planned to be an English teacher, had been with the Los Angeles Police Department 11 years and reached the rank of sergeant when he published his first novel, "The New Centurions," in 1971.

It took a hardened, cynical look at the lives of police officers and the stresses they face patrolling the often mean streets of Los Angeles.

He followed it with a similar novel, "The Blue Knight," in 1972.

"If he didn't invent the police novel, he certainly reinvented it," Michael Connelly, author of the bestselling cop novels featuring LAPD Detective Harry Bosch, told The Associated Press in 2007.

As popular as Wambaugh's first two books were, they were eclipsed by his next one, "The Onion Field," a real-life account of the abduction and killing of a Los Angeles police officer in 1963.

Moments after making a routine traffic stop in Hollywood, Officers Ian Campbell and Karl Hettinger were disarmed by the vehicle's occupants and driven to an onion field near Bakersfield. Campbell was shot to death and Hettinger escaped.

### Fiction

After the book was published, Wambaugh returned to fiction with the wildly funny, although sometimes tragic look at a group of Los Angeles police officers he called "The Choirboys."

Like his first two novels, it included fictionalized accounts of first- and second-hand experiences, and explored the back stories of cops, the people they were sworn to protect and even some they arrested.

Police in Wambaugh's books struggled with such issues as alcoholism, racism and adultery, much of which was triggered by job stress. They sometimes engaged in brutality, and their targets were not always criminals. Some were poor or powerless people in the wrong place at the wrong time.

"Wambaugh's fictional cops were human beings, with all the same quirks and fears any of us have. His enormous insight changed the way all of us who came after him approach our work," bestselling detective writer Robert Crais said.

The son of a police officer, Joseph Aloysius Wambaugh, Jr. had planned to become a teacher after earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from California State University, Los Angeles. He said he chose law enforcement instead when he learned police were paid better.

He had used his G.I. bill benefits to pay for college after serving in the Marine Corps following high school.

### Film

#### Berger's film resonates with pope's health battle

# Life and art collide amid 'Conclave' Oscar buzz

VATICAN CITY, March 1, (AP) — There has long been a Vatican taboo against openly talking about a conclave when a pope is sick: It's considered gauche to speculate about the election of a new pope while the current one is fighting for his life. And that is certainly true as Pope Francis battles double pneumonia at Rome's Gemelli hospital.

But the surprising success of "Conclave" the film and momentum going into Sunday's Academy Awards have thrust the arcane rules, glorious ceremony and supreme drama of one of the Catholic Church's most solemn moments into popular culture, and put the Catholic hierarchy in something of a bind as it simultaneously prays for Francis.

The film can't be dismissed as distasteful or blasphemous, since it treats the gravity of a papal election with respect and accurately portrays the ancient rituals and contemporary problems facing today's Catholic Church. Both the Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano and the Avvenire daily of the Italian bishops conference gave "Conclave" rave reviews.

Granted, those reviews were published before Francis entered the hospital Feb. 14 with a complex lung infection that has taken him out of commission for the longest time of his 12-year papacy.

It's unclear if the newspapers would have published them after Francis' health took such a dire turn. That's even more the case since it's clear from the opening scenes in the Vatican's modern Santa Marta hotel where Francis lives that "Conclave's" fictional dead pope is modeled after the real-life current one.

### Descended

But at the very least, the life-imitating-art coincidence of "Conclave" the movie finding mass popular appeal at a time when the world's media has descended on Rome to monitor Francis' health has certainly piqued interest in what might happen in a real-life conclave.

"Conclave," director Edward Berger's adaptation of the Robert Harris novel starring Ralph Fiennes as the dean of the College of Cardinals, has been nominated for eight Academy Awards, including Best Picture. It goes into Sunday's Oscars with a Bafta win for best picture and a SAG award for best ensemble.

Harris is well aware of the sensitivity of the moment, and how the surreal turn of events of an ailing pope dovetailing with an Oscar campaign had made his book and the film relevant to say the least. But he is adamant against trying to milk the moment for publicity.

"I've been refusing all requests to talk about it and a future conclave because I think that's in extreme bad taste," Harris told The Associated Press. "I really hope he's got some more years yet."

Francis suffered a setback on Friday, after he inhaled vomit during a coughing fit and required non-invasive mechanical ventilation to breathe. Doctors said they need 24 to 48 hours to evaluate how and if the isolated episode affected his overall clinical



This image released by Focus Features shows Ralph Fiennes in a scene from 'Conclave.' (AP)

condition, while keeping his prognosis guarded.

All of which has made "Conclave" the film a bit too close for comfort in more ways than one for anyone following Francis' plight and concerned about what it means for the Catholic Church.

To recap: The film opens with the

death of the pope and turns around the political maneuvering and manipulations behind the election of his successor. Cardinal Thomas Lawrence (Fiennes) is dean of the College of Cardinals, who must organize the conclave amid his own crisis of faith.

With the future of the church weighing on him, he has to contend with secrets, scandals, smear campaigns and

surprising twists, while ensuring the election's integrity.

Massimo Faggioli, theologian at Villanova University, said the film was "sadly effective" in illustrating the institutional instability that the Catholic Church is going through now, as well as the ease with which a single act or allegation of misconduct can ruin someone.

In November, Drake filed a legal petition in Bexar County, Texas, where San Antonio is located, alleging that iHeartMedia had received illegal payments from Universal Music Group to boost radio airplay for "Not Like Us."

UMG is the parent record label for both Drake and Lamar.

The petition, a precursor to a potential lawsuit, had sought depositions from corporate representatives of both companies.

In a court document filed Thursday, attorneys for Drake said the rapper and iHeartMedia had "reached an amicable resolution of the dispute" but did not offer any other information.

"We are pleased that the parties were able to reach a settlement satisfactory to both sides, and have no further comment on this matter," Drake's legal team said in a statement.

In an email Friday, iHeartMedia declined to comment on the settlement.

The claims against UMG remain

"The main threats (are) now coming not from the outside (Napoleon, or Hitler, or secularization), but from the inside (especially the fear of another sexual scandal)," he said.

For sure Berger takes some creative liberties. Cardinal Lawrence, for example, would have been excommunicated two or possibly three times for his efforts to navigate the intrigue, given the ban on communications with the outside world during a conclave and canon laws governing the seal of the confessional and the sealing of the papal apartments after a pope has died.

But this is Hollywood, and His Eminence can be forgiven.

Avvenire, which hews to the Vatican establishment line, praised the film for its sumptuous beauty, twists of plot and "anything but trivial" commentary about the current state of the church.

"Let's face it: 'Conclave,' which takes us to the heart of one of the world's most mysterious and secret events, is a highly entertaining film, especially for an American audience that isn't terribly picky," Avvenire said on Dec. 20, when the film opened in Italian theaters and well before Francis got sick.

### Highlighted

Writing in the Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano on Feb. 1, critic Alessandra Comazzi highlighted the short but critical turn played by Isabella Rossellini, as Sister Agnes.

As a longtime critic for the La Stampa daily, Comazzi is well aware of the Vatican taboo of openly talking of a conclave. But in an interview, she said the film managed to treat a conclave as thriller without causing offense. She said the Vatican newspaper was only too happy to publish her rave.

"The dean Lawrence has to govern the conclave and liberate it from these false prophets," she said. "And I think also from the ecclesial and religious point of view, the director managed to do it in a very respectful way."

That said, someone who has actually participated in a conclave gave the film something of a thumbs down.

"My experience of being in at least one conclave was not that it was some sort of scene of political backroom plotting of how to get your candidate elected," Cardinal Sean O'Malley, the retired archbishop of Boston, wrote in a Feb. 7 blog post.

O'Malley voted in the 2013 conclave that elected Francis pope and is one of his closest allies. He said he and his brother cardinals were well aware that millions of Catholics were praying from afar "so that the Holy Spirit would guide us in our deliberations."

"And, of course, at the moment when each cardinal votes, you take your ballot, stand in front of Michelangelo's image of Christ in the 'Last Judgment' and swear before God that you are going to vote for the person that you believe is God's will for the church," he wrote.

"It's a much different experience than what they depicted in the movie," he wrote. "For all its artistic and entertainment value, I don't think the movie is a good portrayal of the spiritual reality of what a conclave is."

active, and a hearing on a motion by UMG's lawyers to dismiss the petition was scheduled to be held Wednesday in a San Antonio courtroom.

Drake has alleged UMG engaged in "irregular and inappropriate business practices" to get radio airplay for "Not Like Us." The petition also alleges that UMG knew "the song itself, as well as its accompanying album art and music video, attacked the character of another one of UMG's most prominent artists, Drake, by falsely accusing him of being a sex offender, engaging in pedophilic acts, harboring sex offenders, and committing other criminal sexual acts."

An email to a UMG representative seeking comment was not immediately answered.

In January, Drake filed a defamation lawsuit in federal court in New York City against UMG over what he alleges are false allegations of pedophilia made in "Not Like Us." Lamar is not named in the lawsuit. (AP)

### Variety

**NEW YORK: Michelle Trachtenberg,** a former child star who appeared in the 1996 "Harriet the Spy" hit movie and went on to co-star in two buzzy millennial-era TV shows - "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Gossip Girl" - has died. She was 39.

Police responded to a 911 call shortly after 8 a.m. at a 51-story luxury apartment tower in Manhattan's Hell's Kitchen neighborhood where officers found Trachtenberg "unconscious and unresponsive," according to an NYPD statement.

Paramedics pronounced her dead at the scene. No foul play was suspected. Trachtenberg's family objected to an autopsy, the New York City's Office of Chief Medical Examiner said Thursday. Because there was no evidence of criminality, the medical examiner's

office honored the objection, limiting its findings. Such objections are allowed by law. The cause and manner of her death are listed as undetermined.

"The family requests privacy for their loss," Trachtenberg's representative, Gary Mantoosh, said in a statement Wednesday.

Trachtenberg was 8 when she began playing Nona Mecklenberg on Nickelodeon's "The Adventures of Pete & Pete" from 1994 to 1996 and then starred in the title role in the film adaptations of "Harriet the Spy" and "Inspector Gadget," opposite Matthew Broderick.

"Michelle comes off as genuine



Trachtenberg

## A classic Italian novel remake

## Netflix's 'The Leopard' a sumptuous period drama

ROME, March 1, (AP) — "The Leopard," a new Netflix series, takes the classic Italian novel by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa and transforms it into a sumptuous period piece showing the struggles of the aristocracy in 19th-century Sicily, during tumultuous social upheavals as their way of life is crumbling around them.

Tom Shankland, who directs four of the eight episodes, had the courage to attempt his own version of what is one of the most popular films in Italian history. The 1963 movie "The Leopard," directed by Luchino Visconti, starring Burt Lancaster, Alain Delon and Claudia Cardinale, won the Palme d'Or in Cannes.

One Italian critic said that it would be the equivalent of a director in the United States taking "Gone with the Wind" and turning it into a series, but Shankland wasn't the least bit intimidated.

He said that he didn't think of anything other than his own passion for the project, which grew out of his love of the book. His father was a university professor of Italian literature in England, and as a child, he loved the book and traveling to Sicily with his family.

The book tells the story of Don Fabrizio Corbera, the Prince of Salina, a tall, handsome, wealthy aristocrat who owns palaces and land across Sicily.

His comfortable world is shaken with the invasion of Sicily in 1860 by Giuseppe Garibaldi, who was to overthrow the Bourbon king in Naples and bring about the Unification of Italy.

The prince's family leads an opulent life in their magnificent palaces with servants and peasants kowtowing to their every need. They spend their time at opulent banquets and lavish balls with their fellow aristocrats.

## Advantage

Shankland has made the series into a visual feast with tables heaped with food, elaborate gardens and sensuous costumes. He has taken advantage of drone technology to show the family traveling in coaches across the Sicilian countryside or soldiers marching through Palermo.

The series was filmed in magnificent palaces in the Sicilian cities of Palermo, Siracusa and Catania. The famed ballroom scene where the prince dances the waltz with Angelica was in the ballroom at the Grand Plaza Hotel in Rome.

The prince has taken under his wing his beloved orphaned nephew, Tancredi, who stuns the family by joining Garibaldi's men known as the Red Shirts.

Italian actor Saul Nanni takes on the role once played by

Delon. He said that he was honored to play such an "iconic character" and be able to follow in the footsteps of such an "amazing" actor as Delon.

Tancredi seems set to woo and perhaps marry the prince's beloved eldest daughter, Concetta, which would bring him officially into the noble family and protect the line. But the stunningly beautiful Angelica, the daughter of the newly rich mayor of Donnafugata, the town where the family resides in the summer, changes everything.

Angelica is played by Deva Cassel, a model in addition to being an actor, and daughter of Monica Bellucci and Vincent Cassel.

"It was a real honor for me to be able to step into the shoes of Claudia Cardinale, who is such a magnificent actress, who is unreachable, untouchable," Cassel said. "But it was really great to be able to experience such a big set. It was my second project, so it was very stressful to take on such a huge responsibility."

Angelica and the prince's daughter, Concetta, played by Benedetta Porcaroli, flounce through the scenes in lavish costumes, dresses with tight bodices and large skirts with cage crinolines.

Cassel noted the sharp contrast with modern clothing that "adapts to our own body shape."



This photo released by Netflix shows Deva Cassel as Angelica in episode 103 of The Leopard. (AP)

## Fashion

At 90, Armani has more than a few cards up his sleeve

## Versace struts confident collection at Milan show

MILAN, March 1, (AP) — Donatella Versace strutted a confident collection brimming with house codes during Milan Fashion Week on Friday amid speculation that the fashion house is on the market.

Versace waved to the crowd at the end of the co-ed Fall-Winter 2025-26 runway show, maintaining silence even as other Italian fashion companies have expressed interest in the fashion empire founded in 1978 by her late brother, Gianni Versace.

The show unfurled on a long runway in Milan's cavernous tram depot. Guests — including Ice Spice — were provided heated seats and warm blankets against the winter chill. Fittingly, the first looks employed thick quilted puffers in a mix of animal and Medusa prints as a wrap, a coiled mini-skirt, and a couture-like gown.

The stiletto-heeled models walked with unusual high-stepping vigor, perhaps against the drafty venue, or perhaps to project energy to prospective buyers.

Versace is at her best when projecting sex appeal — and there was that aplenty. Satiny teddies were belted and worn under black business blazers, or beneath a roomy ribbed turtleneck.

Silken dress shirts in archival prints were worn with a leg-baring black ruffled skirt for her, and black leather trousers for him. Both finished with studded black gloves.

Built-in corsets were shaped like ice cream cones, colorfully contrasting in primary colors against black garments. They were worn with flouncy skirts and thick-soled boots, or a business trouser and pumps for the unabashed business woman.

Chainmail dresses for her and shirts for him appeared battleworn, with metal mesh and crystal mesh patchworked as if mended and remended. The looks were paired with fierce, spiked caps fastened at the chin.

## Giorgio Armani

At age 90, Giorgio Armani still has more than a few cards up his sleeve.

That was quite literally true in the Emporio Armani collection previewed on Thursday during Milan Fashion Week, where playing cards were the recurring motif.

Sequined playing cards were tucked alluringly in bodices or handily in belts or jacket pockets. A heart-shaped top peeked out of jackets, belt buckles came in diamond shapes and costume jewelry were clubs and spades. For anyone going all-in: An overcoat was flush with all of the suits.

The collection riffed on men's dressing for women, featuring three-piece suits and velvet ensembles with matching ties or big neck bows. Trousers were comfortably loose, featuring deep pockets. Shirt collars and cuffs were at times detached — as if magically floating.

## Tod's

Tod's showcased its "Artisanal Intelligence" behind the latest womenswear collection for next fall and winter at the Gallery of Modern Art during Milan Fashion Week on Friday.

At the entrance, Italian model Carla Bruni was swathed in a leather dress crafted from strips of scrap leather, a living installation that paid tribute to Tod's craftsmanship. Nearby, artisans hand-stitched the brand's trademark Gommino car shoes in a living display of craftwork.

"Machines will never replace the hands of artisans," brand founder Diego della Valle told reporters before the show.

Outerwear prevailed at the creative director Matteo Tamburini's third runway collection, featuring tailored leather trenches, intarsia shearling furs and cozy, woolen pea coats. Knitwear alternatively hugged the body over asymmetrical leather skirts, or was belted over sheer skirts. Blouses with broad shoulders meant business, paired with neat trousers.

## Moschino

The Moschino runway collection for next fall and winter was both a celebration and a wake-up call, a mixed message underlined by the black confetti that rained down on the finale during Milan Fashion Week on Friday.

Creative director Adrian Apollolaza's sweatshirt exhorted "Don't be silent," during his closing bow.

"The ethos of Moschino stems from joy, so I didn't want to lose (that) sentiment. But I wanted to be also conscientious of the times that we live in," Apollolaza said.

The overall tone of the collection was playful, with the brand's engaging trompe l'oeil sleights of the eye.

Raw denim looks showed the tailor's basting stitches. Grey wool dresses featured exaggerated, sculptural elements,



as if wind pushed up the skirt hems and bell sleeves. Oversized puffer coats were paired with sofa cushion headgear. Fetching gowns were made from florals fished from the Moschino archive.

## Roberto Cavalli

Fausto Puglisi offered a grand tour of Pompeii in his latest collection for Roberto Cavalli presented Thursday

during Milan Fashion Week.

The opening look of fiery devore velvet giving way to silver and gold beautifully represented the damage wrought by Vesuvius when it rained volcanic ash

on the ancient city in 79 AD. The city's famed floral frescoes appeared on silky off-shoulder tunics and velvet minidresses, while ensembles were printed with faded marble patterns.

## Variety

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.:** Andrew and Tristan Tate, who are charged with human trafficking in Romania, have returned to the US after authorities lifted travel restrictions on the siblings, who have millions of online followers.

After the pair arrived in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on Thursday, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis

made it clear the influencer brothers are not welcome in his state and that his administration is conducting a preliminary inquiry into the pair — sparking push-back from supporters of the Tates.

Andrew Tate, 38, is a former professional kickboxer and self-described misogynist who has amassed more than 10 million followers on X. He and his brother Tristan Tate, 36, are vocal supporters of US President Donald Trump.

Andrew Tate is a hugely successful social media figure, attracting millions of followers, many of them young men and schoolchildren who were drawn in by the luxurious lifestyle the influencer projects online.

He previously was banned from TikTok, YouTube and Facebook for hate speech and his misogynistic comments, including that women should bear responsibility for getting sexually assaulted.

The Tates, who are dual US-British citizens, were arrested in late 2022 and formally indicted last year on charges they participated in a criminal ring that lured women to Romania, where they were sexually exploited. Andrew Tate was also charged with rape. They deny the allegations. (AP)



Andrew

**NEW YORK:** At age 45, Lin-Manuel Miranda already has accomplished enough to receive a lifetime achievement honor.

The celebrated "Hamilton" playwright is among 21 new inductees into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the 127-year-old honor society where current members include Robert Caro,

Jasper Johns and Meredith Monk. All are to be formally welcomed during a May ceremony at the academy's beaux arts complex in Upper Manhattan, not far from the setting of Miranda's musical, "In the Heights."

Willem De Kooning, Toni Morrison and some key influences on Miranda are among the previous members.

"I am deeply grateful and humbled to be joining this distinguished community, which included Stephen Sondheim, Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein and so many other titans of the arts who continue to inspire me," Miranda said in a statement. "I am excited to visit the Academy in my neighborhood of Washington Heights as a new member to support and celebrate great artists and their work."

May's event will include a keynote, the Blashfield Address, from the novelist-playwright Caryl Phillips. (AP)

**BEIJING:** Chinese record-breaking animated film "Ne Zha 2" is now ranked 7th on the all-time global box office chart, with its total box office revenue surpassing that of "Spider-Man: No Way Home," according to ticketing platforms on Saturday.

This movie entered the list of the top 10 highest-grossing films of all time globally on Feb. 17, the 20th day after its release on Jan. 29, which was during the 2025 Chinese New Year festival.

As of 1:50 p.m. on Saturday, the global earnings of "Ne Zha 2," including presales, had exceeded 14.2 billion yuan (about 1.98 billion U.S. dollars), according to data from ticketing platform Maoyan. (Xinhua)

**ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla.:** The Florida Man Games are back for Round 2, as teams from around the state gather to prove they have what it takes to join the ranks of the world's worst superhero.

Following the success of last year's inaugural Florida Man Games in downtown St. Augustine, organizers have moved Saturday's event a few miles away to the St. Johns County Fairgrounds, where they expect to have room for more spectators and tailgating.

The games, which start a 9 a.m. and last all day, will be hosted by Florida comedians Josh Wicks Robinson and Kevin Flynn. (AP)

Anticlockwise from top main picture: Models wear creations as part of Max Mara, Versace, Moschino, Moschino, Roberto Cavalli, Emporio Armani and Versace Fall/Winter 2025-2026 Womenswear collections presented in Milan, Italy, Feb. 27-28, 2025. (AP)

## 'Fuel up with a variety of food groups'

## Expert tips for practicing healthy fasting during Ramadan

NEW YORK, March 1, (AP): Manal Elfakhani looks back fondly on childhood memories from the month of Ramadan. She would break her fast at the mosque with family and snack on sweet semolina flour cookies that she's since learned to bake herself.

Ramadan is about spiritual reflection and the value of having enough to eat, she said. For about a month, many Muslims don't eat or drink from dawn to sunset. This year, it's set to begin this weekend.

While it's safe for most people to fast, planning ahead and keeping nutrition in mind can make the month that much more meaningful, said Elfakhani, a nutrition expert at Pennsylvania State University.

Young children, the elderly and those who are pregnant,

menstruating or breastfeeding are exempt from fasting. People with diabetes, heart disease or other chronic conditions should talk to their doctor when deciding to fast, especially if they take medications regularly.

"You should be in a very good, healthy state in order to do this," Elfakhani said.

For the pre-dawn meal called suhoor, nutrition experts recommend fueling up with a variety of food groups.

When Sonya Islam was too tired to crawl out of bed for suhoor as a child, her mother would bring her a banana and a glass of milk. Now a dietician at VCU Health, she sees the wisdom in that meal: a combination of fiber and protein.

"Having sustained fuel that can last for as long as possible

is critical," she said.

She suggests foods with healthy fats in them - like avocados and nuts - as well as high-fiber, hydrating vegetables and fruits. Sugary foods aren't the best idea since they digest quickly and can trigger cravings.

While that cup of coffee or tea may be tempting, experts say it's best to fight the urge. Instead, hydrate with water and non-caffeinated drinks.

The daily fast's duration can vary by location depending on the hours of daylight. Experts say to take it easy and listen to the body while fasting.

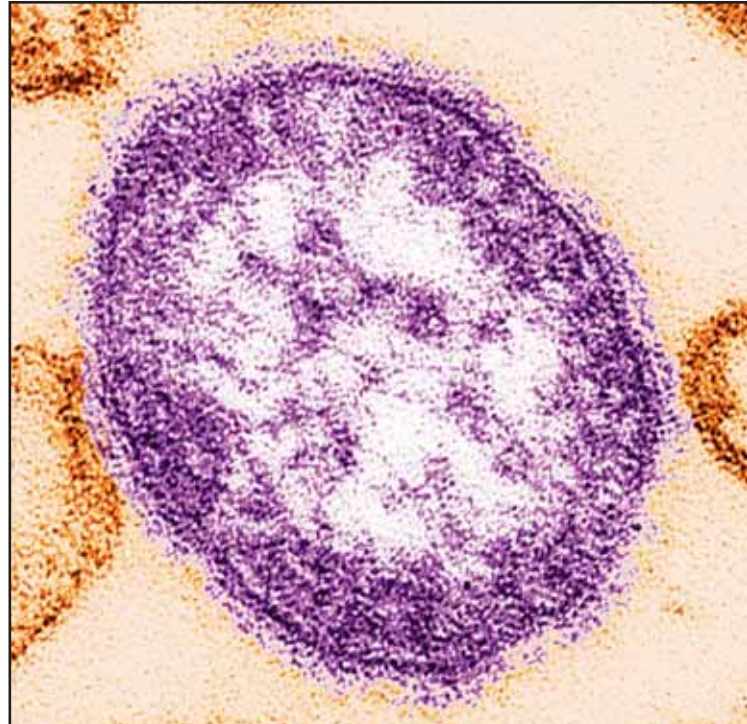
Elfakhani tries to slow down during the day in between teaching stints and catches up on work after the evening iftar meal.

Going for a short walk or stretching can help boost energy levels and keep the mind active. People who exercise regularly may want to work out right before breaking the fast or later in the evening to avoid dehydration.

At the evening iftar meal, avoid overeating as this can make the body feel sluggish.

Some choose to break their fast with a glass of water or a hot drink and fiber-rich dates. After that, consider having a few appetizers and a small entree. Wait a few hours and then snack as needed.

"It's more so about mindful eating and listening to when your body's actually hungry as opposed to just overloading," said Zaiba Jitpuri from UT Southwestern Medical Center.



This undated image made available by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Feb. 4, 2015 shows an electron microscope image of a measles virus particle, (center). (AP)

## Unvaccinated child dies

## US confirms first measles death as cases rise to 146

WASHINGTON, March 1, (Agencies): The Texas Department of State Health Services reported the first death from measles in the ongoing outbreak in the South Plains and Panhandle regions.

The school-aged child who was not vaccinated was hospitalized in Lubbock last week and tested positive for measles, the department said in a statement.

By February 25, 124 cases of measles have been confirmed in the outbreak since late January. Most of the cases are in children. Eighteen people have been hospitalized over the course of the outbreak, it added.

Measles is a highly contagious respiratory illness, which can cause life-threatening symptoms to anyone who is not protected against the virus.

During a measles outbreak, about one in five people who get sick will need hospital care and one in 20 will develop pneumonia. Rarely, measles can lead to swelling of the brain and death. It can also cause pregnancy complications, such as premature birth and babies with low birth weight.

The number of people with measles in Texas increased to 146 in an outbreak that led this week to the death of an unvaccinated school-aged child, health officials said Friday.

The number of cases - Texas' largest in nearly 30 years - increased by 22 since Tuesday. The Texas Department of State Health Services said cases span over nine counties in Texas, including almost 100 in Gaines County, and 20 patients have been hospitalized.

The child who died Tuesday night in the outbreak is the first US death from the highly contagious but preventable respiratory disease since 2015. The US

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. The child was treated at Covenant Children's Hospital in Lubbock, though the facility said the patient didn't live in Lubbock County.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the nation's top health official and a vaccine critic, said Wednesday that the US Department of the Health and Human Services was watching cases but dismissed the outbreak as "not unusual."

But on Friday afternoon, Kennedy said in a post on X that his heart went out to families impacted by the outbreak, and he recognized "the serious impact of this outbreak on families, children, and healthcare workers."

Kennedy went on to say in the post that his agency will continue to fund Texas' immunization program and that ending the outbreak is a "top priority" for him and his team.

The virus has largely spread through rural, oil rig-dotted West Texas, with cases concentrated in a "close-knit, undervaccinated" Mennonite community, state health department spokesperson Lara Anton has said.

Gaines County has a strong homeschooling and private school community. It is also home to one of the highest rates of school-aged children in Texas who have opted out of at least one required vaccine, with nearly 14% skipping a required dose last school year.

Texas law allows children to get an exemption from school vaccines for reasons of conscience, including religious beliefs. Anton has said the number of unvaccinated kids in Gaines County is likely significantly higher because homeschooled children's data would not be reported.

## 80% decline in cancer precursors in young women

## CDC report adds to evidence that HPV vaccine is preventing cervical cancer

NEW YORK, March 1, (AP): A new government report adds to evidence that the HPV vaccine, once called dangerous by Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., is preventing cervical cancer in young women.

The report comes after Kennedy pledged to give a family member any fees he might earn from HPV vaccine litigation. In a 2019 video posted on the anti-vaccine nonprofit Children's Health Defense website, Kennedy called Gardasil "the most dangerous vaccine ever invented."

The new report found that from 2008 to 2022, rates for precancerous lesions decreased about 80% among 20- to 24-year-old women who were screened for cervical cancer. The estimates were published Thursday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

HPV, or human papillomavirus, is very common and is spread through sex. Most HPV infections cause no symptoms and clear up without treatment. Others develop into cancer, about 37,000 cases a year, according to the CDC.

Women in their 20s are the group most likely to have been given the HPV vaccine, which has been recommended in the US since 2006 for girls



A doctor holds a vial of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine Gardasil in Chicago on Aug. 28, 2006. (AP)

at age 11 or 12 and since 2011 for boys the same age. Catch-up shots are recommended for anyone through age 26 who hasn't been vaccinated.

Jane Montealegre of MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, who was not involved in the study, called the decline dramatic and said it can be attributed to the increasing use of the safe and effective HPV vaccine.

"This should reassure parents that

they're doing the right thing in getting their children vaccinated against HPV," said Montealegre, a cancer-prevention researcher.

Other countries also have reported declining rates of cervical precancer in younger and more vaccinated cohorts, she said. The U.S. doesn't have a national registry but estimates what's happening across the country by monitoring five sites.

## Further ventilation needed after bronchial spasm

## Pope suffers setback in pneumonia recovery

ROME, March 1, (AP): Pope Francis had coffee and was reading newspapers Saturday after an alarming setback in his two-week recovery from double pneumonia: Doctors had to put him on noninvasive mechanical ventilation following a coughing fit in which he inhaled vomit that needed to then be extracted.

Doctors said it would take a day or two to evaluate how and if the Friday afternoon episode impacted Francis' overall clinical condition. His prognosis remained guarded, meaning he wasn't out of danger.

In its morning update Saturday, the Vatican said the 88-year-old pope didn't have any further respiratory crises overnight: "The night has passed quietly, the pope is resting." He had coffee in the morning for breakfast, suggesting that he was not dependent on a ventilation mask to breathe and was still eating on his own.

In the late Friday update, the Vatican said Francis suffered an "isolated crisis of bronchial spasm," a coughing fit in which Francis inhaled vomit, that resulted in a "sudden worsening of the respiratory picture." Doctors aspirated the vomit and placed Francis on non-

invasive mechanical ventilation.

The pope remained conscious and alert at all times and cooperated with the maneuvers to help him recover. He responded well, with a good level of oxygen exchange and was continuing to wear a mask to receive supplemental



Pope Francis

oxygen, the Vatican said. The episode, which occurred in the early afternoon, marked a setback in what had been two successive days of increasingly upbeat reports from doctors treating Francis at Rome's Gemelli hospital since Feb. 14. The pope, who had part of one lung removed as a young man, has lung disease and was admitted after a bout of bronchitis worsened and turned into pneumonia in both lungs.

The Vatican said the episode was different from the prolonged respiratory crisis on Feb. 22, that was said to have caused Francis discomfort.

Dr. John Coleman, a pulmonary

critical care doctor at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago, said the isolated episode Friday as relayed by the Vatican was nevertheless alarming and underscored Francis' fragility and that his condition "can turn very quickly."

"I think this is extremely concerning, given the fact that the pope has been in the hospital now for over two weeks, and now he's continuing to have these respiratory events and now had this aspiration event that is requiring even higher levels of support," he told The Associated Press.

"So given his age and his fragile state and his previous lung resection, this is very concerning," added Coleman, who is not involved in Francis' care.

Dr. William Feldman, a pulmonary specialist at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, said it was a good sign that the pope remained alert and oriented during the episode, but concurred that it marked "a worrying turn."

"Often we will use noninvasive ventilation as a way of trying to stave off an intubation, or the use of invasive mechanical ventilation," Feldman said.

## Cases surge

## Mpox remains an emergency

GENEVA, March 1, (Agencies): WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced recently that the (mpox) upsurge continues to meet the criteria for a public health emergency of international concern under the International Health Regulations (IHR).

According to a press statement released from Geneva, this announcement follows the third meeting of the (IHR) Emergency Committee on the Mpox upsurge held on Tuesday, where the Committee advised the Director-General to extend the public health emergency of international concern based on the continued increase in numbers and geographic spread.

WHO said that the upsurge of (mpox) is also linked to the increase in violence in eastern DRC which is hampering the response as well as a lack of funding to implement the response plan.

WHO added that the recommendations guide countries experiencing outbreaks of mpox in their efforts to prevent and control the spread of the disease.

It stressed that the emergence of (mpox) in the Democratic Republic of Congo and its spread to neighboring countries was first declared a public health emergency of international concern by the Director-General on 14 August.

## Emergency

Africa CDC extends mpox emergency status amid rising cases

The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) said on Friday that the ongoing mpox outbreak in Africa remains classified as a Public Health Emergency of Continental Security (PHECS).

In a statement issued Friday, Africa CDC said its emergency group has reached a unanimous decision to extend the PHECS declaration after a thorough review of the outbreak. The review highlighted the rising number of mpox cases, its continued spread to new countries, the emergence of a highly transmissible variant, and persistent challenges in vaccine supply and distribution.

According to data from the African Union's specialized healthcare agency, since Africa CDC first declared the mpox outbreak a PHECS in August last year, cases have continued to surge across the continent.

The agency said the average weekly mpox cases have tripled from 909 in August 2024 to 3,264 in February 2025. Additionally, the outbreak has spread to nine more African countries since the initial declaration.

Africa CDC warned that the growing number of cases and affected countries underscores the need for sustained vigilance and intervention. The emergence of a highly transmissible variant has further escalated public health risks.

It also identified key challenges, including gaps in surveillance and testing, inadequate vaccination coverage, and under-reporting of cases. These challenges, it said, have been exacerbated by worsening security conditions in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the epicenter of the current mpox outbreak.

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## SPORTS

# Villa ends FA Cup quarterfinal drought

## Asensio continues hot streak

**BIRMINGHAM, England, March 1, (AP):** A clinical second-half double from Marco Asensio took Aston Villa into the FA Cup quarterfinals for the first time in a decade after beating plucky Cardiff City 2-0.

Cardiff's last win at Villa Park was in 1954 and the visitor never looked like ending that long drought. The home side was on top from the start and Cardiff goalkeeper Ethan Horvath was one of the busiest men on the park.

However, the Welsh club defend-



Cardiff City's Anwar El Ghazi, top, and Aston Villa's Ian Maatsen challenge for the ball during the English FA Cup fifth round soccer match between Aston Villa and Cardiff City at the Villa Park stadium in Birmingham, England. (AP)

ed stoutly and it took Villa until the middle of the second half to finally get the goal its superiority deserved.

Asensio, the Spanish striker who signed on loan from Paris Saint-Germain in the January transfer window, scored twice in Villa's 2-1 win over Chelsea last week. In only his third start for the club, he continued to justify coach Unai Emery's faith.

The big striker took a cut back from the left from Marcus Rashford and slotted home with his left foot.

Twelve minutes later, he did the same but this time from the right, steadying himself to take an Ollie Watkins pass and side-foot home.

"It was not an easy game," Asensio told ITV. "We knew it was a difficult game. (I'm) very happy for the goals, for the win. We're in the next round, that's the most important." seo choices

Alejandro Garnacho will buy dinner for his Manchester United teammates after his reaction to being substituted in the first half against Ipswich.

Garnacho headed straight to the locker room when replaced by Noursair Mazraoui just before halftime, with United coach Ruben Amorim having to reorganize his team following a red card for Patrick Dorgu.

Unless injured, players are usually expected to take a seat on the bench after being substituted and Amorim said after the 3-2 win that he would speak to the Argentina forward.

"It was funny because in the next day he came to me, to my office, I did some investigations, and he went to the dressing room, he changed his clothes because he was wet," Amorim said Friday. "He watched the game in the different (place), not on the bench. In the end of the game



Aston Villa's Ezri Konsa, right, and Cardiff City's Ruben Colwill challenge for the ball during the English FA Cup fifth round soccer match between Aston Villa and Cardiff City at the Villa Park stadium in Birmingham, England. (AP)

he was there, then he went home, so there's not an issue there.

"But I told them that in Manchester United everything is important, and the perception in a big club is really

important, so he's going to pay (for) a dinner to all the team, and that's it."

Garnacho was left out of United's squad for a game against Manchester City in December. Amorim said

at the time that it was important to set high standards at the club.

"He's a young kid that will learn," Amorim said. "The important thing is that in the next morning he was

speaking with me."

Garnacho is expected to be in contention when United plays Fulham in the fifth round of the FA Cup on Sunday.

## Cost of missing out on Champions League highlighted

# Liverpool reports losses of \$71.8 million

**LONDON, March 1, (AP):** Liverpool reported pre-tax losses of 57 million pounds (\$71.8 million) in its latest financial accounts.

The losses came despite the Premier League club reporting record commercial revenues of 308 million pounds (\$387.8 million) for the year.

The accounts for the year ending May 31, 2024, underline the importance of Champions League qualification for England's leading clubs, with Liverpool pointing to a sizeable fall in media revenue due to its absence from the competition last season.

A drop of 38 million pounds (\$47.9 million) to 204 million pounds (\$257 million) came after the club missed out on qualification for European club soccer's most prestigious competition.

Matchday revenue was up 22 mil-



Newcastle's Lewis Hall, left, challenges Liverpool's Mohamed Salah during the English Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Newcastle United at Anfield in Liverpool. (AP)

lion pounds (£27.7 million) to 102 million pounds (\$128.4 million) and the record commercial revenues came after a rise of 36 million pounds (\$45.3 million).

Overall revenue rose by 20 million pounds (\$25.2 million) to 614 million pounds (\$773 million).

Liverpool said administrative costs "increased significantly," with salaries one of the main causes. Administrative costs rose by 38 million pounds (\$47.85 million) to 600 million pounds (\$755.5 million).

"Operating a financially sustainable club continues to be our priority and, with the continued increase in costs, it's essential to grow income streams year on year to maintain financial stability," said Liverpool's chief financial officer Jenny Bea-  
cham.

## Purdue beats UCLA to end four-game skid

# Northwestern pulls away from Iowa for 68-57 win

**EVANSTON, Ill., March 1, (AP):** K.J. Windham scored 20 points and Northwestern pulled away in the second half to beat Iowa 68-57 to break a four-way tie for 13th place in the Big Ten Conference Friday night.

The top 15 teams advance to the Big Ten Conference tournament and Northwestern came into the contest tied for the 13th seed with Iowa, Minnesota and USC. The win moves the Wildcats (16-13, 7-11) into 13th place with two games left, with Minnesota and USC tied for 14th. Iowa (15-14, 6-12) now sits a game out of the tournament.

Northwestern held a four-point advantage at intermission, but Drew Thelwell hit from 3-point range with 16:17 left to get Iowa within a point, 37-36. Ty Berry and Windham each hit a 3 and, after Brock Harding scored at the basket for Iowa, Windham hit a third-straight Northwestern 3 for a 46-38 advantage. Berry's jumper with 1:27 left pushed the Northwestern lead to double digits, 64-53, and Justin Mullins' free throw in the final minute made it a 13-point lead, 66-53.

Windham hit 4 of 7 from 3-point range and the Wildcats were 9 of 23 from distance. Nick Martinelli added 16 points and grabbed nine rebounds and Mullins added 10 points.

Iowa was just 21 of 58 from the field (36.2%). Thelwell finished with 14 points and Josh Dix added 10.

Northwestern coach Chris Collins earned his 193rd victory with the Wildcats and moves into second place all-time, one win ahead of Bill Carmody. Naismith Hall of Famer Dutch Lonborg



Purdue guard Braden Smith drives the ball around the defense of UCLA guard Trent Perry (left). (AP)

(1928-1950) holds the record with 236 career wins.

Northwestern plays host to UCLA Monday and plays its regular season finale Saturday at No. 16 Maryland. Iowa hosts No. 8 Michigan State Thursday and plays its regular season finale March 9 at Nebraska.

Trey Kaufman-Renn scored 29

points and Braden Smith added 23 to help No. 20 Purdue beat UCLA 76-66 and end a four-game losing streak.

Kaufman-Renn shot 11 for 15 from the field and 7 for 10 on free throws. Fletcher Loyer scored 11 points for the Boilermakers (20-9, 12-6 Big Ten).

Tyler Bilodeau had 15 points for the Bruins (20-9, 11-7), and Sebastian

Mack scored 10.

Purdue shot 52% from the field while UCLA hit 48% in a game that went back and forth until the final 6 minutes.

Trailing 56-55, Kaufman-Renn scored six consecutive points to put Purdue ahead 61-56 with 5:35 left. Camden Heide and Fletcher Loyer then made 3-pointers to cap a 12-0 run.

## Al-Qadsiya extends perfect run as Kuwait Club drops to second place

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, March 1:** Qadsiya Club secured the top position in the Kuwait Basketball League standings, defeating Kuwait Club 87-83 in a postponed match from the first division. This win propelled Qadsiya to 16 points, maintaining an undefeated record of 8 wins, while Kuwait Club dropped to second place with 15 points after suffering its first loss of the season.

In another match, Al-Arabi triumphed over Al-Yarmouk with a dominant 99-65 scoreline in the first round of the second division. The standings now show Kazma in third place with 13 points, followed closely by Al-Nasr in fourth and Al-Arabi in fifth.

Al-Qurain sits in sixth place with 12 points, while Al-Sulaibikhat is seventh with 11 points. Yarmouk occupies eighth place with 10 points, and Al-Tadamon rounds out the bottom in ninth with 8 points.

The first round of the second division will conclude today with two key matches: Kazma vs Al-Sulaibikhat at 8:45 pm and Al-Nasr vs Al-Qurain at 11:00 pm. Both games will be held at the Basketball Federation Hall in Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex.

With this victory, Al-Qadsiya handed Kuwait Club its fourth consecutive defeat, further deepening its struggles. Kuwait Club had previously



Al-Qadsiya player drives the ball past Kuwait Club player during the basketball league game.

lost to Shabab Al-Ahli from the Emirates in the last round of Group Two in the West Asia Super League Championship. Following that, it faced Al-Ittihad of Saudi Arabia in the play-off and suffered two consecutive losses.

The tournament is structured in a two-division league system, with the top four teams qualifying for the semi-finals.

In the semi-finals, the first-place team will face the fourth-place team, and the second-place team will meet the third-place team in a best-of-three "play-off" format, with the winner of two matches advancing to the final.

## China unveils roster for qualifiers

**BEIJING, March 1, (Xinhua):** China revealed a 32-player roster on Friday for the upcoming 2026 FIFA World Cup Asian qualifiers against Saudi Arabia and Australia, with five youngsters listed for the first time.

The five newcomers includes three U23 defenders Liu Haofan, Wang Shiqin and Xu Bin as well as two young forwards Wang Yudong and Liu Chengyu who are born in 2006.

Wu Lei, the 2024 Chinese Men's Footballer of the Year, and starting center back Zhu Chenjie have not been included due to injuries, while naturalized forward Hou Yongyong from Yunnan Yukun is expected to make his international debut.

China is set to play against Saudi Arabia away on March 20, and then meet with Australia on March 25 at home in Hangzhou, east China's Zhejiang Province.

With four rounds remaining, the Chinese team now has six points, alongside Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Bahrain, only one point behind second-placed Australia. Japan leads the group with 16 points.

The 32-man roster is as follows: Goalkeepers: Yan Junling, Liu Dianzuo, Han Jiaqi, Wang Dalei; Defenders: Jiang Guangtai, Wei Zhen, Wang Zhenao, Yang Zexiang, Jiang Shenglong, Han Pengfei, Hu Hetao, Li Lei, Wu Shaocong, Gao Zhunyi, Wang Shiqin, Liu Haofan; Midfielders: Xu Haoyang, Wang Haijian, Cao Yongjing, Huang Zhengyu, Xie Wenneng, Cheng Jin, Wang Shangyuan, Xu Bin; Forwards: Liu Chengyu, Wei Shihao, Wang Ziming, Zhang Yuning, Lin Liangming, Wang Yudong, Behram Abduweli, Hou Yongyong.

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## Valladolid earns rare point, but relegation still looms

**MADRID, March 1, (AP):** Real Valladolid snapped a six-game losing streak by drawing at home with 10-man Las Palmas 1-1 in La Liga.

Las Palmas was on top from the start and took the lead in the 22nd minute when Sandro Ramirez's shot deflected in past goalkeeper Karl Hein.

But the dynamic changed seven minutes later when Las Palmas' Scotland defender Scott McKenna was shown a straight red card for bodychecking Valladolid's Anuar Tuhami as he ran through on goal.

Valladolid pushed forward for an equalizer but it took the team with La Liga's poorest offense until the 62nd minute to get the breakthrough. Substitute Juanmi Latasa headed a knock down into the net from close range.

Valladolid, owned by former Brazil striker Ronaldo, remained rooted to the bottom of La Liga, six points adrift of second-from-bottom Alaves.

"We'll keep believing until it is mathematically impossible," Latasa said of the team's survival hopes. "I wish people could see how we work."



EMBASSY OF INDIA  
KUWAIT

### TENDER NOTICE

Advertisement for sale of car

Embassy of India in Kuwait announces sale of its Mercedes Benz E200 (Make: 2019) Car (Mileage 1,78,779 Kms, Good condition) on "as is where is" basis. Interested parties may submit their price offer in sealed envelopes to Embassy of India, Kuwait, before 1600 hrs, March 23, 2025. Details may be seen at the Embassy's website: <https://indembkwt.gov.in/index.php>

## Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr meets Kuwait's diplomatic corps in Geneva

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: On the sidelines of the celebrations organized by the diplomatic corps affiliated with Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Geneva to mark Kuwait's national holidays, President of the Kuwaiti and Asian Water Sports Federations Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr Al-Sabah met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya and members of the diplomatic corps at Kuwait's permanent

mission in Geneva during his stay in Switzerland.

According to a press release, the meeting included friendly discussions on various topics related to local and Asian sports affairs.

Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr expressed his joy at the opportunity to meet and unite the citizens of one nation on the occasion of celebrating National Day and Liberation

Day, which are dear to everyone's hearts.

He affirmed that Kuwait has always been a land of security, safety, and stability under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



Sheikh Badr with officials.

A trademark of quality innovation and reliability

## Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est. Co. launches new brand of premium accessories 'SAYARTI BY ALSAYER'



Mubarak Naser Al Sayer



Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons Est. Co. officials pose for a group photo

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: To further strengthen its brand portfolio as well as to offer customer wide range of choices enhancing their journey at every touchpoint, Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons Est. Co. held the launch ceremony of new accessory brand SAYARTI BY ALSAYER. The event was attended by Mubarak Naser Al Sayer (CEO – ALSAYER Group), Bader Musaed Al Sayer (CEO – Al Dhow Holding), Bengt Schultz (COO – ALSAYER Group), Abdulaziz Kiradiah (CFO – ALSAYER Group), Desmond Lew (Senior Business Director, Parts and Group Logistics), Khalid Nayfeh (Deputy General Manager, Accessories), distinguished delegates from principals, Senior Management Members, team members from Toyota and Lexus Group Sales, Service, Parts along with representatives of the press and media.

Mubarak Naser Al Sayer, CEO – ALSAYER Group emphasized the dedication of Group Parts and Accessories team to meeting the evolving desires of Toyota and Lexus customers in Kuwait. He reaffirmed the company's unwavering commitment to quality, stating, "Each Sayarti accessory undergoes rigorous testing to guarantee its performance and durability. Our Accessories Center is equipped with the latest technologies and boasts a

talented technical team dedicated to achieving excellence. Looking ahead, we are poised to explore innovative solutions and expand our operations to meet all customer expectations."

Desmond Lew, Senior Business Director – Parts & Group Logistics said, "Directly translated from Arabic, SAYARTI literally means 'my car'. With the launch of SAYARTI BY ALSAYER Toyota and Lexus owners will now be able to personalize their car like never before and with the peace



Left-right: Officials view latest Toyota models.

of mind of the quality and customer service that AlSayer is renowned for." The core of SAYARTI are its four strategic pillars, developed from customer insights and automotive trends.

■ Protected: Offering products designed to safeguard the vehicle's exterior and interior, ensuring long-lasting protection.

■ Connected: Offering products that enhance the vehicle's connectivity and convenience.

■ Accessorized: Offering products

designed to enhance the vehicle's style and appearance.

■ Off-Grid: Offering products for outdoor pursuits and off-road exploration.

"The four pillars of Sayarti were developed through market research, which helped us understand the evolving needs of our customers. By integrating these insights and aligning with automotive trends, we deliver premium-quality accessories that meet the unique demands of our customers

and enhance their driving experience," commented Khalid Nayfeh, Deputy General Manager – Accessories.

### Unparalleled Standards

SAYARTI is committed to driving innovation with accessories that seamlessly blend style, functionality, and cutting-edge technology, reflecting each customer's personal expression. The brand is dedicated to unparalleled standards, utilizing precision tools and processes to ensure exceptional quality

- Redefines vehicle personalization by offering accessories that combine style, smart technology, and customization.
- Designed for durability and reliability, each product is tailored for Toyota and Lexus vehicles, ensuring a precise fit and optimal performance.
- Every accessory undergoes rigorous testing, providing customers with the confidence and peace of mind they deserve.

and reliability.

With a team of trained technicians and high-standard fitment center equipped with advanced technologies like laser engraving and precision cutting machines, SAYARTI guarantees superior craftsmanship, seamless integration, and a premium finish.

### Welcome to the exciting new world of SAYARTI

At the launch event, attendees viewed the latest Toyota Land Cruiser, Lexus LX600, and NX350 models, each outfitted with exclusive body kits designed to enhance their bold presence, as well as a Prado featuring an off-road kit. The Toyota Camry also made an appearance, prominently displayed with a newly designed aero kit, underlining SAYARTI's commitment to elevating both aesthetics and performance.

Customers are invited to visit ALSAYER's Toyota showrooms in Shuwaikh, Ahmadi, Abu Fatira, and Jahra to explore the full range of SAYARTI accessories. Expert assistance and premium service are readily available to help visitors find the ideal accessories for their vehicles.

## Al-Sulaibikhat boosts promotion hopes



Sulaibikhat and Jahra players in action during the Zain First Division League match.

### By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: Al-Sulaibikhat achieved a significant 3-1 win over Al-Jahra in the Zain First Division League's tenth round, a match that also saw Burgan draw 0-0 with Al-Sahel.

This victory marked Al-Sulaibikhat's third in the competition, lifting it to third place with 11 points. It also denied Al-Jahra the chance to claim sole leadership, as its points total remained at 12. Al-

Shabab continues to lead the standings with 12 points as well. Al-Sulaibikhat dominated the match and sent a strong message to their rivals, showing it is a formidable contender for qualification to the Premier League. This victory also secured its second consecutive win in the tournament.

The competition between the top five teams is intensifying, with Burgan sitting in fourth place with 10 points, while Al-Sahel occupies the bottom spot with 8 points.

## Fiorentina ends three-game losing run

FLORENCE, Italy, March 1, (AP): Fiorentina recorded its first win in four games when a first-half goal from Robin Gosens held up to beat Lecce 1-0 in Serie A.

The German defender put in a thumping header after nine minutes, connecting with a deep cross from Brazilian full back Dodó.

Fiorentina should have made sure

of the victory after 73 minutes but Lucas Beltrán's penalty, given after a handball in the box, came back off the upright. The same player had another shot hit the woodwork in the final minutes.

Fiorentina moved into sixth place and Lecce remained 16th, four points above the relegation zone and without a win in four games.

## Al-Qadsiya begins training in UAE ahead of the Gulf Champions League semifinal

### By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DUBAI, March 1: Al-Qadsiya has commenced training in the UAE in preparation for their crucial semifinal clash against Al-Nasr in the Gulf Champions League, scheduled for the day after tomorrow.

Montenegrin head coach Zeljko Petrovic has announced the squad list for the upcoming match, featuring key players such as Khaled Al-Rashidi, Ali Jarrah, Moaz Al-Dhafiri, Rashid Al-Dosari, Khaled Sabah, Salman Al-Boos, Mubarak Al-Feni, Eid Al-Rashidi, Faisal Al-Shatti, Hussein Dhahiri, Abdulaziz Wadi, Abdullah Al-Awadhi, Bader Al-Mutawa, Adhbi Shehab, Abdullah Mutawa, Abdullah Al-Shamali, Mo-

ammed Al-Sharif, Ahmed Bodi, Abdullah Al-Ghaniman, Khaled Ibrahim, Mishaal Khaled, Al-Mahdi Barahma, Abdulrahman Al-Dhafiri, and Ismail Khafi.

The team will be without Nigerian professional Daniel Jibola, who is suspended due to yellow card accumulation. However, Ismail Khafi has rejoined the squad after missing the previous match against Al-Ettifaq due to the passing of his mother.

Petrovic expressed satisfaction with the team's recent 2-0 victory over Al-Fahaheel in the seventh round of the Zain Premier League. He hopes the win will boost the squad's morale as they aim for a strong performance against Al-Nasr.



Players battling for the ball.

## Dorival to announce a final 23-man squad for next week

## Neymar named in preliminary Brazil squad for qualifiers

RIO DE JANEIRO, March 1, (Agencies): Neymar has been included in Brazil's preliminary squad for World Cup qualifiers against Colombia and Argentina, the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) said.

The 33-year-old has not represented his country since suffering a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee during a World Cup qualifier against Uruguay in Montevideo in October 2023.

After a long recovery process, the 33-year-old has shown glimpses of his best form since joining boyhood club Santos from Al-Hilal in January.

Brazil manager Dorival Junior also named Real Betis winger Antony, teenage Real Madrid forward Endrick and Atletico Madrid's Samuel Lino while including experienced midfielder Oscar and Sao Paulo teammate Lucas Moura.

As expected, the 52-man list features Real Madrid

attackers Vinicius Junior and Rodrygo, Newcastle enforcer Bruno Guimaraes and Barcelona winger Raphinha.

Brazil will meet Colombia in Brasilia on March 20 and Argentina in Buenos Aires five days later.

The five-time world champions are currently fifth in the 10-team South American group with 18 points from 12 qualifiers, seven points behind leaders Argentina.

Dorival is expected to announce a final 23-man squad for the matches next week.

Uruguayan Midfielder Nicolás Fonseca was robbed and his truck was stolen near his Mexican club Leon.

The club on Friday said Fonseca was not harmed and was training with the team. It did not specify the

date of the robbery.

The 24-year-old Fonseca is in his first season in Mexico after playing for River Plate in Argentina.

According to Leon, the robbery occurred on a highway between Leon and the state of Jalisco, near the club training facilities.

"Nico is fine and trains regularly along with his teammates getting ready for tomorrow's match," the team said in a statement.

Leon hosts Tijuana on Saturday in the Mexican Clausura.

Guanajuato state prosecutor's office said it was collaborating with Jalisco authorities to find the perpetrators. Local media reported Fonseca was kidnapped and abandoned in a remote area, but the team denied that happened. "We ask not to pay attention to rumors or to divulge fake news about issues as delicate as this," Leon said.



Norway's Henrik Kristoffersen celebrates on the podium after winning an alpine ski, men's World Cup giant slalom, in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia. (AP)

# Sports

Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi neck and neck at the top

## Zain Premier League standings take shape after round 17

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: The Zain Premier League picture became much clearer following the conclusion of the 17th round, defining the battle for the top spots and the struggle to avoid relegation.

The competition will pause until the end of March due to Al-Arabi and Al-Qadisiya's participation in the AFC Challenge Cup and the Gulf Champions League, respectively, as well as Kuwait Club's involvement in the 2026 World Cup qualifiers.

The title race remains intense, with Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi tied at 44 points apiece just one round before the classification stage ends. Al-Arabi seized an opportunity to challenge the reigning champion after a hard-fought 2-1 victory over Al-

Nasr, capitalizing on Kazma's 1-1 draw with Kuwait Club.

Al-Qadisiya solidified its hold on third place with 32 points, bouncing back from a heavy 3-0 defeat in the previous round with a 2-0 win over Al-Fahaheel. The team now turns its focus to the Gulf Champions League semifinal against UAE's Al-Nasr. Meanwhile, Al-Fahaheel remains in fifth place with 25 points.

Fourth-placed Al-Salmiya (28 points) salvaged a 1-1 draw against Al-Yarmouk with a stoppage-time equalizer in a match that saw their opponents reduced to nine men.

Al-Tadamon climbed to sixth place with a crucial 2-1 win over Khaitan, securing a

spot in the championship league and avoiding the relegation battle.

Kazma, sitting in seventh place with 16 points, now faces another season in the relegation league. Al-Nasr (8th, 12 points) has shown improvement despite a recent loss to Al-Arabi, while Khaitan (9th, 11 points) has struggled to maintain consistency despite strong performances in previous rounds.

At the bottom of the table, Al-Yarmouk (10th, 6 points) faces near-certain relegation, being the only team yet to secure a victory this season.

With the league resuming after the international break, the battle for the title and survival intensifies as teams prepare for the final stretch of the season.



Left-right: Coaches direct players during the Zain Premier League match in Kuwait.

## Cavaliers rally late to split season series with Celtics



Los Angeles Clippers center Ivica Zubac, center, tries to shoot as Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James, left, and forward Dorian Finney-Smith defend during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles. (AP)

### Thunder continue dominance of East

**BOSTON, March 1, (AP): Donovan Mitchell scored 41 points, including 12 in the fourth quarter, to help the Cleveland Cavaliers rally from 22 points down and stun the Boston Celtics 123-116 on Friday night in the final regular-season meeting of the Eastern Conference's top two teams.**

Darius Garland added 20 points and seven assists. Evan Mobley finished with 17 points and 12 rebounds for his 27th double-double to give Cleveland a split in the four-game series with the playoffs just over two months away.

Jayson Tatum finished with 46 points, 16 rebounds and nine assists. Jaylen Brown added 37 points, marking the first time Boston's top stars posted 30-point games this season.

**Thunder 135, Hawks 119**  
In Atlanta, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 31 points and the Oklahoma City Thunder continued their overwhelming dominance of the Eastern Conference by beating the Atlanta Hawks.

Luguentz Dort scored 20 points and led Oklahoma City's long-range assault by shooting 6 of 11 on 3-pointers. Jalen Williams also scored 20 points for the Thunder.

Oklahoma City never trailed and improved to 21-1 against the Eastern Conference. The Thunder (48-11), who have the Western Conference's top record, are 27-10 against the West.

**Nuggets 134, Pistons 119**  
In Detroit, Nikola Jokic had 23 points, 17 rebounds and 15 assists. Jamal Murray scored 31 points, and the Denver Nuggets ended the Detroit Pistons' eight-game winning streak.

Michael Porter Jr. scored 28 points and Christian Braun matched Jokic with 23 for Denver, which has won 11 of its last 13 games.

**Lakers 106, Clippers 102**  
In Los Angeles, Luka Doncic scored 31 points on his 26th birthday and LeBron James had 28 points and 13 rebounds in the Los Angeles Lakers' fifth straight victory over the Los Angeles Clippers.

Doncic scored 10 points in the fourth quarter of a gritty performance by the Lakers, who were missing two injured starters on the second night of a back-to-back home set. They still won their city rivalry game with strong defense and Doncic's playmaking, finally holding on for their 11th win in 13 games.

**Knicks 114, Grizzlies 113**  
In Memphis, OG Anunoby made the go-ahead 3-pointer with 5.3 seconds remaining, finishing with 19 points as the New York Knicks beat the Mem-

phis Grizzlies.

Anunoby's basket came after the teams exchanged leads in the final two minutes. Memphis had the last possession, but Ja Morant's layup attempt rolled off the front of the rim, and a tip by Santi Aldama was off the mark.

Jalen Brunson led the Knicks with 23 points and six assists. Deuce McBride had 17 points off the bench and Mikal Bridges scored 15.

**Jazz to 117, Timberwolves 116**  
In Salt Lake City, Walker Kessler had a go-ahead dunk with 9.7 seconds left to help the Utah Jazz beat the Minnesota Timberwolves, snapping a six-game losing streak in the series.

John Collins scored a season-high 29 points and 12 rebounds for Utah, Bryce Sensabaugh added 17 points and Isaiiah Collier had a career-high 14 assists.

**Suns 125, Pelicans 108**  
In Phoenix, Bol Bol scored 25 points, one shy of his career high, and the Phoenix Suns never trailed in de-

feating the New Orleans Pelicans to snap a three-game skid.

Nick Richards had 19 points and a game-high 12 rebounds for the Suns, who had lost seven of their last eight. Royce O'Neal scored 18 points off the bench, while Devin Booker had 17 points and nine assists. Kevin Durant also scored 17.

**Bulls 125, Raptors 115, OT**  
In Chicago, Coby White scored 24 points, including a clutch four-point play, and the Bulls rallied to beat the Toronto Raptors in overtime.

White completed his biggest play of the night with four seconds left in regulation to tie the game at 110 and set up the extra period, where Lonzo Ball made a pair of 3-pointers during an opening 10-2 run that gave Chicago the lead for good.

Scottie Barnes scored 24 points for the Raptors, who have lost three straight and nine of 11. Immanuel Quickley scored 23 points before fouling out a minute into overtime.

**Heat 125, Pacers 120**  
In Miami, Davion Mitchell's 3-pointer broke a tie with 43.8 seconds left, Tyler Herro scored 29 points and the Miami Heat topped the Indiana Pacers.

Duncan Robinson scored 20 for Miami, which shot 57% - and has shot 58% in its last two games, tying the seventh-best two-game span in team history. Bam Adebayo scored 18 for Miami.

**Trail Blazers 121, Nets 102**  
In New York, Shaedon Sharpe scored 25 points, Dalano Banton had 14 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter, and the Portland Trail Blazers cruised to victory over the Brooklyn Nets.

Toumani Camara had 19 points, Anfernee Simons chipped in 14, and Donovan Clingan finished with 12 for the Trail Blazers, who extended their winning streak to four games.

Al-Kharafi wins gold at Longines Global Champions Tour in Qatar



Al-Kharafi receives an award from an official.

DOHA, March 1: Kuwait's equestrian star Hussein Al-Kharafi continued his impressive international form by securing first place and the gold medal in the opening round of the Longines Global Champions Tour for Show Jumping, which concluded in Qatar.

Al-Kharafi triumphed in the 120 cm category, outperforming Saudi Arabia's Khaled Al-Hadi, who finished second, while Qatar's Hussein Al-Kaabi claimed third place. The tournament's deputy director, Omar

Al-Buainain, crowned the winners and congratulated the champions on their achievements.

On the domestic front, the Kuwait Equestrian Federation announced that the third round of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation League Championship will take place on Friday, March 7, at Sahara Equestrian Club.

Notably, Ali Al-Kharafi won the title in the second round, while British rider Nick Channing claimed victory in the first round.



Al-Shammari with Adel Aqla and his brothers.

## Al-Shammari bids farewell to soccer in a special ceremony

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: Former Kuwait national team and Kazma football club star Tariq Al-Shammari officially retired during the Zain Premier League clash between Kazma and Kuwait Club.

The match took place under the patronage of former National Assembly member Bader Sayyar Al-Shammari, while former National Assembly Speaker and Honorary President of Kuwait Club, Marzouq Al-Ghanim, honored the retiring star. Al-Shammari also received recognition from Kazma Club Treasurer Omar Al-Mulla, Kazma Board Member Abdullah Al-Duwaisan, and Kuwait Club team manager Adel Aqla.

Expressing his gratitude, Tariq Al-Shammari extended heartfelt thanks

to Bader Sayyar for sponsoring his retirement match, as well as to Kazma's Board of Directors for their unwavering support. He also acknowledged everyone who had been part of his football journey - from coaches and administrators to teammates - whether in the national team or at the club level.

"I will continue to support the game and the players, even after stepping away from the pitch," Al-Shammari affirmed.

Meanwhile, the head of the retirement organizing committee, Falah Mohsen Al-Shammari, remarked that while Tariq Al-Shammari's departure from football is bittersweet, it is a natural part of the sport. He also expressed appreciation to all the committees involved in organizing the event and thanked the media for their coverage.

## Paiva takes reins at Botafogo

RIO DE JANEIRO, March 1, (Xinhua): Portuguese manager Renato Paiva has signed a deal to take charge of Botafogo, the reigning Brazilian and South American champions said.

Paiva, who had been out of work since parting ways with Mexico's Toluca in December, agreed to a contract that runs until December 2026, according to a statement on the Rio de Janeiro club's official website.

"It is with great pride and satisfac-

tion that I arrive at this giant of world football," the 54-year-old told a news conference.

"I turned down several other offers because I didn't consider them worthwhile projects. This is a perfect match. We will not always be able to play well and win but I can guarantee that we'll be aiming to do that." Botafogo had been without a manager since January, when Artur Jorge left to join Qatar's Al-Rayyan.