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Kuwait steps in to clear citizens' debts

Charity to the rescue

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah announced that the ministry is preparing to launch a campaign to help pay off the debts of Kuwaiti debtors through charity societies in line with specific conditions and standards set for debt repayment.

In a press statement issued on the sidelines of the annual Iftar party organized by the Ministry of Social Affairs in cooperation with the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) at social welfare homes complex, Dr. Al-Huwailah explained that the campaign to collect donations for paying off debts of indebted citizens comes in response to the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to promote local charitable work. The campaign will be conducted through the Central Assistance Platform, which allows beneficiaries to apply easily using their civil ID and uploading required documents and information.

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Ramadan Timings

Iftar	Friday	17:52
Imsak	Saturday	04:47
Iftar	Saturday	17:53
Imsak	Sunday	04:45

Deportations loom

Begging bust nabs 11, sponsors in hot water

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Based on the instructions of the acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah to combat all negative phenomena, and as part of the ongoing security efforts to eliminate the increasing phenomenon of begging during the month of Ramadan, the Department of Public Morals Protection and Combating Human Trafficking from the Criminal Security Sector's General Department of Criminal Investigations arrested 11 beggars of

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Rain pours down as drivers navigate through the slick Airport Road, heading toward Shuwaikh on Thursday.

Photo by Samer Shiqer

Rain lingers as temperatures climb

Kuwait's winter draws to a close with a dusty twist

KUWAIT CITY, March 6, (Agencies): The Al-Ojeiri Scientific Center has announced that the cold winter season will come to an end starting Saturday, giving way to more moderate weather, and the emergence of the first signs of spring on plants, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement, the center explained that this atmospheric shift signals the arrival of the Hameem season, which follows the Scorpion season and precedes the "Dhiraan" season. This transitional period is expected to last until April 2.

Hameem season is one of the annual seasons known for its significant weather fluctuations, often causing atmospheric instability marked by shifts between cold and heat, rain, and dust. This period sees a blending of spring and

winter, with occasional dust storms and scattered rainfall. This season also witnesses a gradual rise in temperatures, accompanied by thunderstorms and cumulus clouds.

Hameem season is divided into two parts: the first and second Hameem. The transition between the two is marked by the equality of day and night, which coincides with the spring equinox on March 20 this year. This phenomenon occurs when the sun is perpendicular to the equator, causing day and night to be equal in length.

Two main factors control the length of day and night: the angle of the sun's tilt relative to the equator and geographical latitude. This equality occurs globally when the sun is directly overhead at the equator. The further from the equator, the more noticeable the variation in day and

night length. With the onset of the Hameem season, the sun enters the summer season.

Meanwhile, the acting director of Kuwait Meteorological Department, Dherar Al-Ali, said on Thursday that rain-falls would continue until Saturday morning, along with active southeasterly winds exceeding 60 km/h.

These winds will cause dust waves and lower visibility in some regions, Al-Ali said, affirming that the weather would begin to clear up by Saturday noon.

Friday's weather is expected to be largely identical with dusty conditions. The temperature is forecast at 21-12 degrees.

It will be warm on Saturday as the heat will be 24-22 degrees during day time and drop to 11 degrees at night.



Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Saud Abdul-Aziz Al-Omar with Samer Abu-Latif, Microsoft's corporate vice-president for Central and Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa (CEMA) area.

Partnership to revolutionize public services and workforce

Kuwait and Microsoft forge AI pathway to economic prosperity

KUWAIT CITY, March 6, (KUNA): Kuwait's Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) and the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) signed a strategic partnership agreement with Microsoft Corporation to speed up the digital transformation and enhance the artificial intelligence (AI) applications in Kuwait.

The deal will help transform the country into a regional AI center in keeping with Kuwait Vision 2035. Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Saud Abdul-Aziz Al-Omar said at press conference following the signing ceremony on Wednesday.

"It translates into action the wise instructions of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah under careful supervision by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ah-

mad Al-Sabah," the minister noted.

The partnership marks a milestone in leveraging the AI applications in Kuwait to support the government drive for economic diversification, and promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship.

It will contribute to rehabilitation of the national workforce, build their capacity in information technology and make them better qualified to assuming leading positions, Al-Omar pointed out.

The deal envisages launching AI data center, an integrated AI system, center for promoting the digital economy and state service, and center for excellence in cloud auditing.

"The government will provide the civil servants with access to the Microsoft 365 Copilot, thus making Kuwait one of the first countries in the region using these solutions which contribute to enhancement of productivity and improvement of the state services," the minister went on.

Al-Omar noted that the launching of cloud au-

diting centers, the improvement of the digital infrastructure, and fast access to Microsoft services are key factors for attracting global investors and promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in Kuwait.

On his part, Samer Abu-Latif, Microsoft's corporate vice-president for Central and Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa (CEMA) area, said the partnership will help improve the digital infrastructure of Kuwait, and contribute to economic prosperity and sustainability.

Microsoft is committed to upgrading the cloud infrastructure of Kuwait and helping the state institutions promote innovation and investment, he affirmed.

The Corporation will work with the Kuwaiti government for launching the Cybersphere initiative aiming to enhance cybersecurity at the government sector and guard against cyberattacks, he added.

Supreme Committee revokes citizenship of 464 individuals

KUWAIT CITY, March 6, (KUNA): The Supreme Committee on Kuwaiti Citizenship announced on Thursday the stripping of 464 individuals' citizenship, with the matter to be referred to the cabinet.

This came during a committee meeting chaired by Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

A statement by the Interior Ministry

revealed that as per Article 11 of the Citizenship Law, 12 individuals had their citizenship stripped due to dual nationality, 451 people's citizenship was abolished owing to forgery and fraud in line with Article 15 of the Citizenship Law.

Only one person's citizenship was cancelled according to Article 13 of the Citizenship Law for 1959 due to matters related to the country's higher interest.

'Final exam' timeline set for Grade 12 students in Kuwait

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Public Education Sector at the Ministry of Education has announced the dates and requirements for the committee overseeing the Grade 12 final exams for the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year.

This is to ensure the smooth progress of the exams and to guarantee that all necessary procedures are completed in advance.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the decision issued by Assistant Secretary for Public Education Affairs Mansour Al-Dhafiri, indicating that the committee's work for the scientific, lit-

erary and religious education sections will commence on March 16, 2025. This date marks the closure of transfers between schools and educational districts for secondary school students through the student record system. On this day, amendments to student data, including cases of absence, deletion and re-enrollment, will also be closed. Schools are required to review and update all student data prior to this deadline.

The ministry set April 8, 2025, as the deadline for school administrations to withdraw the records of Grade 12 students applying for high school exams through the student record system.

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Kuwait urges Iran to uphold nuke transparency for regional stability

VIENNA, March 6, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait affirmed the importance of the Islamic Republic of Iran's commitment to implementing its obligations under the safeguards agreement signed with the Interna-

tional Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to ensure transparency regarding the peaceful nature of its nuclear program.

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Nabq ... nature's nutrient powerhouse

Al-Nabq or Al-Canar is a seasonal fruit that is increasingly popular in Kuwait these days due to its taste and high nutritional value.

It has many names and its source is the Sidr trees in Arab countries, including Kuwait, and produce fruits during the spring equinox in various

shapes, color and taste.

Sidr trees, which can withstand harsh environmental conditions, are characterized by the density of their hanging branches and their deep roots, while their height reaches between two and 12 meters. (KUNA)



KUNA photo

Al-Nabq or Al-Canar in vibrant green to yellow hues are seen on display at a fruit market.

NewsWatch

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi Foreign Ministry said on Thursday the forthcoming Arab summit will be held in Baghdad on May 17th.

Iraqi Foreign Minister **Fuad Hussein** announced in a press statement that the date of the summit was officially set following recent talks held in Cairo.

The Iraqi minister said that his country was making proper preparations and arrangements, mainly including protocol, security and media measures, in order to ensure the success of the pan-Arab event. (KUNA)

ADEN: A Yemeni army soldier and several Houthi militants were killed in a gunfight in Yemen's central **Marib Governorate** on Thursday, said the country's army.

The confrontation took place when Yemeni army forces monitored and dealt with an attempt by Houthi militants to infiltrate into southern Marib, the Yemeni army's media center said in a press release. (KUNA)

RABAT: Morocco received first set of U.S. AH-64 Apache attack helicopters.

According to the Moroccan News Agency (Maghreb Arabe Press), this came during a ceremony held at the first air base in Sale City, in the presence of Moroccan officials and an American delegation led by General **Michael Langley**, Commander of the United States Africa Command. (KUNA)



5 Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad welcomes Ramadan well-wishers



8 Zain welcomes fasting individuals with daily iftar meals

9 Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait Group holds EOY 2024 analyst conference call

Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:50	Asr	15:20
Sunrise ..	06:09	Maghrib ..	17:50
Zohr	11:59	Isha	19:07

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Mild and cloudy with moderate to fresh southeasterly wind, with speeds of 20-55 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance for rising dust.

By Night: Rather cold and

Weather

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

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	21	15
Kuwait Airport	21	17
Abdaly	23	14
Bubyan	18	16
Jahra	22	17
Failaka Island	19	17
Salmiyah	17	15

Power station expansion delay imperils summer power supply

Project to add 900 megawatts to network

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy's plan to expand the Subiya Power and Water Distillation Station is facing delays, jeopardizing Kuwait's power supply for the summer.

The project, which aims to add 900 megawatts to the electricity network, is

considered crucial to meeting the country's growing energy demand and to avoid the costly energy purchase from the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA).

Sources from the ministry have warned that delays in launching the tender for the supply, installation, operation and maintenance of gas turbine units for the expansion could force Kuwait to purchase 1,000 megawatts from the GCCIA this summer at an estimated cost of KD 60 million.

"The estimated cost of the Subiya expansion project is KD 350 million and the units are expected to operate for more than 30

years. By implementing the project, the ministry could avoid spending millions of Kuwaiti dinars on energy purchases annually," sources added.

"However, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has rejected ministry's request to offer the project tender; citing the need for amendments and responses to inquiries. The agency has asked the ministry to reconsider and resubmit the request. Bureaucracy and lack of funding are considered major obstacles to electricity production and infrastructure projects. Experts warned that repeating past mistakes could lead to power outages and further dependence on energy import," sources disclosed.

Kuwait Amir congratulates Ghana President on Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, March 6, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to President of Ghana John Dramani Mahama on the occasion of his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished him good health and more progress and development for Ghana and its friendly people.

His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to President of Ghana John Dramani Mahama on the occasion of his country's Independence Day, wishing him good health.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to President of Ghana John Dramani Mahama on the occasion of his country's Independence Day.

Medical City project to serve citizens in southern Kuwait

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has asked companies participating in the tender for the appointment of a local consulting office to carry out the design and licensing works and prepare plans and documents for the medical city project in Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City and supervise its implementation to extend the initial insurance that is about to expire, based on Article 46 of Public Tenders Law No. 49/2016, specifically the provisions on the validity of the tender.

Sources revealed the project will be implemented through the Construction

Projects Sector in the Ministry of Public Works; which focuses on the project, as it is one of the important health projects implemented by the State in the southern part of the country to serve a large number of citizens.

Sources said the proposed area is approximately 300,000 square meters; indicating that the main building has a capacity for 500 beds, while the planned specializations of doctors and medical facilities include an integrated dental building (100 clinics), a doctors' residence building, a nurses' residence building, an outpatient clinics building, a physiotherapy building, a medical warehouses and stores building, a car parking building, an emergency air transport services building and its accessories.

Limited agenda in brief meeting

MC first Ramadan session Monday

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Municipal Council's first regular session during Ramadan will be held on Monday and to be presided over by Abdullah Al-Mahri.

The session is expected to be brief due to the limited agenda; which includes reviewing received messages, notably responses from HH the Amir, HH the Crown Prince and HH the Prime Minister to Al-Mahri's greetings on the National Day, Liberation Day and Ramadan.

The council will also review a letter from Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Abdullah Al-Mishari regarding the ratification of the minutes of a previous meeting.

The minister approved all but one municipal decision from that meeting; he objected to the approval of a citizen's complaint about an electrical transformer placement, pending further study.

The council will discuss the recommendations of the Objections and Complaints Committee and the Legal and Financial Committee.

Meanwhile, council member Alia Al-Farsi expressed satisfaction on social media with Kuwait University's response to her proposal regarding the 'Global Park & Ride System' and the implementation of a strategy from the State of Kuwait's 2040 master plan.

Al-Farsi's proposal, submitted in 2022, aims to allocate spaces for 'Park & Ride' sites as a traffic solution. She underscored the need for an integrated traffic system and controls to reduce congestion and ensure safety.

She stressed the importance of the State's role in promoting the use of public transportation to achieve Kuwait's vision as a financial and commercial center. She added that traffic to and from Sabah Al-Salem University City exceeds planned numbers, prompting her to submit a comprehensive traffic study for the area.



Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi (center) at the ghabqa.



Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi being presented mementos.

Minister attends KMA Ramadan 'ghabqa'

'MoH strives to boost medical professionals competency'

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi has confirmed that his ministry is keen on developing technical and professional performance and qualifying the new generation of specialized doctors working in government and private sectors towards the advancement of medical services in the country.

In a press statement during the Ramadan 'Ghabqa' organized by Kuwait Medical Association recently, Al-Awadhi disclosed that "the ministry is working hard to develop the performance of medical professionals by continuing medical education, bringing in visiting doctors or cooperating with major international institutions in line with ministry's commitment to provide the best healthcare."

He stressed that developing human

resources and providing full support to Kuwaiti doctors are among the main pillars of the ministry's work plan to achieve more excellence, especially in scientific research in a way that serves the interests of patients and alleviates their pain and suffering, as part of the continuing support for the health sector to improve Kuwait's position on the map of global medical excellence.

Medical

He pointed out that the national medical professionals have effective and well-known contributions to global scientific research in various specializations, have shown positive results, left their mark in international forums, and topped the most famous specialized scientific and research journals.

He praised the distinguished level of Kuwaiti medical professionals; affirming that the ministry gives importance to protecting the rights of

doctors, providing them with an appropriate environment, and encouraging continuous professional development. He also appreciated the strong cooperation between the ministry, Kuwait Medical Association and medical professions associations.

He added "our presence at the Kuwait Medical Association's Ghabqa aims to communicate with and unite everyone in a social meeting; offering gratitude and appreciation to fellow doctors for their efforts around the clock and their humanitarian duty that is incomparable to any other job. With my appreciation for all other professions, the doctor remains the first line of defense in society, taking into consideration what doctors do to save lives and provide care for every patient."

Meanwhile, President of Kuwait Medical Association Dr. Ibrahim Al-Tawala stressed that "the association is committed to organize

the Ramadan Ghabqa annually as it is a well-established tradition that brings doctors together in a friendly and social atmosphere, away from the work atmosphere, to strengthen ties between members of the medical sector."

He said "Ramadan is not only the month of fasting, but it is the month of giving and solidarity -- values embodied in the medical profession to which we have dedicated ourselves. As doctors, we do not only bear the responsibility of treating patients, but we also bear the trust of serving society with dedication and sincerity, which we see daily in your efforts and sacrifice. Our doctors contributed to making Kuwait one of the most successful countries in overcoming the Corona pandemic, as doctors and other health professionals stood together in facing the challenges and presented a model of dedication and sincerity."

Tenfold surge in Kuwaiti visitors to Moscow

Russia, Kuwait mull mutual visa exemption to ease travel



Yevgeny Kozlov



A tourist spot

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Moscow holds a distinguished status as a premier global tourist destination, drawing visitors from around the world, particularly from Kuwait; owing to its unique blend of ancient history and luxurious modern experiences.

The city boasts of numerous iconic landmarks, including Red Square, the Kremlin and St. Basil's Cathedral -- all of which are of immense cultural and historical significance and attract considerable attention from Kuwaiti tourists.

Moscow is also home to world-class museums and theaters, such as the Bolshoi Theatre and the Tretyakov Gallery, offering visitors unparalleled cultural experiences.

In terms of modern tourism, Evgeny Kozlov, head of the Moscow City Tourism Committee, highlighted the city's upscale shopping centers, such as GUM and TSUM, as key attractions for Kuwaiti tourists eager to shop for both global luxury brands and exclusive Russian labels.

Kozlov said Moscow offers more than 22,000 dining options, including numerous restaurants serving halal cuisine to cater to diverse tastes and preferences. He explained that these factors have contributed significantly to the substantial growth in tourist arrivals from the Middle East. "In fact, the number of Kuwaiti visitors to Moscow in 2024 surged tenfold compared to 2019, with 98 percent of them traveling for tourism purposes," he affirmed.

He also emphasized that this remarkable increase in numbers underscores Moscow's exceptional appeal as a tourist destination, particularly

for those seeking high-end shopping, fine dining and halal hospitality. He added the city offers over 2,000 hotels, including luxury five-star accommodations, designed to provide Muslim travelers with the highest level of comfort and service. "Despite all the attractions Moscow has to offer, its modern infrastructure and high level of security stand out as the key factors that make it a preferred destination, setting it apart from other cities around the world," he revealed.

Kozlov also confirmed the city's commitment to enhancing its appeal to Kuwaiti tourists. "We are pleased to offer our guests from the State of Kuwait convenient options like electronic visas. We are continually working to improve our tourism relations to ensure a positive experience for our visitors," he said.

Direct flight

He also highlighted the ongoing efforts to expand direct flight options. "Currently, Jazeera Airways operates eight weekly flights between Kuwait and Moscow, with plans for future increases to accommodate growing demand," he disclosed.

He also noted the active coordination between Russian and Kuwaiti officials to introduce a mutual visa exemption, which will significantly ease travel between the two nations and result in a remarkable increase in the number of visitors.

In 2024, to cater to the needs of tourists from Kuwait and the broader Middle Eastern region, Moscow introduced the 'Moscow Guide for Muslim Tourists'. This comprehensive guide offers detailed recommendations on halal restaurants,

mosques, prayer facilities, as well as hotels and leisure activities; allowing visitors to fully enjoy their stay while considering their unique cultural and religious needs.

Moscow's commitment to enhancing the tourism experience extends to fostering cultural exchange. The city provides tourism services in multiple languages, ensuring a smooth and enriching experience for international visitors.

Kozlov also mentioned efforts to develop experiences that celebrate the culture of Kuwait, including hosting Kuwaiti artists, musicians and chefs in Moscow. "These initiatives aim to introduce the rich culture of Kuwait to Russian audiences and encourage them to explore the country," he explained.

In the spirit of cultural exchange, he pointed out several significant events held in Moscow like the 'Kuwaiti Cultural Week' in 2023 and 2024. This event featured art exhibitions by Kuwaiti artists, traditional performances, and discussions on Kuwaiti heritage. It also included screenings of Kuwaiti films, offering the Russian public a unique insight into Kuwaiti culture. Through these efforts, Moscow not only strengthens its position as a top tourist destination but also fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of Kuwaiti culture among Russian citizens.

Kozlov emphasized the strategic importance of the steps being taken to strengthen tourism relations between Russia and Kuwait. He explained that achieving these successes relies on mutual investment in key sectors, such as tourism infrastructure, retail, and hospitality, between the two countries.

Other Voices

Laws, public scene, court rows

By Ahmad alsarraf

Arab societies face several challenges related to personal status laws. Tunisian law is often considered the most flexible and just, while many Arab and non-Arab Islamic countries struggle with these problems to varying degrees.

Kuwait officially follows the Maliki school of thought, and recognizes the Shiite minority with its own personal status laws based on the Ja'afari school.

In a valuable lecture, Lawyer Ibrahim Al-Kindi criticized Personal Status Law No. 41/1984, which was enacted 40 years ago, calling it the worst.

He explained that the law, drafted by three Arab advisors, fails to plant seeds of love and harmony in families. The law has many flaws and violations of justice, logic, and the principles of the official jurisprudential school followed by Kuwait.

The law grants mothers custody of their children until the daughter gets married or the son reaches the age of majority. At that point, alimony payments cease.

However, the law does not clarify where the son should go if, for instance, the father fails to care for him after alimony is stopped. Many cases in the courts are delayed due to the lack of specific legislation addressing this issue.

Also, the law has certain shortcomings regarding women's marriage. While the Maliki school grants the father the right to approve his daughter's marriage, Kuwaiti law allows adult women, whether divorced or widowed, to decide for themselves whether to accept or refuse a marriage proposal. However, if the father or guardian opposes the marriage, the daughter or wife can file a "case of abuse," which can take several years before a ruling is issued. Why has the law not been amended to grant women the right to decide their own lives and destinies?

The Maliki school requires that the dowry be explicitly stated in the marriage contract, and without it, the contract is considered invalid. However, the law does not clarify the consequences if the dowry is not mentioned. In contrast, the Hanafi school does not insist on specifying the dowry in the marriage

contract.

According to the Maliki school, the dowry becomes the wife's right after intercourse or legal seclusion with actual consummation. On the other hand, the Hanafi school considers the dowry due upon actual consummation or legal seclusion, which could occur even if the couple simply went for a drive, to a restaurant, or shopping together. In such cases, the wife is entitled to the full dowry if divorced before actual consummation. This provision has been exploited in some court cases.

Furthermore, under the Maliki school, alimony is due to the wife starting from the date of the first consummation of marriage. However, the Hanafi school states that alimony is due from the date of the marriage contract, even if the wife stays at her parents' home for two years, separated from her husband.

The wife is entitled to alimony, but if she goes to work against her husband's wishes, she may lose her entitlement to alimony. In contrast, the Hanafi school holds that alimony continues regardless of the husband's approval for her to work, and this approach is currently implemented in Kuwait.

According to the Maliki school, if a divorce occurs, alimony is due from the date the woman files for divorce. On the other hand, the Hanafi school dictates that alimony is due up to two years prior to filing the lawsuit, a practice that is unique to Kuwait and not followed in other Islamic countries.

Regarding pregnancy, the Maliki school requires a pregnancy period of six lunar months, or a maximum of 365 days, for the child to be attributed to the husband.

If the husband dies, and the woman comes forward after, for example, nine months claiming to be pregnant, the child will still be attributed to the deceased husband. The same applies if the woman is divorced.

The aim of this discussion is not to criticize the law or those who drafted it, but to highlight the importance of being extremely cautious when enacting any law. It is important to consider various possibilities in order to reduce the suffering of litigants and, at the same time, alleviate the immense pressure on the courts.

A recent statistic revealed that the number of new cases filed in the Family Court during the first half of 2024 reached 6,541 cases, which is a concerning and unacceptable indicator.

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email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

'Kuwait's family-based education system guarantees free thought'

"I DELIBERATELY included the phrase 'Kuwaiti Nationalism' in the title because Kuwaiti national education has a unique character that stands out globally. It both aligns with and contrasts to educational systems around the world, sometimes even surpassing them," Kuwaiti writer **Dr. Hamoud Al-Hattab** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"One of the most defining features of Kuwaiti education is the sense of freedom, courage and politeness in exchanging ideas -- whether between adults or children. This characteristic is deeply rooted in the country's family-based national education system. From its inception, the State of Kuwait has remained committed to ensuring the freedom of its citizens, grounded in values and principles derived from Islam. The Kuwaiti approach holds that there is no value in withholding truth, and no value in a society that rejects it.

"These are the principles upheld by the Islamic leadership of the nation. Whoever adheres to this path does so faithfully, and whoever deviates from it strays. Kuwait follows this approach steadfastly. Freedom -- an essential pillar -- must be instilled in the upbringing and education of children within the Kuwaiti family. A country where its citizens live as slaves to their thoughts and freedoms is a nation that has lost its way.

"The freedom we refer to is one that is guided by Islamic values, ethics, customs and principles. Beyond that, it encompasses virtues such as compassion, mutual respect, care for family members, and the reverence for the elderly and for women. In Islam, the status of the mother is honored above all, as the saying goes: 'Your mother, then your mother, then your mother, then your father.' This perspective shapes the respect for women in Kuwaiti society -- only those of noble character honor her, while those with vile hearts criticize her.

"Moreover, this education promotes a sense of responsibility, teaching the youth not to be wasteful, as extravagance is condemned in Islam -- the spendthrift is a sibling to the devil, who shows ingratitude to his Lord.

"Respecting the freedom to express differing opinions is also a key tenet, as is the belief in the one true religion revealed by Allah to His prophets and messengers. We do not distinguish between any of His messengers, and we affirm that Islam is the final Divine message. This belief in the unity of Allah and the monotheism taught by all His prophets is central to Kuwaiti education.

"The sovereignty of conscience belongs to Allah alone, and this extends to etiquette, food, drink, cleanliness and the protection of others' property, both private and public. Upholding what is right and forbidding what is wrong, each person is called upon to do so in accordance with their own abilities, while adhering to decorum, respect and kindness.

"These are just some of the foundational principles of national education in Kuwaiti families. Kuwait's distinctiveness lies in its devotion to these values, as I previously stated."

Also:

"The current approach of some officials seems to follow the principle of 'close the door that the wind comes from and rest.' What else could explain the decision of agricultural authorities to permanently close the tourist farms? These farms, which could be better described as tourist destinations, usually include luxury cafés and rest houses that serve fast food, hot and cold beverages, and provide a relaxing space for visitors. Yet, these establishments are not licensed by the authorities overseeing agriculture, food and nutrition. It seems the objective is to ensure the safety of those visiting restaurants and cafés in remote agricultural areas like Wafra and Abdally. After all, these farms are State-owned holdings leased to farmers, rather than properties directly owned by them," former board member of the Agricultural Authority and the Farmers Union **Hussain Ahmad Qabazard** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"In my view, given the lack of public parks in remote agricultural areas like Abdally and Wafra, it is crucial to permit or even license farmers who wish to allocate a small portion of their land -- no more than two percent of the total area or the agricultural 'holding' they lease from the State for an annual fee.

"By granting a license, authorities will be able to regulate and monitor the tourism and recreational activities on these agricultural holdings. This will ensure that farmers comply with health and safety standards, protecting the public from exploitation and ensuring proper oversight. The State will benefit from the revenues generated, farmers could diversify their sources of income, and the public will have access to much-needed recreational spaces.

"This system will particularly benefit families, especially expatriates, who may not have the resources to spend time in the desert or go camping. The tourist farms in Wafra and Abdally provide an ideal environment to relax, enjoy the fresh air, and connect with nature for a day or more.

"The presence of these tourist farms can ease the pressure on the desert and other wild areas, preserving the delicate ecosystems there. Wild plants and herbs flourish in these areas for a certain part of the year, offering beauty and tran-

quility before the harsh summer heat sets in.

"While Wafra, Abdally, Kabad and Sulabiya are designated for agricultural production, the State's approval to use up to two percent of each large holding for tourism purposes is harmless. As long as farmers pay a fair licensing fee to the State and adhere to the terms of their farming contracts, there is no harm in allowing them to offer these services. Furthermore, any products sold should be limited to those grown on the farm itself, ensuring that agricultural integrity is maintained.

"This approach not only benefits the farmers and State, but also provides a valuable service to the public, offering spaces for leisure, relaxation and commune with nature."

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"I came across a statement on the X platform about the determination of the Minister of Social Affairs, Family Affairs, and Childhood, Her Excellency Dr. Amthal Al-Huweilah to conduct a series of meetings with the six governors. The aim is to develop a mechanism to enhance the services of cooperative societies and diversify their roles in line with the needs of each governorate, among other objectives," **Dr. Falah Mohammad Fahad Al-Hajri** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"The minister's initiative to hold these meetings is in line with the goal of maximizing the benefits of managing resources within cooperative societies in these governorates and improving them by guiding them in the right direction. The partnership between the responsibilities and services of the Cooperatives Sector at the Ministry of Social Affairs and the powers of the governors converges toward achieving a shared goal, which is serving citizens and improving urban services in both residential and service areas.

"The goals set by the minister require three essential elements: the ministerial responsibilities related to the cooperatives sector, the cooperative societies located within the geographic areas of the governorates, and the environment in which these cooperative societies operate, including their needs, requirements, and areas for improvement. This may explain why she has undertaken, or plans to undertake, these pivotal visits, which is a commendable step.

"What pleases citizens is the huge attention being given to their areas through coordination with the esteemed governors, which, without a doubt, will help achieve the objectives outlined on the X platform, as detailed below:

"First: Discussing the activation of the vital role of these cooperative societies, working to improve their services, and providing goods at reasonable prices. Vitality is realized through coordination between government agencies and the cooperative society in the concerned area with the aim to develop services and offer goods at fair prices. This is the desired goal sought by those involved, led by the minister and the relevant governor for the area being developed.

"Second: Supporting the capabilities of community members by enhancing marketing and financial awareness, and encouraging investment and savings. This is an important goal, as it serves social, economic, psychological, and awareness-building purposes.

"Third: Supporting community events and cultural programs to strengthen cooperation among the people of the governorate. This helps preserve the minds of Kuwait's youth and guides them to serve their country and religion in the right way, as both the soul and mind are vessels that must be filled with what is beneficial.

"Fourth, and finally: Enhancing the cooperative sector for making it more inclusive and effective in serving the community. Cooperative societies hold valuable resources that need to be effectively managed and guided properly.

"In conclusion, Kuwait needs this fresh approach that not only achieves developmental goals but also nurtures creative thinking on how to better utilize the country's abundant human and financial resources. Thank you, Dr. Amthal ... I wish you continued creativity and progress."

□ □ □

"The theme of the fifth annual conference hosted by the Strategic Studies Unit at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies was 'Defense Strategies for Small States and Lesser Powers: Tactical Adaptations and Operational Innovations'.

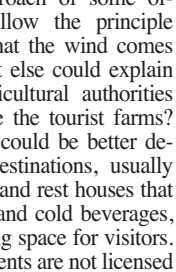
The event took place in Doha, Qatar, on Tuesday, February 25. The conference brought together 36 researchers, academics, and experts from 28 countries to discuss the security challenges faced by small states and non-state actors, and explore methods of adaptation and innovation to deal with these challenges", columnist **Dr. Dana Al-Enezi** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"During the conference, a research paper titled 'Soft Power Strategy for Small States: A Comparative Study between Kuwait and Qatar' was presented. It reviewed how both countries have used soft power tools to enhance their regional and international standing, and highlighted the successes and challenges they have encountered in this domain."

— Compiled by **Mahmoud Attiyeh/Simi K. Kutty**



Dr. Al-Hattab



Dr. Al-Hajri

30 bags of cement stolen from construction site

Car broken down on road stolen, deliberately set ablaze

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Forensic experts were dispatched to a vacant lot in the Sabah Al-Ahmad residential area after an unknown individual stole a vehicle and intentionally set it on fire.

Meanwhile, detectives are investigating a mobile tire shop worker to determine whether he is linked to the case, which involves both theft and arson, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to a security source, a 25-year-

old citizen reported that his Japanese car had broken down in the Sabah Al-Ahmad residential area. He contacted a company offering mobile repair services and provided his vehicle's location.

Two hours later, the driver of the mobile tire shop called him to inform him that the car was missing. The owner rushed to the area, only to find the vehicle deliberately burned approximately three kilometers away from the original location.

In another incident, a citizen filed a theft complaint at the Sabah Al-Ahmad residential police station, alleging that an expatriate working on a construction plot stole 30 bags of cement. The complaint was supported by a plot guard, who identified the expatriate as the culprit. However, it remains unclear whether the worker was demanding payment or had other motives.

Authorities are continuing investigations into both cases.

Jail for Kuwaiti man, Gulf woman overturned in 'indecent act' case

7-year prison term for cleric annulled

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Misdemeanor Court overturned the ruling issued to imprison a Kuwaiti man and a Gulf woman to three-month imprisonment following their appearance in a video clip, widely known as 'Range Rover' on social media in which they can be seen engaging in a public indecent act in Bneid Al-Gar.

Following the cancellation of their sentences, the court refrained from imposing any further punishment on the individuals involved.

The case began with an investigation officer from Qadisiya Police Station detaining the first defendant for appearing in the video clip, which featured the indecent act at a parking lot near the Arabian Gulf Street in Bneid Al-Gar and had gained attention on social media.

The video clip showed a white Range Rover vehicle, with the defendant standing next to it and publicly hugging and kissing a woman whose features were not clearly visible.

Lawyer In'am Haider, who represented the Gulf woman during the court session, argued that the judgment issued in absentia was invalid, as the defendant had not been properly notified of the trial session with a legal announcement.

The lawyer also contended that the elements of the crime of public indecency were not present, asserting that the defendant had no connection to the incident.

In addition, lawyer Haider questioned the validity of the investigators' work, claiming it lacked seriousness.

□ □ □

Jail for cleric annulled: The Criminal Court refrained from punishing Islamic scholar Fouad Al-Rifai and annulled the seven-year prison sentence issued in absentia and the fine of KD 100,000 imposed on him for allegedly inciting sedition and insulting Shiite citizens.

The Public Prosecution had charged Al-Rifai with publicly inciting hatred and contempt for a segment of society through his X account, and with stirring sectarian strife by posting content that contained phrases and opinions aimed at spreading hatred and contempt. Al-Rifai was also accused of broadcasting opinions that mocked and belittled a religious sect by challenging its beliefs, rituals, and teachings.

Copper conductors, cables reported stolen in Al-Mutla'a

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Authorities are investigating the theft of copper conductors worth approximately 3,800 dinars from the Ministry of Electricity's supply lines, along with the theft of 28 cables from a transformer belonging to a private company in Al-Mutla'a, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

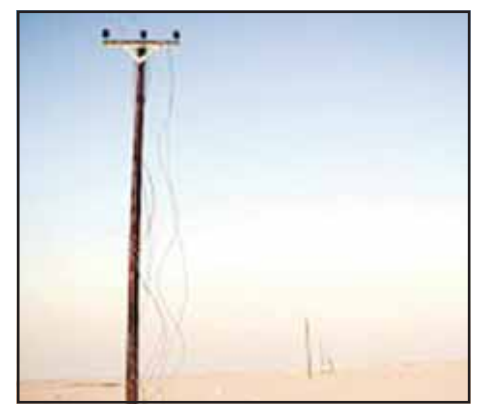
The Public Prosecutor has directed Jahra detectives to track down the unidentified perpetrators, who not only stole copper conductors but also damaged several utility poles in the process. Forensic experts have been deployed to examine the crime scenes and collect any potential evidence left behind. The case has been classified as a felony under the charge of "Theft by Destroying a Safe."

According to reports, a legal representative

from the Ministry of Electricity filed a complaint at a Jahra police station after a technical inspection revealed power line failures. Upon investigation, it was discovered that unknown individuals had stolen over 1,200 meters of conductors, damaged four poles, and removed wiring extensions. The total estimated loss stands at 3,794 dinars.

In a separate incident, a representative of a company specializing in electrical panels reported a break-in at a transformer site. The suspects allegedly infiltrated the facility, cut 28 cables, and made off with them.

Forensic teams have been assigned to both crime scenes to identify any clues that could lead to the culprits. Investigations are ongoing.



Copper conductors stolen from electric poles.

'Lack of interest' ... Cassation rejects Prosecution appeal

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: In a landmark ruling, the Criminal Court of Cassation, presided over by Judge Saleh Al-Muraishid, decided to reject the appeal filed by the Public Prosecution due to the absence of interest in filing the appeal, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

The Public Prosecution had appealed to the Court of Cassation, seeking the cancellation of the Court of Appeal's ruling, which had rejected its request for a harsher penalty and the dismissal of charges against an accused.

The Court of Cassation stated that the appeal filed by the Public Prosecution must specify the part of the appealed verdict it intends to challenge.

The court clarified that there must be a legitimate interest for the Public Prosecution to file an appeal against the verdict.

The court explained that the Public Prosecution, as a fair opponent with a special legal status, represents the public interest and aims to uphold the law. However, it is bound by the

principle of interest. If the Public Prosecution, as the accusing authority, has no interest in the appeal and neither does the convicted person, then the appeal cannot be accepted based on the general principle that interest is the foundation of a lawsuit.

Without interest, there is no lawsuit. Therefore, the Public Prosecution cannot appeal rulings purely for the sake of the law, as its appeal would be considered a theoretical matter that holds no legal weight.



The vehicle on fire.

No one hurt as car goes up in flames on 7th road

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: A vehicle was completely destroyed by fire on the Seventh Ring Road, but firefighters managed to extinguish the blaze swiftly, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The Ministry of Interior's Operations Room received a report about the incident, prompting an immediate response from security personnel in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate, the General Fire Department, Al-Qurain Fire Station, and emergency medical teams. Upon arrival, they found a Japanese-made vehicle engulfed in flames. Firefighting teams acted quickly, bringing the fire under control in record time. No injuries were reported.

Authorities documented the incident, and a report was forwarded to the relevant police station for further investigation.

In another development, Ahmadi Rescue Police patrols arrested two Asians for the possession of about 200 bottles of locally manufactured alcohol at a checkpoint in Ahmadi Governorate recently, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

While operating the checkpoint, officers noticed a car with two individuals who appeared anxious and confused. These individuals attempted to flee the scene but were quickly apprehended.

Don't listen to rumors: Mol

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Ministry of Interior has denied the accuracy of reports circulating on social media about the dismissal of approximately 3,000 ministry members who were returned to service, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

In a press statement, the ministry stressed the importance of verifying information and urged the public not to be swayed by rumors.

It called on everyone to rely on official ministry channels for accurate information, and confirmed that it reserves the right to take legal action against those who spread rumors and false news.



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Al-Mishari approves key council decisions, rejects one complaint

New rules streamline land allocation, delivery processes

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Minister of State for Municipal and Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari has approved the decisions and recommendations of the Municipal Council during its 11th meeting for the third legislative term held on Jan 27, except one decision.

The minister objected to the approval of the complaint submitted by a citizen regarding the installation of an electrical transformer in front of his house in Rumaithiya, Block One for further study and until the completion of the study of the request submitted by the Ministry of Electricity, Water

and Renewable Energy regarding the transfer of the secondary transformer station subject to the complaint according to the study submitted by the executive body.

One of the most important decisions approved by Al-Mishari was the proposal of council member Munira Al-Amir on the issuance of regulations for land allocation as follows:

Chapter One: Pre-allocation stage

Study the project or request submitted by the entity requesting the allocation for the Municipal Council to make the correct decision in this regard. It details all the documents and studies required that must be

submitted to the council, as well as the stages of the allocation request until it reaches discussion and decision-making in the council.

Chapter Two: Post-allocation stage

Allocation decision is activated, during which the competent authorities are obligated to deliver to the owner of the allocation the decision and enable him to receive the land allocated to him. It outlines the steps taken by various State agencies involved in the decision to achieve a smooth delivery of the allocation to the owner; in addition to the procedures that must be followed in the event of delay in delivery, clarification of the mechanism by which the objectives of this stage are achieved, and the powers of the follow up authorities.

Chapter Three: Post-delivery of the allocated land regulatory stage

This stage covers the period from the time the allocated land

is received, the mechanisms for monitoring the project and its development by the concerned State agencies including the Municipality, and reports that the Municipal Council must review constantly. It explains the mechanisms for dealing with delays in terms of procedures and penalties, if any; in addition to the mechanisms for withdrawing the allocation once the specified period ends or any new decision regulating this stage.

Chapter Four: Post-project completion stage

States all decisions, procedures and documents required to complete transactions in the Municipality, and then connect electricity and other services. This stage is important as it is a period for reviewing the allocation status, collecting fines and ensuring the implementation of the remaining decisions in the allocation stages before completing them.



Al-Mishari

MEW reports women make up 33.7 pct of 2024 appointments

By Mohamed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: According to recent statistics from the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, the number of women appointed in the ministry in 2024 was 351, making up 33.7 percent, and number of men appointed were 689, accounting for 67.3 percent.

The statistics revealed that women working in various departments of the ministry totaled 9,770, representing 27.6

percent of the total workforce, which stood at 35,388 employees as of January 2025.

Also, the number of expatriate employees dropped by 68, from 862 in January 2024 to 794 in January 2025. This decrease is attributed to multiple factors, including the ministry's Kuwaitization policy and the retirement of those who reached the mandatory retirement age.

According to informed sources, the ministry is committed to replacing expatriate workers with Kuwaiti employees in all sectors.

Teachers prepare for AI curriculum

Education Ministry to introduce robotics into secondary schools

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Computer Technical Guidance Department at the Ministry of Education is currently preparing for the introduction of robot programming in secondary schools as part of the Grade 12 curriculum, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Some educational districts have conducted individual experiments on this technology, while preparing intensive training courses in artificial intelligence and the Python programming language

for teachers.

An educational report revealed that training courses for faculty members will continue until the artificial intelligence technology is officially applied in the second part of the computer curriculum for the Grade 12, which will be implemented in the middle of Ramadan.

The report of the department indicated that a single course for teachers will take four hours -- from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm, with two breaks for half an hour.

'Recognition reflects dedication to maternal health'

Maternity Hospital attains global accreditation as center of excellence in obstetric anesthesia

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Intensive Care and Anesthesia Department at the Maternity Hospital has received global accreditation as a center of excellence in obstetric anesthesia from the International Society of Obstetric Anesthesia and Maternity Medicine, reports Al-Seyassah daily.



Dr. Qassem

In a press statement, Head of the Intensive Care and Anesthesia Department at the Maternity Hospital Dr. Fatima Qassem highlighted the department's excellence in providing safe and effective care for pregnant women.

She explained that this prestigious accreditation, which is valid for four years, is part of the program of the Center of Excellence by the International Society of Obstetric Anesthesia and Maternity Medicine, based in the United States. The program honors institutions and programs that deliver exceptional care in obstetric anesthesia and aim to enhance the quality of health services provided to pregnant women.

Dr. Qassem affirmed that the Maternity Hospital has distinguished national medical professionals, as well as the latest advanced equip-



Maternity hospital building

KUNA photo

ment and technologies, all of which contribute to providing comprehensive and safe medical care for women during pregnancy, child-

birth, and beyond.

She said this accreditation serves as an incentive to continue developing the hospital's

medical services and strengthen its position as a leading center in obstetric anesthesia and intensive care for mothers, ensuring

the highest levels of safety and comfort for patients in accordance with the latest international standards.

Farwaniya Governor hosts Vietnamese ambassador to strengthen bilateral ties

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Naser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received in his office the Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to Kuwait Nguyen Duc Thang on Wednesday morning to discuss joint cooperation between the two friendly countries.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the meeting began with Ambassador Thang congratulating Governor Sheikh Athbi on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

He stressed that these visits are part of efforts to strengthen the friendship and bilateral relations be-

tween the two nations.

A range of topics of mutual interest were discussed during the meeting between the two parties.

Sheikh Athbi highlighted the depth of the relationship between the two countries and reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to strengthening ties with its friendly countries.

At the end of the meeting, Ambassador Thang expressed his gratitude to Sheikh Athbi for the hospitality and warm reception, commended Kuwait's leading role in the global humanitarian field, and wished the country continued prosperity.



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Naser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives in his office the Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to Kuwait Nguyen Duc Thang.

MEW suspends water cutoffs for non-payment in Ramadan

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has suspended water cutoffs for non-payment in private housing during the holy month of Ramadan, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources from the ministry.

Sources clarified that while water disconnections have been halted, the ministry continues to issue warnings to delinquent customers and is taking

all the necessary steps to recover outstanding dues.

Previously, the ministry would cut off water services to private residences when owners failed to pay high electricity and water bills.

In another development, sources affirmed that the ministry's departments have completed job performance evaluations for about two-thirds of its more than 27,000 employees.

KRCS delivers 40 tons of essential supplies

Kuwait sends 35th relief plane to Sudan

KUWAIT CITY, March 6, (KUNA): The 35th relief aid plane took off from Kuwait to Port Sudan Thursday morning carrying 40 tons of food supplies and tents, to help the displaced people in Sudan as part of the "Kuwait By Your Side" campaign, according to KRCS.

Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS)'s Board of Directors, Ambassador Khaled Al-Maqamis told KUNA that this aid came under the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Al-Maqamis added that the current relief plane for Sudan comes within the framework of Kuwait's support to the Sudanese people, carrying essential humanitarian needs of displaced and affected families there, amounting to 40 tons of various food supplies and tents to help overcome the current crisis.

He expressed his thanks to the Kuwaiti Defense Ministry, Foreign Ministry and Social Affairs Ministry,

Kuwait Embassy in Sudan and the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) for their contributions to the success of this humanitarian mission.

KRCS contributed in providing medicines, medical supplies, ambulances, food and tents to the displaced Sudanese, in coordination with SRCS

to work on distributing them.

Sudanese Ambassador to Kuwait Awad Karim Balah praised on Wednesday the humanitarian contributions of the KRCS in Sudan and around the world, adding that these great efforts have alleviated the suffering of the afflicted.



KUNA photo

A Kuwaiti relief plane takes off heading to Port Sudan Airport carrying 40 tons of food supplies and tents.

Huge returns

GPIC sees strong 'exports' in 2024

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (GPIC) shipped about 62 vessels of products in 2024 -- 37 carrying methanol, 20 carrying urea and five carrying ammonia.

This resulted in total exports of 1,161,725 metric tons from January to December 2024. The company achieved high sales figures despite the ongoing disruptions in maritime navigation due to Houthi attacks on ships since Oct 7, 2023.

GPIC is owned by Kuwait Petrochemical Industries Company, the Bahraini Bapco Energy Company, and the Saudi SABIC Agri-Nutrients Investment Company.

Sources explained that last year witnessed an increase in the number of export ships by two compared to 2023; but despite this, 2023 sales were relatively higher than 2024. They said GPIC exported its products through 60 ships in 2023; 33 of which carried methanol, 22 carried urea, and five carried ammonia; while the total exports marketed were about 1,246,049 metric tons, although the company's actual production in 2023 was about 1,674,227 metric tons. Sources added that GPIC exports its products to many countries like India, China, Thailand, Kuwait, Singapore, Indonesia, South Korea, Iraq, Mexico, Australia, Brazil and America.

Sources revealed the carbon dioxide recycling plant built by the company was among its strategic objectives to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, in addition to its role in improving the overall efficiency of using medical resources by improving the production of methanol and urea in the plant.

Sources indicated that the company will witness many achievements and developments in 2025; as the board of directors -- whose members are from the three owner companies from Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia -- met recently and agreed on the importance of expanding the company's investments, along with increasing production, to achieve huge returns for the owner companies.

Sources pointed out that the political tensions in the Middle East region, which were caused by the impact of shipping traffic in areas witnessing turbulent events in the Arab region, negatively affected the sales of global petrochemical companies; in addition to the increase in shipping costs, as well as the fears of a decline in demand for the petrochemical market in light of fears of the US imposing new fees on petrochemical products.



Leading the well-wishers, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, joined by several members of the ruling family.

Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad welcomes Ramadan well-wishers

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: In a Ramadan atmosphere filled with love and the spirit of the Kuwaiti family, crowds of well-wishers gathered at the Diwan of the late Sheikh Mohammed Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Shuwaikh Palace recently.

According to a press release, the visitors included ruling family members, senior officials, public figures, citizens, and residents, who were all warmly

received by His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad and his sons.

Leading the well-wishers was His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, who was accompanied by a group of ruling family members, several dignitaries, current and former ministers, many ambassadors, and members of the diplomatic corps, as well as a large crowd of citizens from various segments of society.

His Highness Sheikh Nasser welcomed the guests in the presence of his sons Sheikh Sabah Al-Nasser and Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Al-Nasser, and extended his congratulations for the holy month. He prayed to God to maintain this family spirit among the people of Kuwait, affirming that it is a continuation of the legacy of fathers and grandfathers, and a revival of the authentic traditions and customs that have shaped Kuwaiti society as a unified, interdependent, and loving family.



His Highness Sheikh Nasser, joined by his sons Sheikh Sabah Al-Nasser and Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Al-Nasser, extended a warm welcome to the guests and offered his heartfelt congratulations for the holy month of Ramadan.

Photos by Mohammad Morsi

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait steps

Charity societies will receive requests from debtors, and each charity society will classify them according to what it deems appropriate based on the set conditions.

She stated that the campaign will be supervised by the ministry in collaboration with charitable societies, as part of efforts to strengthen social solidarity and alleviate the burdens of struggling families.

Dr. Al-Huwailah commended the efforts of the staff at the ministry and PADA. She stressed her keenness to improve communication with beneficiaries and provide services that meet the highest standards of quality and comfort.

Meanwhile, the acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi revealed that a large portion of the funds raised by charity societies during the month of Ramadan will be allocated to assist debtors, under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs, to support charitable initiatives.

In a press statement, he revealed that a circular has been issued to all charitable societies to direct them to allocate their funds toward promoting local charitable work through charities and endowments.

Dr. Al-Ajmi explained that the project will be launched under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs and will include the legal conditions for the indebted. The funds collected during Ramadan by charitable societies will be primarily directed toward this campaign.

Regarding the exceptional performance bonuses, he indicated that they will be distributed soon but only to those who truly deserve them, rather than to all employees who received an "excellent" rating, in line with the requirements of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) in this regard.

In addition, the Assistant Undersecretary for Social Care Affairs Dr. Jassim Al-Kandari affirmed the ministry's commitment to providing a supportive environment that ensures the delivery of the best services to beneficiaries.

He stressed that the Social Care Sector is a main pillar of the social work system.

Begging bust

Arab and Asian nationalities - eight women and three men - who were begging in front of mosques and markets. This follows the recent arrest of four women who were caught begging in Jahra and Farwaniya governorates.

According to security sources, all arrested beggars will be immediately deported from the country and strict measures will be taken against their sponsors.

The Ministry of Interior confirmed that some of those arrested had entered the country on visit visas or family residency, while others had been brought to Kuwait illegally by companies that did not provide them with employment. Legal measures are being taken against those companies that facilitated their recruitment in violation of the law.

The General Department of Residency Affairs Investigations explained that it will take a firm stance against this phenomenon, with all violators being deported according to their type of residency, as follows:

- Residency Article 22 (family residency): Deportation of the violator and the sponsor.

- Residency Article 18 (private sector workers): Deportation of the violator and closure of the company's file.

- Residency Article 20 (domestic workers): Deportation of the violator and a ban on the sponsor from issuing guarantees or visas in the future.

Anyone who exploits children in begging to manipulate people's emotions will face charges of minor abuse, and strict legal measures will be taken.

The ministry affirmed that cases of electronic begging via social media networks will be monitored in coordination with the General Department of Combating Cybercrime to take appropriate legal action against those involved.

'Final exam'

The records of home-schooled students should also be withdrawn by exam supervisors and student affairs departments in the educational districts. These records, after being reviewed and approved, must be sent in a unified file containing several documents, including student lists, exam applicant records, and a record of missing data such as the English version of the student's name, place of birth, nationality, and other required details for necessary amendments before seating numbers are issued.

The ministry also set April 24, 2025 as the final date for receiving cases of students dropping out of school, with the requirement of attaching supporting documents for the necessary amendments.

According to the timeline, exams for subjects outside the standard schedule will begin on May 11, 2025. The grades

for these subjects will be recorded in the student record system, and grade records will be withdrawn for review by schools. Technical review lists for these off-schedule subjects will be released on May 15, 2025. The student record system will be closed for entering or modifying grades for Grade 12 students by May 19, 2025.

The ministry added that seating numbers for students taking the high school exams will be uploaded on the ministry's website on May 22, 2025. Committee cards and student call lists will be uploaded on May 26, 2025. Seating numbers for the second round will be issued on June 30, 2025.

The ministry stressed the importance of adhering to its instructions when entering daily work grades and practical test results, ensuring complete accuracy to avoid any need for modifications after the data is transferred to the exam committee.

It also underscored the need for students transferring from abroad or from private schools to attach equivalency certificates, to ensure all the necessary documentation is complete before the exams.

The commitment of school administrations to these deadlines is crucial to guarantee the smooth organization of the final exams and provide a suitable environment for the test takers.

Kuwait urges

Ali Behbehani, a member of Kuwait's Permanent Delegation to Austria and diplomatic attache, said in a speech at the IAEA Board of Governors meeting.

The Kuwaiti diplomat emphasized the pivotal role of the agency in implementing the comprehensive safeguards system under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Behbehani underlined the need to resolve outstanding issues between the agency and Iran, allowing the agency to provide credible guarantees regarding the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear program.

He also called on Tehran to continue cooperation with the agency, implement what was agreed upon in the joint statement, and provide the explanations and information required to resolve outstanding issues.

Behbehani renewed the State of Kuwait's support for the IAEA efforts to strengthen the safeguards and non-proliferation system.

He urged all countries to adhere to international agreements to ensure security and stability at the regional and international levels.

PAHW signs road lighting contracts for Mutlaa City

KD 5.3 mln contracts awarded for 6 suburbs

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) has signed two contracts for the supply, installation, and maintenance of road lighting in six residential suburbs of the Mutlaa Residential City project, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the acting Director General of PAHW Rashid Al-Enezi said with the signing of these two contracts, PAHW has completed all agreements related to the supply, installation, imple-

mentation, and maintenance of road lighting in all residential suburbs of Mutlaa City.

He explained that the two new contracts will serve the suburbs of N1, N2, N3, N4, N5, and N12, and were signed with two local companies at a total value of KD 5,311,924, with the duration of each contract set for 730 days. The signing of these contracts is in line with PAHW's commitment to achieving its strategic goals of providing integrated housing projects and enhancing the quality of life for citizens by offering essential services.

Al-Enezi said the authority is closely monitoring the implementation of the first and second contracts for the supply, installation, and maintenance of road lighting in the remaining six suburbs, which include lighting poles of various heights.

He affirmed that work is proceed-

ing at a good pace without any delays as per the schedule, with 38 percent of the work already completed.

Al-Enezi said he expects the lighting poles in these suburbs to be gradually activated before the contractual deadline in February 2026.

Meanwhile, PAHW has opened the envelopes for tenders related to the construction, maintenance, and infrastructure services of public buildings in the N6 and N7 suburbs of Mutlaa City. Seven companies submitted bids for the first tender, and another seven companies for the second tender.

According to informed sources, the lowest bids for both tenders amounted to KD 42.5 million. PAHW will carefully review all bids from financial, accounting, and legal perspectives to select the most suitable offer based on these factors.

Al Yahya to preside over key discussions

GCC Ministerial Council convenes in Makkah under Kuwait's leadership

JEDDAH, March 6, (KUNA): Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassim Al-Budaiwi stated on Wednesday that the 163rd session of the GCC Ministerial Council meeting in the Saudi city of Makkah.

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al Yahya, who is the current President of the Ministerial Council, will preside over the session, Al-Budaiwi stated in a press statement.

Furthermore, joint ministerial meetings will be held separately with foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria, Morocco and Jordan, he disclosed.

The GCC chief revealed that the GCC Ministerial Council will discuss several reports regarding the follow-up on the implementation of the decisions made by the Supreme Council of the

GCC, which were issued during the 45th summit in the State of Kuwait in December 2024, as well as the memoranda and reports submitted by the ministerial and technical committees and the General Secretariat.

"The agenda will also cover topics related to dialogues and strategic relations between the GCC countries and global states and blocs, in addition to the latest regional and international developments affecting the area," he added.

Regarding the joint ministerial meetings with the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Kingdom of Morocco, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Al-Budaiwi noted that several topics will be discussed, the most important of which is enhancing strategic relations and joint cooperation in various fields.

The meeting would also touch upon continuing consultation, coordination, and exchange of views on regional and international issues of mutual concern, which supports and enhances security and stability in the region, he concluded.



Al-Budaiwi

'Border crisis has become a matter of national intelligence'

Vance promotes Trump immigration crackdown during visit to US-Mexico border

EAGLE PASS, Texas, March 6. (AP): US Vice President JD Vance visited the US-Mexico border on Wednesday and said that arrests for illegal crossings had fallen sharply because President Donald Trump is demanding that all of government prioritize the issue in ways his Democratic predecessor, Joe Biden, never did.

Vance was joined by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, as he took a helicopter tour of the area around Eagle Pass, Texas, around 150 miles southwest of San Antonio. They also visited a Border Patrol facility and sat for a roundtable with Republican Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and national, state and local officials.

Vance pointed to arrests for illegal border crossings plummeting 39% in January from a month earlier. The numbers have actually been falling sharply since well before Republican

Trump took office for his second term on Jan. 20, coming down from an all-time high of 250,000 in December 2023. After that, Mexican authorities increased enforcement within their own borders and Biden introduced severe asylum restrictions early last summer.

"President Trump has empowered - and in fact demanded - that his whole government take the task of border control seriously," Vance said.

In an effort to impose harder-line immigration policies, the Trump administration has put shackled immigrants on US military planes for deportation fights and sent some to the US lockup at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. It has also expanded federal agents' arrests of people in the US illegally and abandoned programs that gave some permission to stay.

The presence of Hegseth and Gabbard on the visit underscores how



US Vice President JD Vance, right, speaks during a news conference at Shelby Park on March 5, in Eagle Pass, Texas. (AP)

Trump is tasking agencies across the federal government with working to overhaul border and immigration policy, moving well beyond the Department of Homeland Security, the traditional home of most such functions.

"The border crisis has become a matter of national intelligence and it's also become something that requires the Department of Defense to engage," Vance said.

Gabbard blamed the Biden administration for the presence in the US of people who crossed the border illegally and had possible ties to terrorists but were released into the country while they await immigration court proceedings.

"Who are they? What may they be plotting?" Gabbard asked. "This is just the beginning."

As part of his visit, Vance went to Shelby Park, a municipal park along

the Rio Grande that Abbot seized from federal authorities last year in a feud with the Biden administration, after the governor accused the Biden White House of not doing enough to curb illegal crossings.

A group of friends and neighbors gathered two blocks from the park ahead of Vance's arrival. Dennis Charlton, a veteran and Eagle Pass resident with property along the border, wore two hats, one to commemorate his service and the other a red "Make America Great Again" cap.

He said he's witnessed human and drug smuggling activity on his border property that scared his wife and neighbors, but said such crossings have diminished significantly of late.

"I love it," Charlton said of the visit. "I just wish we could talk to him to thank him for everything that he and Trump have done."



Elon Musk, (center left), operating with a directive from US President Donald Trump to slash government spending, walks with Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., right, as he arrives to meet with Republican senators, at the Capitol, in Washington on March 5. (AP)

Musk comes to Capitol Hill to meet with Republicans

WASHINGTON, March 6. (AP): Billionaire Elon Musk arrived on Capitol Hill Tuesday and learned about something new - budget rescissions, an obscure legislative tool that could bring legal left to his federal budget slashing effort and enshrine the cuts into law.

Musk joined a lunch meeting with Republican senators just hours after the Supreme Court issued a setback to the Trump administration's efforts to freeze some \$2 billion in foreign aid funds as part of its sweeping shutdown of the US Agency for International Development. As he opened the private session, Musk led with a message urging Congress to act.

Over plates of fried catfish, senators

explained how the White House could put the billions of dollars of savings he has amassed into what's called a budget rescissions package, and send it to Congress for a vote to rescind the funding. Musk seemed thrilled, they said.

"He was so happy," said Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, the Republican chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, who is among those championing the effort. "He didn't know."

The proposal introduced a potential next phase of his Musk's Department of Government Efficiency efforts and comes at an important time. The Trump administration is fighting in court - and in the court of public opinion - over the budget cuts tearing through the federal government.

European Union leaders open emergency summit on defense and Ukraine aid

BRUSSELS, March 6. (AP): Facing the prospect that the United States might cut them adrift under President Donald Trump, European Union leaders launched a day of emergency talks Thursday in a bid to beef up their own security and ensure that Ukraine will still be properly protected.

Friedrich Merz, the likely next chancellor of Germany, and summit chairman Antonio Costa discussed over breakfast in Brussels ways to fortify Europe's defenses on a short deadline. Merz pushed plans this week to loosen the nation's rules on running up debt to allow for higher defense spending.

Meanwhile, the 27-nation bloc was waking up to news that French President Emmanuel Macron would confer with EU leaders about the possibility of using France's nuclear deterrent to pro-

tect the continent from Russian threats.

It all underscored the sea change that has taken place in the two months since Trump took office and immediately started questioning the cornerstones of cooperation between the United States and Europe that had been the bedrock of Western security since World War II.

"Given these profound shifts in US policy, and the existential threat of another war on the continent, Europe must manage its essential defence tasks," the European Policy Center think tank said in a commentary.

The bloc will "take decisive steps forward," Macron told the French nation Wednesday evening. "Member states will be able to increase their military spending" and "massive joint funding will be provided to buy and

produce some of the most innovative munitions, tanks, weapons and equipment in Europe," he said.

Adding to the ebullient message, he said that "Europe's future does not have to be decided in Washington or Moscow."

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is taking part in the summit.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has proposed a plan to loosen budget rules so countries that are willing can spend much more on defense. Her proposal is underpinned by 150 billion euros (\$162 billion) worth of loans to buy priority military equipment.

Most of the increased defense spending would have to come from national budgets at a time when many countries are already overburdened with debt.

France is struggling to reduce an excessive annual budget deficit of 5% of GDP, after running up its total debt burden to 112% of GDP with spending on relief for businesses and consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic and the energy crisis that followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Five other countries using the euro currency have debt levels over 100% of GDP: Belgium, Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal.

Europe's largest economy, Germany, has more room to borrow, with a debt level of 62% of GDP.

Part of any security plan is also to protect the increasingly beleaguered position of Ukraine.

A Russian missile killed four people staying at a hotel in Zelenskyy's hometown overnight. He said that a humanitarian organization's volunteers had moved into the hotel in Kryvyi Rih, in central Ukraine, just before the strike.



European Council President Antonio Costa, (right), greets Friedrich Merz, leader of the Christian Democratic Union, prior to a meeting at the European Council building in Brussels on March 6. (AP)

America

US Rep Turner dies: Democratic US Rep Sylvester Turner of Texas has died two months after taking office and hours after attending President Donald Trump's address before Congress in Washington, D.C., officials and his family said on Wednesday. He was 70.

While attending Trump's speech to Congress, Turner was taken to a hospital and later released, Turner's family said in a statement.

Turner's family said that at 5:45 a.m. Wednesday, "he died at his home from enduring health complications."

The family did not offer additional information on those health complications. In November 2022, Turner revealed he had undergone treatment, including surgery and radiation therapy, earlier that year for bone cancer in his jaw.

"Congressman Turner was the consummate public servant. But to us, he was our beloved father, grandfather, sibling and relative. Thank you for your prayers," the family said in its statement.

"The House Democratic Caucus family is shocked and saddened by the sudden passing of Congressman Sylvester Turner. Though he was newly elected to the Congress, Rep. Turner had a long and distinguished career in public service and spent decades fighting for the people of Houston."



Turner

House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said in a statement. (AP)

Tornado warnings issued: Powerful storms that killed three people in Mississippi and ripped roofs from buildings in a small Oklahoma town charged eastward Wednesday, spawning tornado warnings near the East Coast while heavy snow struck the Midwest and dry, windy weather fanned wildfires in Texas.

Meanwhile, forecasters warned that a Pacific storm was expected to bring widespread rain and mountain snow across California and other parts of the West through Friday. California Gov Gavin Newsom warned on the social platform X that the storm could bring another round of debris flow in the areas left barren by recent wildfires.

Tornado warnings were issued in the Carolinas, Florida and Virginia. Officials in Union County, North Carolina, said in a social media post that the US National Weather Service confirmed an EF1 tornado touched down in the Unionville area. (AP)

Suspension a 'pause': CIA Director Ratcliffe

Trump administration pauses flow of intelligence to Ukraine

WASHINGTON, March 6. (AP): The US has paused its intelligence sharing with Ukraine, cutting off the flow of vital information that has helped the war-torn nation target Russian invaders, but Trump administration officials said Wednesday that positive talks between Washington and Kyiv mean it may only be a short suspension.

Information about Russia's intentions and military movements has been critical to Ukraine's defense and a strong indication of support from the US and other Western allies. The suspension comes after Trump paused military aid to Ukraine and is another sign of how he has transformed America's relationship with close allies.

"We have taken a step back and are pausing and reviewing all aspects of this relationship," national security adviser Mike Waltz said Wednesday.

Comments from top Trump administration officials suggest the decision is part of the broader negotiations between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to negotiate a peace deal with Russia, and that intelligence could begin flowing to Ukraine again soon.

CIA Director John Ratcliffe called the suspension a "pause" and said it came after the disastrous meeting between Trump and Zelenskyy in the Oval Office last week. Ratcliffe said Trump wanted to know that Zelenskyy was serious about peace.

"On the military front and the intelligence front, the pause that allowed that to happen will go away, and I think we'll work shoulder to shoulder



Ukrainian serviceman prepares to fire a M777 howitzer towards Russian positions at the frontline near Donetsk, Ukraine on March 3. (AP)

with Ukraine as we have," Ratcliffe said.

U.S. intelligence assistance is vital for Ukraine to track Russian troop movements and select targets. Ukrainians use the information when operating U.S.-supplied High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, or HIMARS, and the US Army Tactical Missile System, known as ATACMS.

Intelligence from the U.S. and other allies also helps Ukraine prepare for Russian attacks, and supplied critical information in the war's early days that allowed Ukraine to thwart Russian President Vladimir Putin's hopes for a quick victory.

The CIA declined to respond to questions about the change in intelligence sharing.

Ukraine could soon be receiving intelligence from the US once Zelenskyy shows to Trump he is serious about participating in talks on Trump's terms, Waltz said on Fox News Channel's "Fox & Friends."

"I think if we can nail down these negotiations and move towards these negotiations and, in fact, put some confidence building measures on the table, then the president will take a hard look at lifting this pause," he said. "We have to know that both sides are sincerely negotiating towards a partial,

then permanent, peace."

The moves by the new administration have dismayed leaders in Europe and Democrats in Washington, who say Trump is depriving a key American ally of assistance they need to fight Russia.

The flow of information to Ukraine has saved lives, US Rep Jim Himes of Connecticut, the top-ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said Wednesday.

"The idea that we will now withhold life-saving intelligence from Ukrainians who are fighting and dying is unforgivable," Himes said.

Officials in Ukraine declined to comment Wednesday on the country's intelligence sharing relationship with Washington. CIA officials also declined to respond to questions.

It's unclear whether the American suspension affects the intelligence sharing ties between Ukraine and other Western powers, including four of the Five Eyes, an intelligence sharing coalition of the U.S., Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's spokesman, Dave Pares, would not confirm whether the U.K. is still supplying Ukraine with intelligence from the United States.

He said Britain was "will do everything to put Ukraine in the strongest possible position across all aspects of our support, particularly around defense and security, and our position hasn't changed."

Women's rights under attack 30 years after leaders adopted blueprint for equality: UN

UNITED NATIONS, March 6. (AP): Thirty years after world leaders adopted a historic blueprint to achieve gender equality, a new United Nations report says women's and girls' rights are under attack and gender discrimination remains deeply embedded in economies and societies.

The report released Thursday by the UN agency focused on women's rights and gender equality found that nearly one-quarter of governments worldwide reported a backlash to women's rights last year.

Despite some progress, including on girls' education and access to family planning, UN Women said a woman or girl is killed every 10 minutes by a partner or family member and that cases of conflict-related sexual violence have increased by 50% since 2022. The report, released ahead of International Women's Day on Saturday, also noted that only 87 countries have ever been led by a woman.

"Globally, women's human rights are under attack," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a statement. "Instead of mainstreaming equal rights, we're seeing the mainstreaming of misogyny."



Flags fly outside the United Nations headquarters on Sept 28, 2019. (AP)

He said the world must stand firm "in making human rights, equality and empowerment a reality for all women and girls, for everyone, everywhere."

The 189 countries that attended a 1995 Beijing women's conference adopted a landmark declaration and 150-page platform for action to achieve gender equality, calling for bold action in 12 areas, including combating poverty and gender-

based violence and putting women at top levels in business, government and at peacemaking tables.

It also said for the first time in a U.N. document that human rights include the right of women to control and decide "on matters relating to their sexuality, including their sexual and reproductive health, free of discrimination, coercion and violence."



Riot police use tear gas against protesters during a rally, after the Greek opposition parties have challenged the country's center-right government with a censure motion in parliament over a devastating rail disaster nearly two years ago, in Athens on March 5. (AP)

Protests turn violent as Greece gov battles censure motion over crash

Protesters launched gasoline bombs and fireworks in clashes with police outside Greece's parliament late Wednesday, in renewed nationwide protests calling for politicians to be held accountable for a 2023 rail disaster that claimed 57 lives.

Scores of youths set fire to trash bins in Syntagma Square in central Athens, and police in riot gear responded with tear gas and baton charges. There were no immediate reports of injuries or arrests.

The fierce clashes erupted hours

after opposition parties challenged Greece's center-right government with a no-confidence motion in parliament. Days earlier, a general strike and much larger protests, some violent, marked the second anniversary of the Feb. 28, 2023, tragedy. (AP)

INTERNATIONAL

Seoul and Washington to begin annual military drills next week

South Korean fighter jets accidentally drop bombs, injuring 8

SEOUL, South Korea, March 6, (AP): Two South Korean fighter jets accidentally dropped eight bombs on a civilian area during a joint live-fire exercise with the U.S. military Thursday, injuring eight people, officials said.

The MK-82 bombs released by the KF-16 fighter jets fell outside a firing range, causing civilian damage, the air force said in a statement.

The air force said it will establish a committee to investigate why the accident happened and examine the scale of the civilian damage. It said the fighter jets were taking part in the one-day firing drill with the U.S. military.

An unidentified air force official told local reporters that a pilot of one of the KF-16s put in a wrong coordinate for a bombing site. An unidentified Defense Ministry official also told reporters that more investigation was needed to find why the second KF-16 also dropped bombs on a civilian area.

The contents of the officials' briefing were shared with foreign media.

The air force apologized and expressed hopes for a speedy recovery of the injured people. It said it will actively offer compensation and take other necessary steps.



South Korean military investigators examine at the site where a South Korean fighter jet accidentally dropped bombs on a civilian area during training, in Pocheon, South Korea on March 6. (AP)

The accident happened in Pocheon, a city close to the heavily armed border with North Korea.

In a televised briefing, Pocheon Mayor Paek Young-hyun called the bombings "awful" and urged the mili-

tary to halt drills in the city until it formulates reliable steps that can prevent a recurrence. He said that Pocheon, a city of 140,000 people, provides three major firing ranges for the South Korean and U.S. militaries.

The military later said it has decided to suspend all live-fire drills across South Korea. Observers say the military will resume firing exercises after it learns the exact cause of Thursday's accident and maps out steps to prevent recurrences.

Also:

SEOUL: South Korean and US troops will begin their large annual joint military drills next week to enhance their readiness against North Korean threats, the South Korean military said Thursday, days after North Korea threatened high-profile provocations against what it called escalating US-led aggression.

The South Korean and US forces will take part in the Freedom Shield exercise, a computer-simulated command post training, and related field exercises from Monday to March 20, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff in a statement.

The statement said the Freedom Shield exercise will involve responses to evolving challenges like North Korea's growing military partnership with Russia.

North Korea views major South Korean-US military training as an invasion rehearsal and often responds with missile tests and fiery rhetoric.

NZ's most senior diplomat in London loses job over remarks about Trump

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, March 6, (AP): New Zealand's most senior envoy to the United Kingdom has lost his job over remarks he made about US President Donald Trump at an event in London this week, New Zealand's foreign minister said Thursday.

Phil Goff, who is New Zealand's High Commissioner to the UK, made the comments at an event held by the international affairs think tank Chatham House in London on Tuesday.

Goff asked a question from the audience of the guest speaker, Finland's Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen, in which he said he had been re-reading a famous speech by former British wartime leader Winston Churchill from 1938, when Churchill was a lawmaker in the government of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain.

Churchill's speech rebuked Britain's signing of the Munich Agreement with Adolf Hitler, allowing Germany to annex part of Czechoslovakia. Goff quoted Churchill as saying to Chamberlain, "You had the choice between



Then-Auckland Mayor Phil Goff talks to the media in Auckland, New Zealand on June 16, 2021. (AP)

war and dishonor. You chose dishonor, yet you will have war."

Goff then asked Valtonen: "President Trump has restored the bust of Churchill to the Oval Office. But do you think he really understands history?"

'Greatest external threat actually is Chinese aggression'

Philippine defense chief warns allies will fight if China restricts flights over sea

MANILA, Philippines, March 6, (AP): The Philippines and its security allies would take measures to counter any attempt by China to impose an air defense zone or restrict freedom of flights over the South China Sea, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said Wednesday, following confrontations between Chinese aircraft and those of his country, Australia and the United States.

Teodoro told The Associated Press in an interview that China's increasing aggression in the disputed waters was now considered the greatest threat to the national security of the Philippines and should also be regarded as a global threat because it could choke a key trade route crucial for global supply chains.

"The greatest external threat actually is Chinese aggression, Chinese expansionism and the attempt by China to change the international law through the use of force or acquiescence... or its attempt to reshape the world order to one that it controls," Teodoro said.

There was no immediate reaction by Chinese officials.

Confrontations over the strategic waterway, which Beijing claims almost in its entirety, have spiked between Chinese and Philippine coast

guard and navy forces in the last two years. The long-seething territorial standoffs over the hotly-disputed shoals also involve Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

Recent brushes involving Chinese military aircraft firing warning flares or flying dangerously close to drive away US, Australian and Philippine patrol aircraft have set off fresh alarms.

Teodoro said defense officials have discussed the possibility of China imposing a so-called Air Defense Identification Zone or any exclusion zone to restrict foreign aircraft movement in what Beijing regards as its airspace over the South China Sea.

"That is a very serious transgression of international law, which will demand our response," said Teodoro, a US-educated lawyer and a licensed commercial pilot.

"The Philippines will take a combination of measures singularly and with like-minded nations to counteract" any such action by China, he said. "We have formulated contingency measures to respond or to have proper courses of action." He did not elaborate.

Last month, a Chinese navy helicopter flew within 10 feet (3 meters) of a Philippine patrol turbo-prop plane it warned had encroached in what Bei-



Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro answers questions during an interview with the Associated Press at the Department of National Defense headquarters in Quezon city, Philippines on March 5. (AP)

jing calls its airspace over the disputed Scarborough Shoal, prompting the Filipino pilot to warn by radio: "You are flying too close, you are very dangerous."

An AP journalist and other invited foreign media on the plane witnessed the tense 30-minute standoff as the

Philippine plane pressed on with its low-altitude patrol around Scarborough with the Chinese navy helicopter hovering close above it or flying to its left in cloudy weather.

The Chinese military, referring to Scarborough Shoal by its Chinese name, said at the time that the plane

had "illegally entered the airspace of China's Huangyan Island without the Chinese government's permission."

Australia separately protested last month after accusing a Chinese J-16 fighter jet of firing flares that passed within 30 meters (100 feet) of an Australian P-8 Poseidon surveillance jet in daylight and in international air space over the disputed waters.

China's foreign ministry responded by accusing the Australian military aircraft of "deliberately" intruding into what it called Chinese airspace over the disputed Paracel Islands.

The U.S. military has also reported encountering such dangerous maneuvers by Chinese air force aircraft in the past over the disputed waters, where it has deployed fighter jets and navy ships to promote freedom of navigation and overflight.

In 2013, the Chinese Defense Ministry announced that it has set an Air Defense Identification Zone over the East China Sea that covers the airspace above a chain of islands disputed by China and Japan.

Beijing then issued a set of rules for the zone, saying all aircraft must notify Chinese authorities and are subject to emergency military measures if they

do not identify themselves or obey orders from Beijing.

Japan, the United States, Australia, South Korea and other countries ignored China's declared air defense zone and rules.

Teodoro said blocs of security alliances among Asian and Western countries, including the Philippines, the US, Japan and Australia, have emerged and could band together in a broader coalition in the future against China's aggression.

China has accused the US along with its treaty allies of "ganging up" against Beijing and threatening regional security and harmony.

But Teodoro said "it is China's own behavior that is the best motive for like-minded countries to band together because what it is doing is entirely unacceptable to a majority of the countries in the Indo-Pacific."

Despite concerns over President Donald Trump's moves to roll back US security aid to allies worldwide, Teodoro was confident the Philippines' long treaty alliance with the US would continue.

"The Philippines has a truly unique relationship with the United States," he said, adding that the decades-old alliance has "stood the test of time."



A cargo ship sails next to the Panama Canal's Balboa port in Panama City on Feb 1. (AP)

Panama's President Mulino calls Trump's talk of 'reclaiming' Panama Canal a lie

PANAMA CITY, March 6, (AP): Panama President José Raúl Mulino on Wednesday accused US President Donald Trump of lying when he said in his address to Congress that his administration was "reclaiming" the Panama Canal.

Trump was referencing a deal announced Tuesday for a consortium led by the US investment management company BlackRock Inc. to buy a controlling stake in the company held by a Chinese group that operates ports at both ends of the Panama Canal.

Panama maintains that it has full control over the canal and that the Hong Kong-based group's operation of the ports did not amount to Chinese control over the waterway, and that therefore the sale to a US-based company would not represent any US "reclaiming" of the canal. Panama's government on Tuesday called the sale

a private transaction.

Mulino in a message posted to X on Wednesday, rejected that the deal came about because of US pressure. "I reject in the name of Panama and all Panamanians this new affront to the truth and our dignity as a nation," he wrote. He accused Trump of "lying again."

Trump has talked about retaking the Panama Canal since his campaign, arguing that the US should have never turned control over to the Panamanians and that the US was being overcharged for using it.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met with Mulino in early February and insisted that China was exerting influence over the canal's operations. The focus was the Chinese consortium running the ports. Panama rejected that China had any influence over canal operations.

"Cooperation between our governments passes through clear understand-

ings in terms of issues of mutual interest," Mulino wrote. "It doesn't have anything to do with 'reclaiming the canal' nor with tarnishing our national sovereignty."

In a filing, CK Hutchison Holding said Tuesday that it would sell all shares in Hutchison Port Holdings and in Hutchison Port Group Holdings to the BlackRock consortium in a deal valued at nearly \$23 billion, including \$5 billion in debt.

The deal has to be approved by Panama's government.

The United States built the canal in the early 1900s as it looked for ways to facilitate the transit of commercial and military vessels between its coasts. Washington relinquished control of the waterway to Panama on Dec 31, 1999, under a treaty signed in 1977 by President Jimmy Carter. Trump has claimed that Carter "foolishly" gave the canal away.

Top Hong Kong court overturns convictions of 3 former organizers of Tiananmen vigils

HONG KONG, March 6, (AP): Hong Kong's top court on Thursday overturned the convictions of three former organizers of an annual vigil in remembrance of the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown over their refusal to provide information to police, marking a rare victory for the city's pro-democracy activists.

Chow Hang-tung, Tang Ngok-kwan and Tsui Hon-kwong - core members of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China - were convicted in 2023 during Beijing's crackdown on the city's pro-democracy movement. They received a sentence of 4 1/2 months and have already served their terms.

The alliance was long known for organizing candlelight vigils in the city on the anniversary of the Chinese military's crushing of the 1989 pro-democracy protests in Beijing. But it voted to disband in 2021 under the shadow of a sweeping national security law imposed by China.

Critics said the shutdown and the case showed that the city's Western-style civil liberties were shrinking despite promises they would be kept intact when the former British colony returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

Before the group dissolved, police had sought details about its operations and finances in connection with alleged links to pro-democracy groups overseas, accusing it of being a foreign agent. But the group refused to cooperate, insisting it was not.

On Thursday, judges at the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal unani-



Tang Ngok-kwan, (center), one of core members of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, and Medina Chow Lau Wah-chun, (left), mother of Chow Hang-tung, also core member, leave the Court of Final Appeal in Hong Kong on March 6. (AP)

mously ruled in the trio's favor. Chief Justice Andrew Cheung announced the decision in court.

The prosecution needed to prove that the alliance was a foreign agent, the judges wrote, adding that the lower courts "fell into error" in holding that it was sufficient merely that the police commissioner said he had reasonable grounds to believe the alliance was a foreign agent.

In their appeal, the appellants also took issue with crucial details that were redacted, including the names of groups that were alleged to have links with the alliance.

The top court's judges ruled that by redacting the only potential evidential basis for establishing that the alliance was a foreign agent, the prosecution disabled itself from proving its case.

"Non-disclosure of the redacted facts in any event deprived the appellants of a fair trial so that their convictions involved a miscarriage of justice," they wrote. After the ruling, Tang told reporters outside the court that he hoped the top court's ruling proved that the alliance was not a foreign agent and that in the future they could prove that the 1989 movement was not a counter-revolutionary riot.

Buenos Aires power outage leaves over 600,000 customers without electricity

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, March 6, (AP): A power failure in Buenos Aires left hundreds of thousands of customers without electricity, shutting off traffic lights, stranding subway passengers and testing the Argentine capi-

tal's electric grid for the second time in 24 hours during a sizzling summer heat wave.

The blackout began Wednesday at 12:40 pm with the sudden failure of a high-voltage power line and hit over

622,000 customers mere hours after officials had restored service from an early morning outage, the Secretariat of Energy said.

The power failure, coming as a heat wave ramped up electricity usage and strained the city's power supply, knocked several substations offline, according to Edesur, an electricity company in Argentina that serves parts of Buenos Aires and its suburbs. It said its technicians were racing to restore power.

The heat index, which takes humidity into account, climbed to 42 Celsius (107.6 Fahrenheit) on Wednesday.

Municipal authorities reported that the outage suspended subway service on all lines in both directions and darkened 50 stoplights, causing chaos in central and southern Buenos Aires that forced the deployment of hundreds of traffic cops.

Later Wednesday afternoon, service resumed on all but two train lines, the capital's subway franchisee said. Officers rescued people temporarily trapped in elevators. Pedestrians were left broiling on sidewalks downtown, unable to cross the traffic-snarled main thoroughfare of Avenida 9 de Julio.



A police officer patrols the entrance of the Toussaint Louverture International Airport, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Nov 12, 2024. (AP)

Airport in southwestern Haiti ready for international flights

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, March 6, (AP): An airport in southwestern Haiti is ready to receive international flights for the first time, officials said Wednesday, adding a safer option for commercial airlines that have halted all flights to the main airport in Port-au-Prince, where gang violence persists.

The Antoine Simon Airport in the coastal city of Les Cayes, named after a Haitian president who led a rebellion in the early 1900s, operated for almost two decades before renovations began in 2013 to extend its runway.

It is now Haiti's third international airport, a development that is expected to boost the local economy and provide a new way for some nonprofits to distribute sorely needed aid.



A worker sits inside a dark store affected by a power outage in Buenos Aires, Argentina on March 5. (AP)

US dollar settles at KD 0.308

KUWAIT CITY, March 6, (KUNA): The US dollar exchange rate against the Kuwaiti dinar settled at KD 0.308 on Thursday and the euro rose by 1.62 percent to reach KD 0.323, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said.

The CBK added in its online daily bulletin that

the exchange rate of the pound sterling moved up by 0.79 percent to KD 0.397, also the Swiss franc by 0.26 percent settling at KD 0.345 and the Japanese yen firmed lower than KD 0.002.

Exchange rates declared by the CBK reflect average prices and not rates of actual transactions.

Business



CEO Nawaf Al-Gharabally with Zain's team at the Iftar hall.



The initiative runs daily throughout the Holy Month.

Initiative continues for 18th year with 40K meals served throughout holy month

Zain welcomes fasting individuals with daily iftar meals

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: From the first day of Ramadan, Zain's annual Iftar initiative has once again commenced, marking its 18th consecutive year. The initiative welcomes fasting individuals daily at Manahi Al-Dawas Hall in Jileeb Al-Shuyoukh, providing 40,000 meals throughout the Holy Month.

The Iftar initiative is a cornerstone of Zain's annual Ramadan campaign, Zain Alshuhoor, where the company serves daily Iftar meals to fasting individuals. Additionally, in collaboration with its strategic partner, the Kuwait Food Bank, Zain distributes meals through a fleet of dedicated trucks that travel across the country.

Zain's team plays a hands-on role in managing and organizing the initiative, supported by the Zain Alshuhoor volunteer team, which consists of employees from various departments. Their participation reflects Zain's deep commitment to meaningful community engagement.

Zain recently kicked off its annual Zain Alshuhoor campaign with the Ramadan Food Baskets initiative, providing essential food supplies to underprivileged families and individuals. The initiative was carried out in collaboration with Zain's strategic partners, including the Social Care Centers of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Kuwait Food Bank.

The food baskets were distributed to the Social Care Centers, benefiting residents such as family care children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Additionally, the Kuwait Food Bank ensured that these baskets reached underprivileged families and individuals across various regions of Kuwait.

Year after year, Zain Alshuhoor continues to evolve and expand its programs, embodying the spirit of generosity that defines Ramadan. Through this campaign, Zain upholds the deeply rooted values of the Kuwaiti people – offering support to those in need and fostering a culture of compassion, love, and peace.

Kuwaiti banks' industrial financing reaches KD 120 million in January

Yearly increase in industrial financing despite January decline

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The value of local banks' financing for the industrial sector, for both residents and non-residents, decreased by 19 percent in January to a total of KD 28.3 million. As a result, financing in January 2025 amounted to KD 120 million, down from KD 148.3 million in December 2024.

On an annual basis, financing saw an increase of KD 2.2 million (1.8 percent), with the value standing at KD 117.8 million in December 2023.

The total financing provided by banks for the industrial sector in 2024 reached approximately KD 1.2 billion. The highest level of financing in 2024 occurred in October with a total of KD 257.9 million, followed by August with KD 118.7 mil-

lion. The lowest level was recorded in April, with KD 25.3 million.

The accumulated balance of industry financing provided by local banks increased by KD 23 million on a monthly basis in January, rising by 0.8 percent from KD 2.741 billion in December 2024 to KD 2.764 billion in January 2025.

On an annual basis, the balance grew by 2.9 percent, an increase of KD 78 million, up from KD 2.686 billion in January 2023. Total bank financing for the industrial sector in 2024 amounted to approximately KD 1.2 billion.

However, the total monthly financing provided by local banks to the industrial sector during the fiscal year 2023 decreased by 31 percent, or KD 466 million, dropping from KD 1.499 billion at the end of 2022 to KD 1.033 billion in 2023. Financing for the industrial sector peaked in December 2023, reaching KD 198.9 million.

The industry has faced many challenges in the last three years, as it was one of the sectors most negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The sector struggled with the ban on company activities, and the multiple disruptions in the supply

chain and production. The decline in demand and the limited number of new projects in the country further exacerbated the situation.

These challenges have had a considerable impact on local industrial projects, which was clearly reflected in the decline in financing received by the sector in 2023 compared to 2022.

Among the most important challenges facing the sector are the lack of developed industrial plots for new projects, bureaucratic delays in completing industrial transactions, insufficient support for national products, limited facilities for exporting Kuwaiti products, continued reliance on imported goods, and high factory rental prices.

Data from the Central Bank of Kuwait revealed that the volume of deposits in local banks increased by 648 million dinars, or 1.2 percent, in January 2025, reaching KD 53.823 billion, compared to KD 53.175 billion in December 2024.

Government deposits, however, decreased by KD 100 million, or 1.9 percent, to reach KD 4.983 billion, down from KD 5.083 billion in December 2024.

Brent & WTI crude prices drop

Oil price rises to \$74.20 pb

KUWAIT CITY, March 6, (KUNA): Kuwait oil price rose by USD 1.01 to reach USD 74.20 per barrel on Wednesday via a vis USD 73.19 pb on Tuesday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation said on Thursday.

In international markets, forwards of the Brent crude oil dropped by USD 1.74 to reach USD 69.30 pb, and those of the West Texas Intermediate crude also fell by USD 1.95 to settle at USD 66.31 a barrel.



Diraya logo

'Avoid clicking suspicious links'

NBK educates customers on online shopping fraud risks

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: In line with its unwavering commitment to fostering financial literacy and empowering all segments of society, NBK continues to bolster its support for the "Let's Be Aware" banking awareness campaign. Spearheaded by the Central Bank of Kuwait in collaboration with local banks and Kuwait Banking Association (KBA).

As part of its commitment to customer protection, NBK is actively educating the public about fraudulent online shopping offers, often promoted through social media. These scams typically feature links to fake applications or websites that lure victims with enticing discounts and promotions.

Designed to mimic legitimate platforms, these fraudulent sites deceive users into providing sensitive personal and banking details – such as account and credit card numbers – ultimately compromising their financial security. NBK urges customers to remain vigilant and avoid engaging with suspicious links, reinforcing its dedication to safeguarding the community from cyber threats.

NBK advises customers to exercise caution and avoid being misled by deceptive shopping deals that promise steep discounts. The bank emphasizes the importance of verifying website URLs and refraining from clicking on links from unknown sources – especially those received via email that advertise offers that appear too good to be true.

Furthermore, NBK cautions customers about the risks of saving credit card details on e-commerce websites or browsers for faster future transactions. The bank highlights that such platforms are susceptible to security breaches, potentially exposing stored banking data to theft.

The Bank also emphasizes that it will never request personal information via email, text messages, or phone calls. Additionally, NBK warns customers against responding to such messages, as they are often fraudulent attempts to steal banking credentials, sensitive data, or funds.

NBK remains vigilant in monitoring emerging fraud tactics, educating customers, and providing clear guidance on how to stay protected. Through comprehensive awareness materials shared across its digital platforms, the

- The Bank continuously monitors emerging fraud tactics and educates customers on effective prevention measures
- NBK strengthens its awareness initiatives across all digital platforms to maximize the campaign's reach and impact

bank continuously emphasizes the importance of engaging only with trusted links and avoiding interactions with unidentified sources.

Harnessing its vast communication capabilities, NBK utilizes all its digital channels – boasting the largest following among Kuwaiti banks – to ensure the widest dissemination of the campaign's messages, effectively reaching the largest possible audience.

Led by the Central Bank of Kuwait in partnership with Kuwait Banking Association, "Let's Be Aware" stands as the region's most comprehensive financial literacy campaign. Aimed at empowering bank customers, the initiative delivers essential education on critical financial topics. Key focus areas include practical steps to prevent fraud, strategies for maximizing banking services, and fostering a strong culture of savings and investment. By equipping individuals with the knowledge and tools to make informed financial decisions, the campaign strengthens financial security and resilience across Kuwait's banking sector.

As a leading financial institution in Kuwait and the region, NBK remains a key supporter of the Central Bank of Kuwait's initiatives aimed at enhancing financial literacy and promoting banking awareness across all segments of society. The bank actively organizes various educational events to keep the community informed about critical banking issues while also investing in specialized training programs for its employees. By strengthening expertise in fraud prevention and financial crime mitigation, NBK reinforces its commitment to safeguarding customers and upholding the integrity of the financial sector.

Main market index slips 0.31%

Boursa Kuwait closes in red, general index down 0.57%

KUWAIT CITY, March 6, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Thursday's trading session in the red, with the general index dropping 46.87 points (0.57%) to 8,119.35 points. Trading volume reached 344.3 million shares through 18,215 transactions worth 96.6 million Kuwaiti dinars (approx. \$297.5 million).

The Main Market Index slipped 23.41 points (0.31%) to 7,544.88 points, with 184.4 million shares traded in 7,568 transactions valued at 35.9 million

dinars (\$110.5 million).

The Premier Market Index declined 55.09 points (0.63%) to 8,663.67 points, as 159.9 million shares changed hands through 10,647 transactions worth 60.6 million dinars (\$186.6 million).

Meanwhile, the Major 50 Index fell 28.81 points (0.39%) to 7,364.12 points, with 162.5 million shares traded in 6,078 transactions totaling 33.9 million dinars (\$104.4 million).

Bank participated in Kuwait Sustainability Event

KFH demonstrates its pioneering role in sustainability

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: In line with its leadership in environmental efforts, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has participated in the 4th Kuwait Sustainability Event.

KFH Executive Manager Corporate Relations and CSR, Faisal Alsurayye, said that KFH's participation reflects its commitment to promoting sustainability and environmental preservation. It also aligns with KFH's (Keep It Green) campaign, which encompasses a variety of environmental initiatives including the participation in KSE.

Alsurayye added that the event is one of the premier occasions in Kuwait, aimed at raising awareness on sustainability significance and enhancing efforts to achieve sustainable development goals in accordance with United Nations principles, and Kuwait Vision 2035. KFH has recently organized a three-day agricultural workshop specifically designed for children aged 5 to 10 years. The workshop aims to raise awareness on the importance of preserving the environment and encourage interest in agriculture.

He pointed out that the workshop received a positive response from participating children. Additionally, their parents highlighted the significance of hosting such activities which develop children's skills and help raise an environmentally aware generation through various available means, including agriculture.

In recognition of its efforts in social responsibility and sustainability, KFH received world-class accolades. These include the Corporate Social Responsibility award from EMEA Finance,



Faisal Alsurayye with Kuwait Finance House team at the bank's booth in the Sustainability Exhibition.

Best Bank for ESG in Kuwait by Euromoney, and Kuwait's Best Bank for Sustainable Finance from Global Finance.

Additionally, the KFH was awarded an "A" rating by MSCI for its exemplary performance

in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices.

Moreover, KFH was included in the FTSE-4Good Index Series, highlighting its excellence in sustainability for 2024.

ABK reports KD 52.4 mln net profit, up from KD 45.2 mln in 2023

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait Group holds EOY 2024 analyst conference call

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently hosted its EOY 2024 analyst conference attended by Abdulla Al Sumait, Acting Group Chief Executive Officer; Shiamak Soonawalla, Group Chief Finance Officer; Abdulaziz Jawad, Chief Strategy Officer; and Osama Ezzeldin, Assistant General Manager of Strategy and Follow Up.

Strategic Accomplishments

On this occasion, Al Sumait said, "Let me start by highlighting our financial performance. We are proud to report an increase in net profit attributable to shareholders, rising from KD 45.2 million in 2023, to KD 52.4 million in 2024. In addition, Earnings Per Share also grew by 17%, from 18 fils to 21 fils and our Capital Adequacy Ratio has increased to 16.94% in 2024 from 16.74% in 2023."

He added that, over the year, ABK has selectively grown its loan portfolio by 13% year-on-year, with quality being its utmost priority evident in an NPL ratio of 1.23% compared to 1.33% in last year.

"Our extensive footprint drives revenue growth, efficient loan distribution, and strong deposit acquisition with our international operations, including our UAE branches and ABK-Egypt, contributing 45% of our operating income and 34% of our assets, highlighting their contribution to our success," elaborated Al Sumait.

He further emphasized that ABK's solid performance in 2024 was the result of careful planning, close coordination and cooperation between our business lines across the Group, introduction of new products and services culminating in a successful execution of our strategy. He highlighted, "During the year, ABK launched innovative offerings catering to Youth, Elite and SME segments, including upgrading the A+ youth offering, improved our credit card offering with 3 new credit cards and offering to SMEs with Al-Tajer Plus. Our latest milestone was the launch of ABK's all-new mobile banking in January 2025. This innovative platform delivers unmatched convenience, security and efficiency in banking."

Al Sumait closed, "Looking forward to 2025, we are steadfast in pursuing our long-term vision, focusing on strategic expansion and capitalizing on growth opportunities across regional and local markets. We will continue to uphold the highest standards of excellence and deliver innovative, world-class solutions to our customers."

Excellent Performance

On his part, Soonawalla said, "I am proud to announce another year of outstanding financial performance, with a net profit attributable to shareholders of KD 52.4 million, reflecting an impressive 16% increase in profitability compared to



Abdulla Alsumait, Acting Group CEO



Shiamak Soonawalla, Group Chief Finance Officer



Abdulaziz Jawad, Chief Strategy Officer

the prior year. Additionally, earnings per share for 2024 stood at 21 fils, representing a 17% growth compared to the 18-fils reported in the prior year. Moreover, ABK's operating income of KD 200.75 million and operating profit of KD 107.41 million, reflect our strong performance and effective execution of strategic initiatives."

From a risk management and stability perspective, the Group non-performing loan (NPL) ratio stood at 1.23% vs. 1.33%, while the Group loan loss coverage ratio remains exceptionally strong at 460% vs. 445% year-on-year. Furthermore, ABK continues to hold provisions amounting to KD 204 million, which exceeds the requirements set forth by IFRS 9 according to Central Bank of Kuwait guidelines.

Soonawalla added, "We continued to maintain our net interest margin at 2.1% levels, stabilizing our earnings. Analyzing the key drivers of performance, the Group achieved a 9% increase in total operating income compared to the previous year. Additionally, our Return on Average Equity (ROAE) increased to 8.4% from 6.8%, a 24% year-on-year improvement. These achievements underscore our profitability and ability to deliver strong returns to our shareholders."

ABK's liquidity position remains exceptionally robust, supported by a net stable funding ratio of 109% and a liquidity coverage ratio of 281%. Additionally, its balance sheet is underpinned by customer deposits amounting to KD 4.4 billion, which represents 67% of total liabilities.

"Our total interest income for 2024 reached KD 471.4 million, marking a significant year-on-year increase of KD 58 million, or 14%. This growth was primarily driven by increased asset levels and a favorable interest rate environment. Fees and commissions delivered a strong performance, contributing KD 37.1 million, reflecting a 6% increase compared to 2023. This consistent growth reflects the Group's ability to capitalize on core banking services and leverage diversified income streams, highlighting continued

momentum in transaction-based income and an expanding client base," explained Soonawalla.

Furthermore, ABK's 11% increase in net operating profit demonstrates robust business performance and improved efficiency. The major contributions to operating income of KD 200.75 million for the year came from Commercial Banking (48%), Retail Banking (37%) and Treasury and Investments (15%). Our asset allocation reflects 57% in Commercial Banking, 12% in Retail and 31% in Treasury and Investments.

The Group's steadfast commitment to excellence is evident through continuous investment in key business initiatives, digital transformation, and process optimization. "These investments continue to enhance operational efficiency, reduce operating costs, and sustain long-term profitability. This is evident in ABK's cost-to-income ratio of 46.5% as of 2024 vs. 47.5% recorded in 2023," emphasized Soonawalla.

As of 2024, the Group's total assets expanded to KD 7.4 billion from KD 6.3 billion, reflecting robust growth of 17% year-on-year. Net loans and advances grew by 13%, rising from KD 4.3 billion in 2023 to KD 4.8 billion in 2024.

Soonawalla summarized, "Our 2024 financial performance highlights robust loan growth, improved credit risk management, and a strengthened balance sheet, ensuring sustainable financial performance, adequate liquidity and a resilient capital position to support future expansion. With this strong foundation and strategic focus, we remain favorably placed to continue



ABK Logo

to create enduring value for our investors."

The International Economy

Discussing the global economy, Jawad stated, "The global economy continues to experience fluidity and volatility, which will most certainly have an impact on global growth projections. In its January 2025 world economic outlook update, the IMF projects a 3.3% growth for 2025, which is marginally higher than its 3.2% projection back in October."

Jawad emphasized that, Kuwait in specific is projected to witness a major transformation in its economic growth as the IMF forecasts an economic expansion of 3.3% in 2025, 50 bps higher than the previous forecast. Furthermore, the Kuwaiti economy is expecting two milestones which will have a seismic impact on economic activities, namely the public debt law and the mortgage law, which are both anticipated in the near future.

Jawad added that despite the challenging global macroeconomic environment of 2024, ABK has successfully navigated its path to solid results. "ABK Kuwait's strategic focus on salaried Kuwaitis and high-income expats has driven strong customer base and market share growth. For instance, our retail loan portfolio has experienced growth at double the pace of the market, while our credit cards' business has grown at close to double the market rate, supported by enhanced cross-selling to the existing base and new-to-bank customers," he said.

"Additionally, we have modernized our branch network, introducing a new branch concept in Jabriya, Salmiya, and Zahra, reinforcing our strategy to enhance the service quality across all customer touchpoints," Jawad highlighted.

ABK continues to enjoy strong credit ratings of 'A' from Fitch and 'A2' from Moody's, reflecting its solid financial position, prudent risk management and strategic long-term investments. Additionally, in Q4-2024, ABK received global recognition, securing eight prestigious awards.

Egypt and the UAE

Shifting the focus to Egypt, Jawad elaborated that the country is on track regarding the IMF program as it continues its economic reform program and is unlocking its economic potential in the MENA region.

In November 2024, Fitch upgraded Egypt's credit rating one notch from 'B-' to 'B,' citing stronger external finances, recovering FX buffers and greater confidence that the more flexible exchange rate policy will prove more durable than in the past. Notwithstanding the turmoil in the region, IMF estimates an economic growth of 3.6% for Egypt, on the back of a loosening of monetary policy and the resumption of Suez Canal flows. Having said that, robust tourist inflows have helped stabilize external balance and improve the country's net international reserves which hit a record USD 47.1 billion in December 2024.

Jawad stated, "ABK-Egypt continues to deliver on the successful execution of its strategy and further strengthen its presence in the country."

Last but not least, Jawad emphasized that 2024 was a stellar year for ABK-UAE and the Bank's DIFC presence, with sixteen syndicated loan transactions concluded during the year. The transactions' value crossed the USD 10 billion mark, spanning across various jurisdictions in the GCC, Europe and Asia.

Jawad reflected, "As communicated during our Q3-2024 earnings call, the hybrid pricing model for the UAE mortgage offering was in progress, and has now been successfully launched. This enables our valued customers to fix the mortgage interest rate for the initial year before moving on to market-derived floating rate. This thus offers customers the flexibility to lower their commitment in the initial year and manage their cashflow."

ESG

In what pertains to ESG, ABK is finalizing a number of crucial ESG milestones, which include the Sustainable Finance Framework to govern potential ESG issuances and loans, as well as the ESG Policy Framework to govern ABK's ESG performance. A 5th edition of our sustainability report is also in progress, where, among various outcomes, ABK aims to have a more comprehensive greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory, as well as expansions of our ESG Strategy via tools like an implementation plan (IP) and a monitoring & evaluation (M&E) framework.

Concluding his statement, Jawad said, "Looking ahead to 2025, ABK remains dedicated to executing its strategy effectively, fostering sustainable growth and long-term value for our shareholders."

Gross commercial borrowing projected at over \$620 billion

EMEA Emerging Markets' borrowings will remain close to peak at about \$624 bln

By S&P Global Ratings

Emerging markets in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) will together account for the smallest portion (about 5%) of commercial borrowing globally in 2025, despite the region containing the largest number of rated sovereigns (55). Of this, 24 sovereigns are in Sub-Saharan Africa, whose combined gross annual commercial borrowing is similar in size to the larger economies of Poland (\$95 billion) or Türkiye (\$84 billion); the region's funding requirements vary considerably.

Common through emerging EMEA's sub-regions, however, we expect the average fiscal deficit to reduce over 2025. But at 3.5% of GDP, these imbalances will still continue to prompt significant commercial borrowing.

In some of the region's larger economies, particularly in the Gulf, we expect continued issuance to help fund large economic diversification plans and to develop capital markets. While in less wealthy Sub-Saharan Africa, for whom commercial debt often comes at a high cost, we expect additional concessional bi and multilateral funding.

Although financing conditions could change, these factors, plus debt maturities at a similar level to last year, sit behind our expectation that gross commercial borrowing will be maintained at over US\$620 billion. As a result, we expect the total commercial debt stock to exceed US\$3.5 trillion by year end.

This year, the largest contributors to gross borrowing expectations relates to the combined reduction in borrowing from Israel and Saudi Arabia and a drop in Polish maturities. On the flip side, we expect higher deficit driven issuance from Egypt, a jump in South African amortization and market development related issuance from Abu Dhabi which (at 3.7% of GDP) we expect will run the highest surplus in the region.

2025 Borrowing expectations are concentrated in a few key markets

In aggregate terms, the 55 rated sovereigns we classify as emerging markets in the EMEA region borrow a similar amount of commercial debt as the 29 rated sovereigns in the Americas (excluding the U.S. and Canada). Commercial borrowing in both regions look set to reduce marginally over 2025 and we project the entirety of outstanding commercial debt will be quite similar by the end of the year, close to US\$3.5 trillion.

However, Mexico and Brazil's borrowing plans tend to dominate statistics in the Americas—together they make up 70% of our expected 2025 borrowing. While emerging EMEA is slightly less concentrated, the overall picture is typically dominated by patterns in the largest six borrowers, who together account for over 61% of 2025 our expected commercial borrowing; this is down from 65% in 2024.

Also important in our estimates is the average size of expected commercial borrowing. Excluding the largest six borrowers we expect the average amount will be about US\$4.8 billion, with over one-quarter borrowing US\$1 billion or less. Compared with the global average estimated borrowing of \$40 billion (excluding the U.S. and China) this illustrates a relatively nascent state of economic development and implies some commercial borrowing constraints. The region

has the largest stock of concessional lending globally, which mostly comprises Sub-Saharan Africa and Ukraine.

In 2025, the regional outlook is mainly driven by an expected reduction in borrowing by Israel but also to an extent by Saudi Arabia. Both governments borrowed significantly more in 2024 than their longer-run average; at nearly US\$60 billion, Saudi Arabia's 2024 borrowing was nearly 80% up on its 10-year average, and at US\$75 billion Israel's exceeded the same metric by 110%.

The combined reduction in 2025 projections therefore implies a reversion toward more normal but still-elevated levels of borrowing although the reasons behind each is different. Both projections also contain elements of significant potential variability.

In Israel, we premise our estimates on a reduced fiscal deficit (from 9% to 6% of GDP) and a US\$7 billion reduction in maturing debt. Our base case is for expenditure rationalization and tax-rate adjustments—though some uncertainty remains around the passage of these measures through the Knesset. We also acknowledge potential additional conflict-related and defense spending—the primary reason for the still-wide fiscal imbalance. Estimates do not include the potential for post-war reconstruction spending.

We expect Saudi Arabia to borrow slightly less this year because the government ramped up issuances in 2024 to pre-fund part of the 2025 fiscal deficit, and conducted a nearly US\$17 billion debt buyback and exchange exercise to extend upcoming maturities in 2025-2026 to 2031-2039. As a result, we expect a lower increase in net borrowing by 0.4% of GDP for 2025 despite a higher projected fiscal deficit.

However, we note that the Saudi government has exceeded its annual borrowing targets (announced at US\$37 billion for 2025) in recent years due to slightly wider-than-budgeted deficits and opportunistic issuances to pre-finance future maturities and to build reserves in the central bank. Broadly, we expect Saudi Arabia's borrowing to remain elevated while it progresses its economic transformation policy and projects under Vision 2030. In January, the government issued US\$12 billion in eurobonds and will likely issue more external debt over the course of the year, depending on market conditions.

While the country's fiscal revenues have diversified away from hydrocarbon receipts, they remain sensitive to oil price shocks which have the potential to increase borrowing. They also have a strong asset buffer to maintain counter-cyclical policy if required—on a gross basis we expect government debt of about 27% in 2025 and, on a net basis, an asset position in the region of 55% of GDP.

Generally, we expect wealthy Gulf states will take advantage of beneficial borrowing opportunities when required. To this end, we expect Abu Dhabi's issuance to increase by some US\$5 billion over 2025, as it seeks to continue developing its domestic market and maintain capital market presence.

Egypt's issuance is projected to increase by nearly US\$10 billion from 2024 levels, however this is more explained by Ras El-Hekma related inflows that year, which reduced financing needs. South Africa's US\$6.5 billion increase mostly relates to larger maturities.

Some fiscal brakes but debt still expanding for most

S&P Global Ratings projects that EMEA emerging markets will borrow about

3.7% of GDP on a net basis in 2025, similar to the 3.8% of GDP in 2024.

Underneath these figures, we project that the most meaningful fiscal consolidation, at the general government level, will be in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), reducing on average by nearly 0.4 percentage points (ppt) of GDP and just under 0.3 ppt of GDP respectively. Of course, there's a wide range of fiscal trajectories behind those averages; the chart below shows the sovereigns with the greatest projected changes to general government balances in 2025.

Although narrowing deficits contribute to the reduction in gross borrowing in 2025, we still expect the region's long-term commercial debt stock to reach nearly 40% of GDP in 2025, from 37% in 2024. This is the equivalent to over US\$3.5 trillion. Moreover, at US\$624 billion, 2025 gross long-term commercial borrowing will be almost the same as during the pandemic, which is over 50% higher than the average for the three years prior to 2020.

Somewhat limiting our expectations for commercial debt growth is our view that bilateral and multilateral lending will increase over 2025; this will mostly take the form of concessional loans to SSA sovereigns. The stock of this lending to emerging EMEA has increased sharply in the past few years and we expect it to reach nearly US\$722 billion by end-2025.

Ukraine has received a significant portion of this lending over the past few years and we project associated lending will increase to just over US\$37 billion in 2025 from US\$32.6 billion at end-2024 (see CEE bubble in chart). However, much more prominent in our expectations for 2025 is lending to SSA sovereigns, which we expect will receive about US\$8 billion in bi- and multilateral lending, mostly on concessional terms.

For SSA in particular, high debt-service costs and limited revenue-generating capacity both act as borrowing—and rating—constraints. We estimate the average fiscal revenue base as a proportion of GDP at about 19% in 2025, which is about 10% of GDP lower than the global average. This effectively limits many regional sovereigns' commercial debt-bearing capacity and, relatedly, determines a premium from market-based lenders, leading to a reliance on cheaper funding which can be slower to disburse.

Further, over the past 10 years, SSA's average revenue-to-GDP ratios have declined slightly, highlighting fundamental difficulties in raising revenues from economies with low per-capita incomes and limited foreign investment. Creating some uncertainty for our projections, recent suspensions of foreign assistance by the U.S. could—if not reinstated—lead to further borrowing to cover critical health- and food-related expenditures.

In Nigeria, under the Tinubu administration, a raft of reforms aimed to increase the country's revenue base is underway following measures to remove costly fuel subsidies and liberalize its exchange rate. The latter led to a substantial depreciation of the Naira, and consequently an increase in the country's debt/GDP burden because of a high proportion of foreign currency-denominated debt. However, if expenditure growth is contained, we believe these fiscal reforms will gradually reduce deficits, improving market access and lowering the cost of debt-servicing.

The largest robotics championship in Kuwait gathers over 800 students

Warba Bank honors winners of the Kuwait National Robotics Championship

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Warba Bank presented a special honor to the winners of the Kuwait National Robotics Championship, organized by Kuwait University, the Public Authority for Youth, and the Ministry of Education. The championship, the first of its kind on a national scale, brought together over 800 students from various educational levels, ranging from elementary school to university.

This initiative reflects Warba Bank's commitment to supporting education, fostering innovation and advancing technological and digital development in Kuwait, particularly among young generations. The bank firmly believes that empowering Kuwaiti talents is an investment in building a globally competitive generation capable of driving national progress and ensuring a more sustainable future.

Warba's Commitment to Youth and Technology

Speaking of the participation, Dr. Mohammad Barakat, Chief Marketing and Corporate Communications Officer at Warba Bank, stated: "At Warba Bank, we take pride in celebrating these outstanding students for their achievements in the Kuwait National Robotics Championship. This championship serves as an exceptional platform to inspire young minds, encouraging them to explore the realms of technology and innovation. It aligns with our strategic vision to invest in a promising future by equipping youth with essential skills in artificial intelligence, programming and robotics."

He added: "We believe that empowering young people today is an investment in tomorrow's leaders. Through strategic partnerships, we actively support initiatives that contribute to building a sustainable knowledge economy in alignment with Kuwait's Vision 2035. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to all participants and winners and express our gratitude to the organizing bodies for their dedication to making this national event a remarkable success."

Dr. Barakat further emphasized that Warba Bank is deeply committed to supporting youth and fostering technological innovation. Over the years, the bank has introduced various programs aimed at developing digital skills and nurturing the next generation of innovators.



Warba Bank presenting a special honor to the winners of the Kuwait National Robotics Championship, organized by Kuwait University, the Public Authority for Youth, and the Ministry of Education.

One notable initiative is the "Rowad Program", which provides Kuwaiti students studying abroad with hands-on experience in technology and innovation. This program is conducted in collaboration with leading international institutions, such as the Innovation Hub at the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC).

This initiative is part of Warba Bank's broader efforts to embed sustainability within its operations, focusing on implementing innovative solutions that contribute to a more sustainable future.

Four Main Competitions to Enhance Technical Skills
Spanning over four months, the Kuwait National Robotics Championship aimed to introduce students to the

world of robotics and strengthen their capabilities in programming, artificial intelligence, and automation. Through various competitions, students had the opportunity to hone their skills, develop innovative solutions, and prepare for a future shaped by digital and smart technologies.

The championship featured four specialized competitions, each covering a different aspect of robotics and AI technology:

■ **VEX Robotics:** A competition focused on programming and designing robots according to international standards, enabling students to develop advanced technical solutions applicable across multiple industries.

■ **Aerial Drone:** A challenge centered on drone control and automated flight technology, where students trained in drone programming and intelligent navigation.

■ **SeaPerch:** An underwater robotics competition, allowing participants to explore mechanical engineering techniques and design robots capable of performing specialized tasks in various marine environments.

■ **Open Innovation Challenge:** A platform for students to showcase their creativity and implement groundbreaking ideas in robotics and artificial intelligence, encouraging critical thinking and real-world problem-solving.

These competitions provided students with an exceptional opportunity to test their abilities, enhance their technological expertise, and engage with cutting-edge innovations in AI and robotics.

The tournament also benefited from strategic partnerships with leading national institutions, including Warba Bank and Kuwait Technical College, which served as a key educational partner, further enriching the students' learning experience.

Towards a Sustainable Digital Future

Warba Bank continues to support Kuwaiti talents through initiatives designed to foster innovation, leadership and technological advancement as part of its long-term strategy that aims to empowering future generations and contributing to the development of a knowledge-based digital economy driven by advanced technology. This collaboration reflects Warba Bank's dedication to investing in young talent, reinforcing its role as a key partner in building a sustainable and prosperous future for Kuwait.

A Leading Position in Digital Banking Services

It is worth noting that Warba Bank has achieved significant success in a short period, securing a leading position in Islamic digital banking services. The bank is also recognized as one of the local financial institutions with the largest shareholder base, positioning it close to all segments of society.

This milestone further reaffirms Warba Bank's reputation as a trusted financial partner, seamlessly combining innovation and social responsibility to offer top-tier financial services and products.

'Tariffs will make America rich again'

Trump defends tariffs as key to US prosperity and security

WASHINGTON, March 6, (AP): To President Donald Trump, "tariff" is more than "the most beautiful word in the dictionary," something he says often.

Tariffs, in Trump's view, are also a cure for a number of the nation's ills and the tool to reach new heights.

Most economists see taxes paid on imports as capable of addressing unfair trade practices, but they're skeptical of the quasi-miraculous properties that Trump claims they possess.

As the Republican president has touched off a trade war with America's trading partners, he has offered an array of reasons to justify the steep tariffs he's imposing or considering on goods coming from Mexico, Canada, China and beyond, despite warnings from experts that adding taxes to imported goods leads to higher prices for U.S. businesses and consumers.

A look at Trump's assortment of justifications for the tariffs he's imposing:

Trump, in his address to a joint session of Congress on Tuesday, said his threats of tariffs had spurred more U.S. manufacturing in the auto industry.

"Plants are opening up all over the place," Trump said.

In comments directed at manufacturers, the president added: "If you don't make your product in America, however, under the Trump administration, you will pay a tariff and in some cases a rather large one."

Trump, however, is granting a one-month exemption on his stiff new tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada for U.S. automakers, as worries persist that the newly launched trade war could crush domestic manufacturing.

The pause comes after Trump spoke with leaders of the Big 3 automakers, Ford, General Motors and Stellantis, on Wednesday, the White House press secretary said.

Stopping illegal immigration has been one of Trump's top priorities, and he's used it as part of the rationale behind steep tariffs he's imposing on America's border nations, Canada and Mexico.

Trump last month gave both countries a temporary reprieve from his tariff threats after they took steps to appease his concerns about border security, including Canada's move to list Mexican cartels as terrorist groups and Mexico's announcement it would send 10,000 troops from its National Guard to its northern border.

On Sunday, Trump posted on his social media network: "ILLEGAL BORDER CROSSINGS LAST MONTH WERE THE LOWEST EVER RECORDED. THANK YOU!!!"

The next day, Trump announced he was imposing the tariffs anyway and said there was "no room left" for those countries to avoid the taxes.

Trump has also cited the illicit flow of fentanyl into America as a reason for his tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China, though a much smaller amount comes across America's northern border than its southern border.

U.S. customs agents seized 43 pounds (19.5 kilograms) of fentanyl at the Canadian border during the last fiscal year, compared with 21,100 pounds (9,570 kilograms) at the Mexican border.

Trump, in a post on his Truth social media network on Wednesday, said that when Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau asked

what could be done about the tariffs, "I told him that many people have died from Fentanyl that came through the Borders of Canada and Mexico, and nothing has convinced me that it has stopped."

Trump's order imposing tariffs on China says that country's government provides a "safe haven" for criminal organizations to "launder the revenues from the production, shipment, and sale of illicit synthetic opioids."

Last month, when Trump spoke at an investment summit in Miami, he said tariffs will help balance the federal budget.

"We're trying to balance the budget immediately, and because of the tariff income, which is really going - it's - it's already turned out to be amazing, actually," Trump said. "It's really meant more for bringing countries and companies into our country, but it's - the numbers are rather staggering, because we're the big piggy bank that everybody wants to be."

"I've decided for purposes of fairness that I will charge a reciprocal tariff," Trump said last month as he signed a proclamation laying out his plan for reciprocal tariffs. "It's fair to all. No other country can complain."

In his address to Congress, Trump explained his push for reciprocal tariffs on all countries, which he said will start April 2, as a tit for tat.

"Whatever they tariff us, other countries, we will tariff them. That's reciprocal back and forth," Trump said. "Whatever they tax us, we will tax them."

Trump signed executive orders in February and March instructing the Commerce Department to consider whether tariffs on imported copper, lumber and timber were needed to protect national security.

The order Trump signed in February said copper plays a vital role in U.S. defense, infrastructure and emerging technologies, and it ordered Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick to investigate "actions to mitigate such threats, including potential tariffs."

Wooden products are used by the construction industry and the military, and they depend upon a strong lumber industry in the U.S. to meet those needs, according to the order Trump signed in March.

Last year, as Trump campaigned again for the presidency, he frequently proselytized his tariff plans and in one appearance suggested tariffs could help solve rising child care costs.

In response to a question about how he'd tackle child care costs so more women could join the workforce, Trump brought up his plan to hike taxes on imports and said, "We're going to be taking in trillions of dollars, and as much as child care is talked about as being expensive, it's - relatively speaking - not very expensive, compared to the kind of numbers we'll be taking in."

Trump has several times said the revenue collected from tariffs will make the country wealthy.

In his speech to Congress, Trump said: "Tariffs are about making America rich again and making America great again."

Trump delays tariffs for US automakers

Canada and Mexico to counter US tariffs with own measures

WASHINGTON, March 6, (AP): President Donald Trump is granting a one-month exemption on his stiff new tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada for U.S. automakers, as worries persist that the newly launched trade war could crush domestic manufacturing.

The pause comes after Trump spoke with leaders of the "big 3" automakers, Ford, General Motors and Stellantis, on Wednesday, according to White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt.

Asked if 30 days was enough for the auto sector to prepare for the new taxes, Leavitt said Trump was blunt with the automakers seeking an exemption: "He told them that they should get on it, start investing, start moving, shift production here to the United States of America where they will pay no tariff."

Trump had long promised to impose tariffs, but his opening weeks in the White House involved aggressive threats and surprise suspensions, leaving allies unclear at what the U.S. president is actually trying to achieve.

Based off various Trump administration statements, the tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China imposed on Tuesday are about stopping illegal immigration, blocking fentanyl smuggling, closing the trade gap, balancing the federal budget and other nations showing more respect for Trump.

All of that has left Canada, a long-standing ally, determined to stand up against Trump with their own retaliatory tariffs, rejecting a White House overture to possibly reduce some of tariffs imposed on Tuesday.

"We are not going to back down," Ontario Premier Doug Ford said after speaking with the Canadian prime minister. "We will not budge. Zero tariffs and that is it."

Ford told The Associated Press that the auto sector in the United States and Canada would last approximately 10 days before they start shutting down the assembly lines because of the tariffs.

"People are going to lose their jobs," he said.

After the White House announced the one month reprieve, shares of big U.S., Asian and European automakers jumped as much as 6%.

But pausing the 25% taxes on autos and auto parts traded through the North American trade pact USMCA would only delay a broader reckoning to take place on April 2, when Trump is set to impose broad "reciprocal" tariffs to match the taxes and subsidies that other countries charge on imports.

The U.S. automaker Ford said in a statement: "We will continue to have a healthy and candid dialogue with the Administration to help achieve a bright future for our industry and U.S. manufacturing."

GM in a statement thanked Trump "for his approach, which enables American automakers like GM to compete and invest domestically."

Stellantis also thanked Trump for the one-month exemption, saying it "strongly" supported "his determination to enable the American automotive sector to thrive."

Other industries are also likely to seek exemptions from the import taxes.

"A number of industries have reached out to us to ask us for exemptions to the tariffs," Vice President JD Vance said Wednesday.

The White House repeatedly insisted that it would not grant exemptions and the sudden turnaround reflects the economic and political problems being



White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt speaks with reporters in the James Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House, Wednesday, March 5, 2025, in Washington. (AP)

created by Trump's day-old tariffs. While the Republican president sees them as enriching the United States, his plans to tax imports have alienated allies and caused anxiety about slower economic growth and accelerating inflation.

The U.S. president engaged in a phone call on Wednesday with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, as U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick had suggested that the administration was looking to meet Canada and Mexico "in the middle."

But Trudeau refused to lift Canada's retaliatory tariffs so long as Trump continues with his new taxes on imports from Canada, a senior government official told The Associated Press. The official confirmed the stance on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak publicly on the matter.

"Both countries will continue to be in contact today," Trudeau's office said.

The prospect of a trade war appears to be an ongoing feature of the Trump administration. In addition to his upcoming reciprocal tariffs that could strike the European Union, India, Brazil, South Korea, Canada and Mexico, Trump wants to tax imports of computer chips, pharmaceutical drugs and autos. He also closed exemptions on his 2018 steel and aluminum tariffs and is investigating tariffs on copper as well.

Tariffs are taxes paid by importers in the countries receiving the goods, so the cost could largely be passed along to U.S. consumers and businesses in the form of higher prices. In his Tuesday night speech to a joint session of Congress, Trump tried to minimize the financial pain as a "little disturbance."

"It may be a little bit of an adjustment period," he said after claiming that farmers would benefit from reciprocal tariffs on countries that have tariffs on U.S. exports. "You have to bear with me again and this will be even better."

Trump has predicted that tariffs will lead to greater investment inside the U.S., creating factory jobs and boosting growth in the long term.

On Tuesday, Trump put 25% taxes on imports from Mexico and Canada, taxing Canadian energy products such as oil and electricity at a lower 10% rate.

The president also doubled the 10% tariff he placed on China to 20%.

The administration has claimed that the tariffs are about stopping the smuggling of drugs such as fentanyl, with aides asserting that this is about a "drug war" rather than a "trade war." U.S. customs agents seized just 43 pounds (19.5 kilograms) of fentanyl at the northern border the last fiscal year.

Trudeau said on Tuesday that his country would plaster tariffs on over \$100 billion (U.S. dollars) of American goods over the course of 21 days, stressing that the United States had abandoned a long-standing friendship. "Today, the United States launched a trade war against Canada, their closest partner and ally, their closest friend. At the same time, they are talking about working positively with Russia, appeasing Vladimir Putin, a lying, murderous dictator. Make that make sense," Trudeau said on Tuesday.

Mexico indicated it would announce its own countermeasures on Sunday.

Beijing responded with tariffs of up to 15% on a wide array of U.S. farm exports. It also expanded the number of U.S. companies subject to export controls and other restrictions by about two dozen.

"If war is what the U.S. wants, be it a tariff war, a trade war or any other type of war, we're ready to fight till the end," China's embassy to the United States posted on X on Tuesday night.

In response to China, U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth told Fox News Channel's "Fox & Friends" that the United States is "prepared" for war against the world's second largest economy.

"Those who long for peace must prepare for war," Hegseth said Wednesday morning. "If we want to deter war with the Chinese or others, we have to be stronger."

Leavitt is one of three administration officials who face a lawsuit from The Associated Press on First- and Fifth-amendment grounds. The AP says the three are punishing the news agency for editorial decisions they oppose. The White House says the AP is not following an executive order to refer to the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America.

Germany's defense spending boosts growth

ECB set to cut interest rates amid economic uncertainty

FRANKFURT, March 6, (AP): The impact of a potential trade war with the United States and massive increases in European defense spending and government borrowing loom over a policy meeting Thursday at the European Central Bank, which is expected to cut interest rates by a quarter percentage point.

Analysts are widely expecting a cut in the bank's benchmark deposit rate to 2.50%, a step to lower borrowing costs for consumers and businesses in an economy that's struggling to get out of first gear.

The bank's monetary policy statement and post-

meeting news conference by President Christine Lagarde will be scrutinized for hints about how far the bank will cut rates amid concerns about weak growth. The bank has already reduced the benchmark rate by 1.25 percentage points since June.

Meanwhile new concerns that would massively reshuffle the economic picture are likely to intrude: the potential impact of new tariffs on European imports from U.S. President Trump, which could slow growth, and plans for massive new defense spending and borrowing, which could mean more growth but

also more inflation.

Those two forces could push the ECB in opposite directions: a hit to growth would call for lower rates, while more persistent inflation would argue for keeping rates higher in coming months.

Growth estimates for Germany, the eurozone's largest economy, shot up overnight and long-term interest rates rose following an agreement by the two parties that will form the country's next government to loosen constitutional limits on borrowing and exempt defense spending.

What's On



A picture of the professional chefs participating in the 'From Planet to Plate' event.



Bosch equipment showcased during the event.

Bosch, AAW showcase smart appliances for sustainable cooking

AAW sponsors 'Planet to Plate' event, promotes sustainable living

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW) announced its sponsorship of the second edition of the "Planet to Plate" event, organized by Sustainable Living Kuwait. AAW participated through its Kitchen business line, featuring the renowned German home appliance Bosch, reinforcing both brand's commitment to corporate social responsibility and sustainable living.

AAW's participation in the event underscores its

dedication to raising awareness about sustainable practices showcasing innovative and efficient solutions to help save water and energy, reduce food waste, and promote responsible living within communities.

The company provided chefs with state-of-the-art appliances from Bosch, a leading global manufacturer of home appliances. Bosch prioritizes sustainability by developing high-efficiency smart home appliances designed to minimize energy con-

sumption, lower carbon footprints, and encourage sustainable cooking practices. This commitment aligns with AAW's goal of offering consumers innovative, eco-friendly solutions.

"Planet to Plate" is an educational and interactive event organized by Sustainable Living in collaboration with Kuwait Times. Leading up to the holy month of Ramadan, the event addressed the seasonal increase in food waste by combining awareness and entertain-

ment. It brings together local farmers, chefs, and sustainability experts to explore the journey of food from farm to table through live cooking demonstrations, music, and art.

Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. remains committed to leading in sustainability by providing innovative, eco-friendly solutions and supporting local initiatives that promote responsible living.



Temporary tech glitch

talabat Kuwait confirms no security breach, ensures customer data safe

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: talabat Kuwait reassures its customers and partners that no security breach has occurred, following recent misinformation circulating on social media. The company confirms that all customer data, including payment information, remains secure and protected.

talabat experienced a temporary technical issue affecting some orders processing, which was swiftly resolved. "At talabat, customer security and privacy are our top priorities. We implement best-in-class security protocols to safeguard customer information, and we assure our users

that their data is fully protected. The recent claims of a security breach are completely unfounded, and we remain committed to providing a safe and seamless ordering experience," said Bader Al-Ghanim, Vice President & Managing Director of talabat Kuwait.

talabat Kuwait remains fully compliant with international security standards, including PCI-DSS certification, ensuring encrypted and secure transactions. The company actively monitors its systems to prevent unauthorized access and remains committed to transparency with its users and partners.

New members welcomed

'Malankara Rite Movement' marks 31st Foundation Day

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The Kuwait Malankara Rite Movement (KMRM) is a prominent organization representing the Syro Malankara Catholic community in Kuwait. The Kuwait Malankara Rite Movement (KMRM) upholds the rich cultural and spiritual traditions of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, deeply rooted in the ancient heritage of the St. Thomas Christians of India. Through its social, cultural, and humanitarian initiatives, KMRM fosters unity, faith, and a strong sense of community among its members in Kuwait. Its commitment to preserving liturgical traditions, language, and values reflects the vibrant legacy of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church while actively serving the needy and promoting social welfare.

The 31st Foundation Day Celebration of Kuwait Malankara Rite Movement concluded on March 1, 2025, at the City Co-Cathedral Church with a Holy Qurbana and Thanksgiving Mass, expressing gratitude for 31 years of blessings and guidance. The Samuhabeli Mass was led by three priests: KMRM Spiritual Director Rev. Dr. Thomas Kanjiramakalil, Rev. Fr. Joy Mathew Mundackal, and Rev. Fr. Thomas Liju Kalathil.

The liturgical procession commenced at 7:00 PM, with numerous Malankara faithful dressed in white, symbolizing unity and devotion. Following the Holy Mass, a brief gathering was presided over by KMRM President Shaji Varghese. General Secretary Jomon Cherian welcomed the attendees and clergy, highlighting KMRM's history, mission, and the contributions of its founder leaders and all former leaders. He also expressed appreciation for the spiritual directors who have guided the organization over the past 16 years.

To officially inaugurate the event, Shaji Varghese hoisted the KMRM flag, and a commemorative cake was cut by the three priests. In his benedictory speech, the KMRM Spiritual Director extended heartfelt gratitude to the Central Managing Committee for including him in this special occasion, sharing his joy in serving the Syro Malankara Catholic Faithful in Kuwait on this significant milestone.



A photo from the event.

Mr. Shaji Varghese also expressed sincere appreciation to the Syro Malankara Catholic faithful in Kuwait for their support, acknowledging the contributions of past leaders in shaping KMRM's present form. He conveyed gratitude to His Beatitude Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos for his blessings and support of the Kuwait Malankara Rite Movement, as well as to His Lordship Aldo Berardi, Bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Arabia, for his encouragement in strengthening the Syro-Malankara Catholic presence in Kuwait.

As part of the celebration, 14 newly joined members were welcomed into KMRM with floral greetings. The Vice President and event convener, Sharon Tharaken, delivered the vote of thanks, expressing appreciation for everyone who contributed to the success of the program.

The event concluded with a final blessing from the three priests, followed by a "Snehavirunnu," for all attendees. The KMRM Central Managing Committee extends its deepest gratitude to the Syro Malankara faithful in Kuwait for their unwavering support in making the celebration a truly memorable and meaningful occasion.

Elevating travel with innovative, quality luggage collection

Samsonite x Pelé: An exclusive collection uniting 2 icons whose legacies defy time

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Samsonite x Pelé is a collaboration that embodies Pelé's indomitable spirit both in football and in helping others, and Samsonite's relentlessness in its quest to create ever better travel pieces through innovation and quality.

Throughout his life, despite winning three World Cups with Brazil and helping to better the lives of millions of people through his humanitarian efforts, Pelé believed in always striving to be a better person. This crystal-clear perspective was deeply ingrained in him as a child and played a pivotal role in guiding him in life and inspiring his vision for a better future.

Similarly, world luggage leader Samsonite shares the same relentlessness and unwavering commitment to research, development and innovation to make travel better for people the world over.

Samsonite x Pelé is the union of this shared perspective brought to life in the form of an exclusive and exquisitely crafted line.

Celebrating the path to greatness
The launch of the Samsonite x Pelé collection will be supported by a campaign with the tagline "Journey of a Champion". This campaign commemorates Pelé's values of humility, resilience, excellence and elegance which were always his North Star on his way to greatness. This also mirrors the values that have shone the way forward for Samsonite over the years which have made it a leader in the creation of practical, durable and innovative luggage and travel accessories.

The Samsonite x Pelé collection consists of two Luggage Cases (Spinner 75/28 and Spinner 55/20), a 15.6" EXP Laptop Backpack, a Crossover S Bag and a Clutch Bag. Each piece features design elements inspired by Pelé's legendary ca-



Samsonite luggage collection.



Pelé's iconic legacy meets Samsonite innovation in new luggage collection.

reer. The Spinner 75/28 and Spinner 55/20 are embellished with a classy metal collaboration logo plate and also come with a luggage cover printed with a silhouette of Pelé's iconic bicycle kick. Inside, the interior lining of both luggage cases is adorned with a pattern that pays homage to Pelé's three World Cup victories with Brazil. All pieces in the collection are accented with external trim in celestial blue.

The collection also brings to travelers the functional expertise and build quality for which Samsonite is renowned with thoughtful organization options, durable construction and reliable, long-lasting performance.

Product summary
The Samsonite x Pelé collection is a celebration of the values that inspire greatness - humility, resilience, excellence and elegance - embodied in the form of exquisitely crafted travel pieces that pay hom-

age to Pelé's achievements and are an expression of Samsonite's own relentless commitment to creating better luggage for travelers around the world.

About Samsonite
Founded in 1910, Samsonite is the world's leading luggage brand with an extensive legacy in trendsetting travel solutions. Renowned for breakthrough research, development and its commitment to innovation, Samsonite has excelled since its inception in a number of industry firsts. Samsonite offers an extensive range of travel, business, kids, casual and personal accessory products. Samsonite helps travelers journey further, with ever-lighter and stronger products. www.samsonite.com

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About Pelé
Pelé is widely regarded as the

greatest footballer of all time. His skill, vision, and goal-scoring prowess led Brazil to three World Cup victories (1958, 1962, and 1970) - the only player in history to have three World Cup titles to his name. Pelé is also the top goal scorer of all time with 1,263 goals and was crowned FIFA Player of the Century in 2000. Due to his football accomplishments, he came to be known as 'O Rei do Futebol' (The King of Football).

After retiring from the game, Pelé used his significant fame to fight for causes he believed in, ranging from world peace to international children's rights and poverty alleviation - a mission that lives on with the Pelé Foundation. For his humanitarian efforts, Pelé was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1997 and received the 'Children in Need' Award from UNESCO in 2012. <https://www.pele10.org>

Many pet owners unaware of the impact

Sharing bedroom with pets disrupts your sleep

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

By Brian N. Chin
Trinity College

Sleeping with your dog in the same room could be negatively affecting your sleep quality, according to my team's 2024 research paper in Scientific Reports.

We recruited a nationally representative sample of more than 1,500 American adults who completed questionnaires assessing their sleep habits. Overall, about half of the participants reported co-sleeping with pets - defined in our study as sleeping in the same room with your pet for at least part of the night.

Next, our research team compared the sleep habits of people who did and didn't co-sleep with pets. Our analyses revealed that participants who co-slept with pets had poorer sleep quality and more insomnia symptoms than those who did not. These findings persisted even after accounting for demographic differences between these groups. When considering pet type, we found evidence for a negative effect on sleep when co-sleeping with dogs but no evidence for a negative effect on sleep when co-sleeping with cats.

Surprisingly, 93% of people in our study who co-slept with their pets believed that their pets had either a positive or neutral overall effect on their sleep. Although more research is needed, these findings could suggest that most people are unaware of the potential negative effects their pets may have on their sleep.

Most pet owners report that their pets have a generally positive effect on their mental health. Pets can improve their owners' health in numerous ways during the day, such as by encouraging physical activity, promoting a daily

routine and providing love and companionship.

However, our study fills an important knowledge gap by indicating that co-sleeping with pets can affect sleep quality. Good sleep is a pillar of health and wellness. Even though pets may have an overall positive effect on mental health, it is possible that some of this benefit may be undermined if they are also causing you to lose sleep at night.

Although some people report that co-sleeping with their pets can provide them with a sense of comfort or

intimacy, it is important for people sharing a bedroom with their pets to be aware of their potential to serve as a source of nighttime noise, heat or movement that can disrupt your ability to fall or stay asleep.

Survey-based studies like ours are unable to prove that co-sleeping with pets causes disrupted sleep, although there is some evidence suggesting that this could be the case.

One important factor that our study did not assess was whether participants were also co-sleeping with other people like a spouse or child. Previous research suggests that sharing a bed with other people can also affect our sleep and that the mental health benefits of pet ownership could be stronger for people with a romantic partner.

It probably isn't realistic for most people to just stop co-sleeping with their pets. So, what should someone do to improve their sleep if they already share a bed with their pets?

Some expert tips include choosing a mattress that is large enough for you and your pets, washing and changing your bedding regularly, and establishing and maintaining a consistent bedtime routine with your pets. Further research is needed to identify more specific habits and routines that pet owners can adopt to ensure a good night's sleep when sharing the bedroom with their pets. (AP)



A dog barks at his master during a yoga exercise on a sunny day on the beach in Katwijk, Netherlands, Monday, March 3, 2025. (AP)

Stage



George Clooney, (left), and Grant Heslov appear at the 'Good Night, and Good Luck' Broadway cast announcement at the Winter Garden Theatre on Feb. 6, 2025, in New York. (AP)

'Good Night, and Good Luck'

Clooney brings journalism icon Murrow to Broadway

NEW YORK, March 6, (AP): George Clooney made waves in July when he called on Joe Biden to drop out of the presidential race, citing diminished capacity. For Clooney, there wasn't a choice to stay silent.

"I was raised to tell the truth and telling the truth means telling it when it's not comfortable," the actor-director and big Democratic booster tells The Associated Press. "I did what I was raised and taught to do. That's it."

There was inevitable backlash - just as there was back when he was branded a traitor for speaking out against the invasion of Iraq - but Clooney took the hits.

"Telling the truth to power or taking chances like that - we've seen it over our history," he says. "We've been here and survived these things and we will survive it."

Clooney's truth-to-power stance takes another step this spring as he makes his Broadway debut, telling the story of legendary reporter Edward R. Murrow in an adaptation of his 2005 film "Good Night, and Good Luck." Performances start March 12.

Murrow, who died in 1965, is considered one of the architects of U.S. broadcast news and perhaps his greatest moment was opposing Sen. Joe McCarthy, who cynically created paranoia of a communist threat in the 1950s.

"This is a story about who we are at our best, when we hold our own feet to the fire, when we check and balance ourselves," says Clooney. "What's scary about now and the difference between Murrow's time is that we've now decided that truth is negotiable."

Resemble

In the movie version - which Clooney co-wrote with Grant Heslov - the role of Murrow went to David Strathairn and Clooney played CBS executive Fred Friendly; this time, Clooney takes up the mantle of Murrow. When he and Heslov did a reading for theater investors he just played Murrow and the financiers agreed to sink their money in the play - on the condition Clooney stay in the role.

As in the movie, the play version will have footage of the real McCarthy on screens and the stage will resemble a newsroom with several dozen old-fashioned monitors mixing old and new footage.

The transition to Broadway makes a lot of sense since many of the movie's reviewers said it felt to them a lot like a play. It actually was originally conceived as a live TV movie, an idea scuttled after Justin Timberlake exposed Janet Jackson's nipple in the 2004 Super Bowl halftime show and scared away any notion of live network events.

"It is an incredibly literary play," says Tony-winning director David Cromer. "It is filled with debate. It is filled with well-reasoned and very complex arguments about is this the right thing to do? Is this the right thing to do now? What happens when we do this? How do we say this?"

Two-time Oscar winner Clooney returns to Murrow at a time when journalists are under fire from the new US administration and being denied access

for not following White House talking points.

"We didn't decide to remount or do the play for any real political reasons," says Heslov, a frequent Clooney collaborator who is also making his Broadway writing debut. "It turns out that the environment might be ripe for it."

Murrow had a large presence in Clooney's home growing up. His father, Nick Clooney, a veteran journalist, worked as a TV news anchor and host in a variety of cities including Cincinnati, Salt Lake City and Los Angeles. He also wrote a newspaper column in Cincinnati and taught journalism at American University.

"I'm the son of a journalist, a proper journalist, a guy who tells the truth. My father's still out there fighting the good fight," says Clooney. "I believe in it. I believe in the whole idea of how this works."

Clooney is part of a starry group of Hollywood veterans arriving on Broadway this season, a list that includes Denzel Washington, Jake Gyllenhaal, Keanu Reeves, Robert Downey Jr., Jim Parsons, Sarah Snook and John Mulaney.

Mirrored

Clooney insisted before he came that he didn't want to be the highest paid actor on Broadway. It mirrored the time he mortgaged his house and paid himself a salary of just \$1 to finance the movie version of "Good Night, and Good Luck."

"To me, it's like, pay Patti LuPone the most of anybody on Broadway. Pay somebody who's paid their dues. It shouldn't be somebody who's doing his first Broadway play," he says. "I can't do that. I don't want to be part of that. It doesn't make sense to me."

The box office for a ticket to see him at the Winter Garden is white hot even before previews begin but Clooney deflects that to Murrow - it's not me, he suggests, it's the character he's playing.

"The words of Edward Murrow are words that kind of soothe us," he says. "It's a salve for insanity. And I think people are excited to be in a room and share some of those conversations."

Clooney hasn't done a full-length play since he got his Equity Card in 1986 in Chicago as the comic relief in "Vicious," about punk icon Sid Vicious. "Most of the cast members that I'm working with weren't born when I did my last play. So it's scary," he says.

He thought he'd missed his chance at Broadway, a notch on many actor's bucket list. He's 63 now and it would mean uprooting his family for months.

"I've succeeded in my career. I'm not saying that I haven't succeeded, but I hadn't done anything on Broadway and I thought maybe it's too late," he says.

"I'd been offered a couple of plays that I didn't think I was right for, and I thought if I was going to do it, I should do something that I was right for. And this was an opportunity where I thought, 'Well, I know how to tell this story. I may not do a great job with it. You know, I may really screw it up, but I know what's required of the thing.'"

Abdullah Saeed's new comedy breaking stereotypes

'Deli Boys' brings laughter, chaos to the screen

WEST HOLLYWOOD, Calif., March 6, (AP): Abdullah Saeed wasn't looking to write a groundbreaking comedy. He was just looking for a job.

The "Deli Boys" creator wrote a sample script in 2019, hoping to secure a staff position in a writers' room after transitioning from journalism to screenwriting. ("Nobody was buying my documentaries," jokes Saeed.) He had recently co-written a script for a feature film, but needed something to showcase his own voice.

Saeed sat down to write without worry about representing his entire community, and decided to freely create a show that was as lighthearted as he is.

"The pressure was off because I didn't think it was going to be a TV show. I was just like, 'OK, whatever, I think that's funny,'" said the Pakistani American writer.

"Deli Boys" soon landed in front of television writers and producers Jenni Konner ("Girls") and Nora Silver ("Single Drunk Female"), who immediately wanted to do more than hire Saeed. They wanted to develop the half-hour pilot and bring it to life.

"It was so unique and so funny and fresh, and (there is) nothing like that in the world, ever," said Konner who later brought on showrunner Michelle Nader ("2 Broke Girls").

The 10-episode Hulu original comedy presented by Onyx Collective stars Saagar Shaikh ("Ms. Marvel"), Asif Ali ("WandaVision") and Poorna Jagannathan. Premiering Thursday, "Deli Boys" follows two Pakistani American brothers, Raj and Mir - played by Shaikh and Ali - who lose their comfortable lifestyles after their convenience store mogul father (Iqbal Theba) dies unexpectedly from a golfing accident. Raj and Mir must now work together to take over the family business, but soon learn they are in way over their heads when they discover the stores were a front for cocaine distribution.

Saeed, who used to cover stories centered on music, cannabis and recreational drugs, says he was inspired by the "unverified stories about stealth and smuggling" that he heard over the years.

"It's just lore," he said of the stories he was never able to report out. "But in this show, we can borrow all that stuff, right? And so, like, there's all these elements about, you know, stealth, like how



Asif Ali, (from left), Saagar Shaikh and Poorna Jagannathan pose for a portrait to promote 'Deli Boys' on Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2025, in Los Angeles. (AP)

you actually package and move drugs that really made their way into the show."

The brothers at the show's heart are two complete opposites who have to find themselves while being comically thrust into the drug-smuggling underworld: Raj is the free spirit who relies on cannabis, his shaman and good looks to get him by, while Mir is the buttoned-up, model child looking to make his father proud.

"It was great to finally, for the first time, be a flawed character not a model minority," said Shaikh. "The spectrum for white shows goes from like, 'Full House' to 'It's Always Sunny.' And, you know, we are, like them, not a monolith, right? We have different stories. We have different values from house to house. We have different cultures

from house to house. And we rarely get to see any nuance."

For Ali, portraying Mir was something he never would have imagined.

"It really is above just being, you know, an exploration of what being South Asian is," said Ali. "It's something that I have never seen our community have before. Just like straight-up crazy comedy."

Jagannathan plays their father's right-hand woman Lucky, who quickly takes the boys under her wing in an effort to salvage the family's dwindling drug operation. According to Jagannathan, Lucky was initially written as a man until Saeed was advised to go back to his script and change two characters from men to women. Soon, Lucky became a blend of Saeed's mother, whom he describes as a "self-starting, headstrong badass," executive producers Silver and Konner, Nader and Jagannathan's past roles as a mother on "Never Have I Ever" and "The Night Of."

"She's sweet and loving and nurturing and then the next scene is her putting a bullet in someone's head," said Jagannathan. "And I think the juxtaposition of that is so funny, but the script has so much of that. It's the expected with the unexpected right next door."

The cast also includes Alfie Fuller ("The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel") and Brian George, a familiar face to "Seinfeld" and "The Big Bang Theory" fans who is now front and center as Lucky's second-in-command. Guest stars for this season also include "Queer Eye's" Tan France, who makes his acting debut in the sixth episode.

"I saw the script, and it was a fully formed character. I was so nervous. But the first day I got on that set, I had the best experience," said France, who initially thought he was only going to play a small role.

Saeed and Konner hope the show will have the opportunity to welcome more South Asian guest stars in later seasons. "There's a lot of people we would die to have," said Konner.

"And then for each of them, we've now set this thing up for ourselves where they have to play someone against type," said Saeed. "So, that makes it more fun for us if we get somebody huge, right? And we've only seen them one way; we get to put them into something different."

Film



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Robert Pattinson in a scene from 'Mickey 17.' (AP)

Bong's latest is a hilarious and chaotic space mission

Pattinson just can't stay alive in 'Mickey 17'

LOS ANGELES, March 6, (AP): So you think your job is bad?

Sorry if we seem to be lacking empathy here. But however crummy you think your 9-5 routine is, it'll never be as bad as Robert Pattinson's in Bong Joon Ho's "Mickey 17" - nor will any job, on Earth or any planet, approach this level of misery.

Mickey, you see, is an "Expendable," and by this we don't mean he's a cast member in yet another sequel to Sylvester Stallone's tired band of mercenaries ("Expendables"?). No, even worse! He's literally expendable, in that his job description requires that he die, over and over, in the worst possible ways, only to be "reprinted" once again as the next Mickey.

And from here stems the good news, besides the excellent Pattinson, whom we hope got hazard pay, about Bong's hotly anticipated follow-up to "Parasite." There's creativity to spare, and much of it surrounds the ways he finds for his lead character to expire - again and again.

The bad news, besides, well, all the death, is that much of this film devolves into narrative chaos, bloat and excess. In so many ways, the always inventive Bong just doesn't know where to stop. It hardly seems a surprise that the sci-fi novel, by Edward Ashton, he's adapting here is called "Mickey 7" - Bong decided to add 10 more Mickeys.

The first act, though, is crackling. We begin with Mickey lying alone at the bottom of a crevasse, having barely survived a fall. It is the year 2058, and he's part of a colonizing expedition from Earth to a far-off planet. He's surely about to die. In fact, the outcome is so expected that his fellow Timo (Steven Yeun), staring down the cre-

vasse, asks casually: "Haven't you died yet?"

How did Mickey get here? We flash back to Earth, where Mickey and Timo ran afoul of a villainous loan shark. This man likes to dine while watching his goons torture delinquent borrowers. Needless to say, the two young men need to escape - and far.

So they join the expedition to planet Nilfheim. Filling out his job application, Mickey, a hapless chap with an American grifter accent apparently subconsciously inspired by Steve Buscemi in "Fargo," fails to read the fine print. He's distracted by the smell of a woman's hair.

Moment

It's rather a shock, then, when he learns what he signed up for. During the four-plus year journey, he'll be a human guinea pig, subjected to countless fatal indignities. Sending him out to absorb cosmic radiation, they ask Mickey to track the moment his skin burns and the moment he becomes blind. When his hand falls off and floats by the ship's windows, nobody takes notice.

That's because a human "printer" awaits - looking a lot like an MRI machine - ready to reprint him, with memory backup. Human printing has been banned on Earth, but is legal in space, where there is also, unfortunately, no worker's comp.

Things are bleak on the ship. Food is rationed severely. Sex takes up too many calories, so it is banned, by none other than Kenneth Marshall, the wealthy, pompous, thin-skinned leader of the expedition (Mark Ruffalo) and his unpleasantly perky wife, Ylfa (Toni Collette). This is inconvenient for Mickey, whose shipboard life is made

bearable only by Nasha (Naomi Ackie), his brave and loving girlfriend, but they seem to get it on nonetheless, between Mickey's deaths and new lives.

Marshall's supporters wear red baseball caps, which gives you a pretty good hint as to which real-life leader Ruffalo, and Bong, are trying to evoke here. Current political references aside, Ruffalo relies mainly on an eccentric facial tic, and it must be said that both he and Collette grow more buffoonish, and hence more tiresome, as time goes on.

But Pattinson's Mickey is the life (um, lives) we care about. By the time he falls into a crevasse and meets up with some presumably terrifying but also cute native animals - creepers, they're called - sure to eat him alive, he is Mickey 17. But somehow, he miraculously survives. And things really get complicated when he gets back to the ship and meets - what? - Mickey 18. Oh no! Suddenly he's not only an Expendable, he's a Multiple. This is bad news.

Pattinson does double duty in the now-dual role, with one Mickey much more violent and nasty than the other as the two fight for survival. It's his movie, and he saves it from Bong's tendencies to overstuff the proceedings. In an extremely physical, committed, even exhausting performance, Pattinson takes what could have been an unwieldy mess and makes it much less, well, expendable.

Hopefully he's recovering well. "Mickey 17," a Warner Bros. release, has been rated R by the Motion Picture Association "for violent content, language throughout, sexual content and drug material." Running time: 139 minutes. Two stars out of four.

Tips to prevent dry mouth and bad breath

Ways to maintain oral and dental health during fasting

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: A health report enumerated basic tips for maintaining oral and dental health during fasting; and to avoid problems like dry mouth and unpleasant odors within the fasting hours due to decreased saliva secretion when abstaining from drinking water and other fluids.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the report, stating that dry mouth and unpleasant odors are not only associated with fasting but may worsen as a result of some

unhealthy habits when breaking the fast and suhoor (late night meal); in addition to not paying attention to oral hygiene. It advised brushing the teeth twice a day using a toothpaste containing fluoride.

The report stressed the importance of using dental floss to remove food residues that are difficult for the brush to reach, which reduces the accumulation of bacteria; while taking care of the tongue using a special brush or tongue scraper to remove food residues and prevent the formation of bacteria that cause bad breath.

It recommended using mouthwash to reduce bacteria, get rid of stuck food residues and reduce the acidity level in the mouth; as well as using 'siwak' (toothbrush) as a natural alternative and an effective way to clean the mouth and teeth due to its antimicrobial properties that help prevent gum infections and bad breath; and drinking sufficient amounts of water, milk and natural juices between breaking the fast and suhoor to maintain body hydration and reduce the risk of dry mouth. It also advised avoiding drinks rich in sugar and caffeine, such as

coffee and tea, as they may increase the risk of dehydration and tooth decay.

It suggested eating more vegetables and fruits; as they contain fiber and protein that are good for maintaining oral and dental health and reduce the chances of tooth decay. It stressed the need to refrain from smoking, consult a dentist before and after Ramadan, and chew sugar-free gum after breaking the fast to stimulate saliva production in order to maintain mouth moisture and reduce the risk of tooth decay.

Stop late-night snacking

Physical activities important for healthy Ramadan: Dr. Al-Baho

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Director of the Health Promotion Department at the Health Ministry Dr. Abeer Al-Baho has stressed the need to engage in physical activities during the holy month of Ramadan and stop bad habits like eating a lot of fatty foods and sweets and staying up all night that lead to a feeling of fullness and lethargy, as well as obesity.

Al-Baho told the newspaper that changing the daily routine during Ramadan leads to obesity and the accompanying diseases like high blood pressure and diabetes due to continuous dehydration, which causes muscle and general weakness. He stressed the importance of engaging in physical activities to protect the body from fat deposits, burn fats instead of glucose, strengthen muscles and comfort the soul.

She cited reports of the World Health Organization (WHO), confirming that physical activities reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and colon cancer; improve mental and psychological health; delay aging symptoms like Alzheimer's disease; and contribute to weight control by increasing muscle mass, reducing harmful fats, lowering harmful cholesterol, lowering triglycerides and raising the level of good cholesterol.

She revealed there are several physical activities, including moderate daily activities such as walk-

ing to the mosque or at the park, regular household chores like sweeping floors and arranging furniture, and using the stairs instead of the elevator.

On the best times to engage in physical activities in Ramadan, the research recommended light activities like walking for 30 minutes before breaking the fast, during which the body burns fats. "Therefore, it is advisable for those who want to lose weight, because the concentration of blood glucose is low, so the level of insulin in the blood is low. This means that the fat stored under the skin is released into the bloodstream and used as a source of energy needed for engaging in a physical activity," Al-Baho explained.

She warned against increasing sports exercises at this time, as it may lead to dizziness, severe hunger, hand tremors or an irregular heartbeat as a result of the body's inability to tolerate excessive activity, dehydration, lack of salt and glucose necessary for the burning process, and other disorders that require one to break the fast so as not to be exposed to serious complications of low blood sugar level.

She advised engaging in a physical activity two to three hours after breaking the fast to prevent the body's tendency to store the calories it gained. She added that exercising immediately after breaking the fast is not recommended, because the digestive system is still busy.

US drug supplies improve

Popular obesity treatments Wegovy, Zepbound prices cut

NEW YORK, March 6, (AP): Makers of the popular obesity treatments Wegovy and Zepbound are cutting prices for people without insurance.

Danish drugmaker Novo Nordisk said Wednesday that it will drop prices 23% for all doses of Wegovy. The new monthly price of \$499, down from \$650, takes effect immediately.

Novo said the new pricing is available to both the uninsured and people who have insurance that doesn't cover the weight-loss drugs.

Last week, Eli Lilly said it would cut the monthly price of its starter dose of Zepbound to \$349. The US drugmaker also is making larger doses available for \$499 through its

self-pay program.

Patients start taking the injectable drugs at smaller dose levels and then increase the amount over time.

The price cuts come as supplies improve. The US Food and Drug Administration has moved both drugs off its list of medicines in shortage. The agency has said compounding pharmacies and other entities that have been allowed to make off-brand, cheaper copies of the drugs during the shortage will have to wind down production.

Wegovy and Zepbound are part of a GLP-1 class of treatments that has shown unprecedented results for helping people shed weight by decreasing appetite and boosting feelings of fullness. Sales of the drugs have soared.



Top-bottom row: Fahd Al-Mulla, Fatema Al-Rashed, Rasheed Ahmad, Halemah Alsaeed, Haya Alabduljader and Nadeem Akhter.

Poor sleep increases chronic diseases risk

Sleep disruption tied to inflammatory immune changes and health risks

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: New research conducted by Dr. Fatema Al-Rashed, scientist at Dasman Diabetes Institute which is founded by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, reveals insight into the impact sleep quality has on a person's immune system, and how it could be linked to the development of diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases.

The study, published in The Journal of Immunology, found that even a single night of 24-hour sleep deprivation in young, lean, and healthy individuals altered the profile of immune cells that help regulate the immune system to resemble that of individuals with obesity - a condition known to drive chronic inflammation. This suggests that the immune system is highly sensitive to sleep and may adapt rapidly to changes in sleep pattern. According to the researchers, if these shifts persist, they could contribute to long-term inflammatory states

and increase the risk of disease.

Substantial evidence exists linking sleep disorders and disturbances to an array of chronic conditions and morbidity, such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. It's also known that poor health outcomes can be driven by chronic inflammation but the direct influence of sleep on circulating immune cells, such as monocytes, is not as well understood.

In this study, the researchers from the Dasman Diabetes Institute, analyzed the sleep patterns of 237 healthy adult participants of varying BMI, and took blood samples to profile the levels of different monocytes as well as markers of inflammation. They found that obese individuals had significantly lower sleep quality and higher chronic low-grade inflammation compared to the lean group.

Dr. Fatema Al-Rashed, who led the study, said: "Our findings underscore a growing public health challenge. Advancements in technology, prolonged

screen time, and shifting societal norms are increasingly disruptive to regular sleeping hours. This disruption in sleep has profound implications for immune health and overall well-being."

The researchers next want to explore in greater detail the mechanisms linking sleep deprivation to immune changes. They also want to find out if interventions such as structured sleep therapies or technology-use guidelines can reverse these immune alterations.

In the long term, we aim for this research to drive policies and strategies that recognize the critical role of sleep in public health. We envision workplace reforms and educational campaigns promoting better sleep practices, particularly for populations at risk of sleep disruption due to technological and occupational demands. Ultimately, this could help mitigate the burden of inflammatory diseases like obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases," Dr. Fatema Al-Rashed.

Vaccination programs at risk

Gaza aid blockade endangering kids: UNICEF

GAZA, March 6, (Xinhua): Blocking the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip, particularly medical supplies, will have devastating consequences for children's health, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said on Wednesday.

In a press statement, UNICEF said that the continued blockade of medical supplies, including vaccines, could lead to the suspension of routine vaccination programs, putting Gazan chil-

dren at risk of contracting preventable diseases.

The organization also highlighted that neonatal units in Gaza's hospitals will be unable to provide essential care for premature babies due to the lack of vital medical equipment and supplies.

UNICEF urged immediate and sustained humanitarian access, warning that thousands of children's lives will be at risk if the situation persists.

On Sunday, Israel announced that

it would block the entry of goods and supplies into Gaza following the conclusion of the first phase of a ceasefire agreement with Hamas that took effect in January.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the decision was made to pressure Hamas into accepting a new proposal to extend the first phase of the ceasefire deal, which he said was put forth by US Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff.

'Improving'

Pope rests after peaceful night

ROME, March 6, (AP): Pope Francis was awake and resting Thursday after a peaceful night during his third week of hospital treatment for double pneumonia, the Vatican said.

The pope has been sleeping with a non-invasive mechanical mask to guarantee that his lungs expand properly overnight and help his recovery. He has been transitioning to receiving high-flow oxygen with a nasal tube during the day. His routine now includes physical therapy, along with treatment for double pneumonia and respiratory therapy, Vatican officials said.

The 88-year-old pope, who has chronic lung disease and had part of one lung removed as a young man, has been stable for two days after suffering a pair of respiratory crises Monday. Doctors underlined that his prognosis remained guarded due to the complex picture.

The Vatican said the evening Rosary prayer for Francis would be presided over by Cardinal Angel Fernández Artime, the deputy official in charge of the Vatican's department for religious orders. The department is actually headed by Sister Simona Brambilla, the first-ever nun named as prefect of a major Holy See office. But when Francis appointed her in January, he simultaneously named Artime as "pro-prefect" in a sign that he foresaw there were some functions that only an ordained priest can perform.

The pope on Wednesday marked the start of Lent by receiving ashes on his forehead and by calling the parish priest in Gaza, the Vatican said.

The Catholic Church opened the solemn Lenten season leading to Easter without the pope's participation. A cardinal took his place leading a short penitential procession between two churches on the Aventine Hill, and opened an Ash Wednesday homily prepared for the pontiff with words of solidarity and thanks for Francis.

"We feel deeply united with him in this moment," Cardinal Angelo De Donatis said. "And we thank him for the offering of his prayer and his suffering for the good of the entire church in all the world."

On Ash Wednesday, observant Catholics receive a sign of the cross in ashes on their foreheads, a gesture that underscores human mortality. It is an obligatory day of fasting and abstinence that signals the start of Christianity's most penitential season, leading to Easter on April 20.

"The condition of fragility reminds us of the tragedy of death," De Donatis said in his homily. "In many ways, we try to banish death from our societies, so dependent on appearances, and even remove it from our language. Death, however, imposes itself as a reality with which we have to reckon, a sign of the precariousness and brevity of our lives."



Pope Francis

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The first TKO Group boxing card to be held in 2026

White says he can fix boxing with new promotion in partnership with Saudis

NEW YORK, March 6, (AP) — TKO Group, the company that already houses WWE and UFC, is set to step into the ring with a new boxing promotion as part of a business deal with Saudi Arabia.

TKO announced it entered a multi-year partnership with Turki Alalshikh, chairman of the Saudi General Entertainment Authority, and Sela, a subsidiary of Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund.

Led by UFC president and CEO Dana White and WWE president and TKO board member Nick Khan, TKO will serve as managing partner and run the day-to-day operations of the promotion.

"Everybody's going to say it's the money. I don't do (expensive) anything for the money," White told The Associated Press on Wednesday. "I want to be in business with people that I'm aligned with. We have the same ideas, we have the values. We

have the same everything"

The first TKO Group boxing card will be held in 2026. The start date will depend on when a broadcast rights deal can be secured.

"I'm going to go in and select who my partner is going to be," White said. "Then they're going to let me know what they need, as far as programming goes. I'll let them know what works for me and, as a partnership, we'll work out a rights deal."

TKO did not announce a name for the new promotion. Boxers will have access to the UFC Performance Institute, with locations in Las Vegas, Mexico City and Shanghai. TKO will handle production, media and promotion for events that will include worldwide broadcasts. There was little immediate detail outside of the announcement of the promotion's impending launch.

"I like taking things that are broken, can't be fixed and I'm going to



In this file photo, Dana White watches as Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump speaks at an election night watch party at the Palm Beach Convention Center, in West Palm Beach, Fla. (AP)

fix them," White said.

White calls the shots in UFC - and even with an alignment with Khan

and the Saudis, the 55-year-old former boxer says he still will be the final boss with this venture.

"There's no way I would get into something that I couldn't run and control," White told AP.

The new venture is just the latest in Saudi Arabia's massive spending on global sports driven by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

The Saudis host a Formula 1 auto race, fund LIV Golf, have hosted numerous pay-per-view boxing cards - topped by Tyson Fury's win over Francis Ngannou in October 2023 - and are in the midst of a 10-year deal to hold WWE events and will host the 2034 World Cup in men's soccer, giving the oil-rich kingdom its biggest prize yet in its sports expansion.

The kingdom plans to spend tens of billion of dollars on projects related to the World Cup as part of the crown prince's sweeping Vision 2030 project that aims to modern-

ize Saudi society and economy. At its core is spending on sports by the \$900 billion sovereign wealth operation, the Public Investment Fund, which Salman oversees.

Critics have accused Saudi Arabia of "sportswashing," an effort to rebrand a nation's troubling public image that has been going on for decades, using the Olympics and other sports across the globe.

Alalshikh purchased Ring Magazine in November and is set to stage a May 2 boxing card in Times Square.

The fighters on the card are known: Ryan Garcia against Rolando "Rolly" Romero in the main event; Devin Haney against Jose Ramirez in the co-main; and Teofimo Lopez against Arnold Barboza Jr. in a title fight as the opener.

Up next, Saudi Arabia's biggest partnership yet, this one with the global leaders in mixed martial arts and professional wrestling.

"This landmark partnership between industry powerhouses sets the stage for an unparalleled experience for boxers and fans," Alalshikh said. "Together, we are developing the next generation of talent and delivering world-class events at a time when the sport is primed for further disruption."

White said he's not interested in celebrity bouts at the outset - such as Jake Paul's win over a 58-year-old Mike Tyson - and that his unnamed promotion will not be confined to fight nights only in Saudi Arabia.

"I'm going to take this thing everywhere," White said. "We're going all over the US. We're going to Mexico, Canada, Brazil, Australia, the UK. The list goes on. Just like UFC. You can't build a boxing business without America. You have to have the United States to have a truly successful sport."

Pritchard scores career-high 43 to lead Celtics over Trail Blazers

Harden has 24th 50-point game, 1 shy of Bryant for 3rd all-time

BOSTON, March 6, (AP) — Payton Pritchard scored a career-high 43 points and knocked down a career-best 10 3-pointers to lead the short-handed Boston Celtics past the Portland Trail Blazers 128-118 on Wednesday night.

Derrick White added career highs with 41 points and nine 3s to lead Boston to its eighth victory in 10 games, making Pritchard and White the first Celtic duo to score 40 or more points in the same game and the first duo in NBA history with nine or more 3-pointers each in a game.

With starters Jayson Tatum (shoulder), Jrue Holiday (finger) and Kristaps Porzingis (illness) all sitting out, Pritchard picked up the scoring load for a Celtics team that made 23 3-pointers.

The game remained tight throughout the first half, featuring five ties and 15 lead changes. But Boston outscored the Blazers 36-27 in the third quarter.

Anfernee Simons led Portland with 30 points and Shaedon Sharpe added 25.

Clippers 123, Pistons 115

In Inglewood, James Harden scored 50 points, his 24th career 50-point game and first with the Clippers, and Los Angeles beat Detroit.

Harden scored 23 in the first quarter and ended up with the eighth 50-point game in franchise history, the first since Lou Williams on Jan. 10, 2018, at Golden State.

Bogdan Bogdanovic added 23 points and Ivica Zubac had 22 points and 11 rebounds for the Clippers, who played without Kawhi Leonard (knee) and Norman Powell (hamstring) on the second night of back-to-back games.

Cade Cunningham had 37 points and 10 assists for the Pistons, who lost for just the second time in 12 games.

Cavaliers 112, Heat 107

In Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell scored 26 points, Darius Garland had 10 assists and Cleveland survived some sloppiness in the final two minutes to win their 12th straight game, over banged-up Miami.

With the win, the Cavs became the first team to clinch a playoff berth.

It wasn't easy as the Heat, who were missing several rotational players, led 107-106 with 2:55 left. But Miami didn't score again and Duncan Robinson's apparent tying 3-pointer with 17.4 seconds left was waved off because he stepped out of bounds.

Bam Adebayo scored a season-high 34 points for Miami, which was without leading scorer Tyler Herro.



Milwaukee Bucks' Giannis Antetokounmpo fouls Dallas Mavericks' Olivier-Maxence Prosper during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Milwaukee. (AP)

Evan Mobley and De'Andre Hunter added 16 points apiece for Cleveland.

Bucks 137, Mavericks 107

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 32 points to bring his career total over 20,000, Damian Lillard added 34 points and Kevin Porter Jr. had a triple-double as surging Milwaukee trounced short-handed Dallas.

The 30-year-old Antetokounmpo has scored 20,010 career points, becoming the 52nd player to reach 20,000. The only players to get to the 20,000-point mark at a younger age were LeBron James, Kevin Durant, Kobe Bryant, Wilt Chamberlain and Michael Jordan.

Antetokounmpo, who played less than 25 minutes, also had 15 rebounds as the Bucks won for the eighth time in their last nine games.

Porter had 10 points and 11 rebounds while playing 26 minutes off the bench, and he matched a career high with 14 assists. His previous triple-doubles came in March 2022 and March 2023 with the Houston Rockets.

Klay Thompson scored 28 for the Mavericks, who had only eight available players in their first game since Kyrie Irving tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee on Monday.

Nuggets 116, Kings 110

In Denver, Nikola Jokic had 22 points and 14 rebounds, Russell Westbrook scored 25 points, and Denver rallied in the fourth quarter to

beat Sacramento.

Jamal Murray added 24 points for Denver, which has won the first three games between the teams this season.

DeMar DeRozan scored 18 of his 35 points in the third quarter to give Sacramento a 93-84 lead heading into the fourth, but Westbrook gave the Nuggets a lift with seven straight points.

Zeke Nnaji's 3-pointer from the top of the circle put Denver ahead 96-95, its first lead since the first quarter, but Zach LaVine heated up after the Nuggets went up 110-104. He scored 12 of his 20 points in the fourth, including two deep 3-pointers that kept the Kings without three.

Westbrook hit another 3-pointer and Murray and Jokic sealed it from the line.

Thunder 120, Grizzlies 103

In Memphis, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 41 points and keyed a third-quarter rally as Oklahoma City beat Memphis.

Jalen Williams added 20 points and Aaron Wiggins had 16 for the Thunder, who have now won five straight games and seven of their last eight. Isaiah Hartenstein finished with 10 points and 15 rebounds.

Ja Morant, who returned after missing two games with a sore shoulder, led Memphis with 24 points, but was 8 of 22 from the field. Desmond Bane and Scotty Pippen Jr. finished with 15 points each as Memphis dropped its fourth straight and seventh in its last nine games.

The Thunder used a 15-6 run to create a slight buffer in the second quarter, then outscored Memphis 30-23 in the third.

Timberwolves 125, Hornets 110

In Charlotte, Anthony Edwards and Jaden McDaniels scored 29 points apiece and Minnesota beat Charlotte.

Julius Randle finished with 25 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists for the Timberwolves, who won their third straight. McDaniels grabbed 10 rebounds.

LaMelo Ball had 28 points, 10 rebounds and six assists for Charlotte, which has lost eight straight. Miles Bridges added 23 points, nine rebounds and five assists.

The Timberwolves took the lead with 5:40 remaining in the first quarter and did not give it up. The score was 65-58 by halftime, with Edwards racking up 16 points in the half.

Wizards 125, Jazz 122

In Washington, Kyshawn George scored 23 points, Alex Sarraf added 21 and Washington edged Utah.

Seven of the nine players used by Washington were in double figures, with Justin Champagnie coming off the bench for 17 points.

Johnny Juzang scored 27 points and Kyle Filipowski had 23 points and 13 rebounds for the Jazz, who have lost 10 straight road games.

Isaiah Collier finished with 19 points, six rebounds and six assists. Brice Sensabaugh scored 15 points but missed a 3-pointer to tie with a second to play.

FIFA excludes Europe until 2035

US-Mexico joint bid for 2031 Women's WC gets clearer path

ZURICH, March 6, (AP) — The expected bid by the United States and Mexico to co-host the 2031 Women's World Cup can face only a rival bid from Africa, with FIFA on Wednesday excluding Europe from the contest.

FIFA also invited bids for the 2035 tournament only from Europe or Africa, and the four British federations - England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales - said they would enter the contest.

FIFA said it expected to pick hosts for both tournaments at its annual congress next year, likely to be held on the eve of the men's 2026 World Cup being co-hosted by the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

The U.S. and Mexico bid has been favored to win 2031 Women's World Cup hosting rights since last year, when the two federations pulled out of bidding for the 2027 edition. That tournament will be played in Brazil, which beat a European co-hosting bid from Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands.

The North American soccer body CONCACAF is due its turn to host another Women's World Cup ahead of European body UEFA.

Canada hosted the 2015 tournament and France hosted the 2019 edition. The U.S. hosted the Women's World Cup in 1999 and 2003. Australia and New Zealand co-hosted in 2023.

No African country has hosted a Women's World Cup, with the inaugural edition in 1991. South Africa's bid in the 2027 contest was withdrawn months

before getting to the vote.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer backed a 2035 bid.

"Football is and always will be at the core of our country's identity," he said. "The FIFA Women's World Cup 2035 on home turf would be another monumental moment in our sporting history, driving growth and leaving a lasting legacy."

The Football Associations of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales will submit a declaration of interest to FIFA in the first quarter of this year.

England hosted the Women's European Championship in 2022 and, in a joint bid with Ireland, Scotland and Wales, will stage the men's Euros in 2028.

Top women's soccer teams finally will play a Club World Cup in 2028, nearly nine years after FIFA publicly committed to the idea.

FIFA said Wednesday that 19 teams will take part in the first four-yearly tournament in January-February 2028.

Six teams - one from each continent - will enter play-in games for three places in the 16-team group phase, leading to a knockout bracket of eight teams, FIFA said.

Europe will get five of the 13 direct entries and two each go to North American region CONCACAF, South America, Africa and Asia. The host venue has yet to be decided, FIFA said.

Before the inaugural edition, an annual tournament for the six continental champions will see teams competing for the Women's Champions Cup in 2026.



Manchester City's Laura Wienroither, center, in action during the Women's Super League soccer match between West Ham United Women v Manchester City Women at the Chigwell Construction Stadium in Dagenham, England. (AP)

Lyon coach Fonseca banned 9 months for confronting referee

PARIS, March 6, (AP) —

Lyon coach Paulo Fonseca has been banned from the touchline at games for nine months for aggressively confronting the referee at a French league game.

Fonseca also is banned from the locker room and access to players at games until Sept. 15, the French league said in a disciplinary ruling on Wednesday.

The ban applies just to domestic games and can let Fonseca work on Thursday in the UEFA-organized Europa League. Lyon plays a first-leg game of the round of 16 in Romania against FCFSB.

Fonseca angrily confronted referee Benoit Millot on Sunday about a potential penalty for Brest deep in stoppage time as Lyon led

2-1.

After being shown a card, Fonseca approached the referee and leaned in very close to his face before being pushed away by Lyon captain Corentin Tolisso.

Fonseca tried to confront the referee a second time and was restrained by a couple of Lyon players.

It was Fonseca's fifth game in charge of Lyon since being hired in January by the club's American owner John Textor. The Portuguese coach was fired by AC Milan in December after just six months in charge.

Lyon said on Wednesday it regretted Fonseca was judged for his emotional reaction and he had no intent to physically attack the referee. The club is considering an appeal and noted

the context of criticism of refereeing in French soccer.

Marseille president Pablo Longoria was given a 15-match ban last week after he accused French referees of "true corruption."

Ole Miss stuns Tennessee behind Brakefield's late surge

OXFORD, Miss., March 6,

(AP) — Jaemyn Brakefield scored all 19 of his points in the final 11 minutes, including a tiebreaking basket with 7 seconds remaining that lifted Mississippi over No. 4

Tennessee 78-76 on Wednesday night.

Brakefield rebounded a missed 3-pointer from Sean Pedulla and fought through traffic inside to convert the decisive layup. Malik Dia

and Dre Davis had 13 points apiece for Ole Miss (21-9, 10-7 Southeastern Conference), and Matthew Murrell added 12.

The Rebels are 5-0 in games decided by four points or fewer since late January.

Tennessee (24-6, 11-6) had an opportunity in the last few seconds, but a short running jumper by Igor Milicic Jr. bounced off the rim. The loss snapped a four-game winning streak.

Terrance Edwards Jr. scored a career-high 35 points to lead No. 14 Louisville to an 85-68 victory over California.

Edwards, the Sun Belt Player of the Year last season for James Madison, provided early offense as he made six of his first eight shots to give

the Cardinals (24-6, 17-2 Atlantic Coast Conference) a 22-19 lead with 7:22 remaining before halftime.

Meanwhile, Edwards' teammates missed a combined 10 of 11 shots during that span. Edwards shot 11 of 19 overall from the field and set a career high with seven 3-pointers in 11 attempts.

Chucky Hepburn added 16 points, seven rebounds and five assists for Louisville. J'Yonne Hadley finished with 16 points and eight rebounds.

Jovan Blacksher Jr. scored 22 points for California (13-17, 6-13), which also got 11 from Jeremiah Wilkerson.

Louisville led by as much as 53-29 after Hepburn's three-point play with 17:20 left. The Bears drew as close

as 13 at 64-51 after DJ Campbell's 3-pointer with 11:36 remaining, but the Cardinals pulled away again.

JT Toppin had 30 points and 14 rebounds as ninth-ranked Texas Tech led throughout in a 91-75 win over Colorado, clinching a double-bye for the Red Raiders into the quarterfinal round in next week's Big 12 Tournament. It was 13th double-double this season for Toppin, the sophomore who is a transfer from New Mexico. He led five players scoring in double figures for Tech (23-7, 14-5 Big 12) in its home finale.

Chance McMillian added 15 points, while Christian Anderson and Kerwin Walton each had 12. Darrion Williams scored 11.

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NZ sets up Champions Trophy final against India



South Africa's Wiaan Mulder bowls a delivery during the ICC Champions Trophy semifinal cricket match between New Zealand and South Africa at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore, Pakistan. (AP)



New Zealand's Kane Williamson plays a shot during the ICC Champions Trophy semifinal cricket match between New Zealand and South Africa at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore, Pakistan. (AP)

South Africa falls again in knockout stage of ICC tournament

LAHORE, Pakistan, March 6, (AP): Centuries from batting sensation Rachin Ravindra and the ever reliable Kane Williamson powered New Zealand into the Champions Trophy final with a resounding 50-run win over South Africa in the second semifinal.

New Zealand will now travel to Dubai for Sunday's final against India, after Virat Kohli's 84 anchored India to a four-wicket win over Australia in the first semifinal on Tuesday.

The 25-year-old Ravindra hit 108 runs off 101 balls and raised his fifth ODI hundred at an ICC tournament. Williamson also impressed with 102 off 94 as New Zealand scored the tournament's highest ever score of 362-6 in its 50 overs.

After winning the toss and electing to bat first, the Black Caps bettered Australia's Champions Trophy record of 355 made against England in the group stage at the same venue last month.

South Africa, which was unbeaten in the group stage, again fell in the knockout stage of an ICC tournament.

South Africa knew it was going to lose with 99 runs needed off the last three overs but David Miller (100 not out) reduced the scale of defeat by smashing 48 runs in those three overs - including seven fours and two sixes - as his team finished on 312-9.

Miller raised his 67-ball century off the final ball with two runs.

Half centuries from Rassie van der Dussen (69) and captain Temba Bavuma (56) kept the Proteas in the race by the halfway stage before New Zealand skipper Mitchell Santner squeezed the chase with 3-43 in 10 overs.

South Africa's batters also struggled against three other spinners with Glenn Phillips (2-27), Ravindra (1-20) and Michael Bracewell (1-53) sharing five wickets between them.

It was New Zealand's third win at the Gaddafi Stadium in almost a month after victories against host Pakistan and South Africa in the warmup tri-nation series last month.

"It's a cool feeling to make the final," Santner said. "The platform we were able to set with Rachin and Kane, and set up the death phase earlier, was great ... We got four allrounders who bowl spin, that gives (us) depth."

Van der Dussen and Bavuma shared a run-a-ball 105 second-wicket stand before New Zealand spinners spun their web.

Bavuma was lured by Santner's flighted ball and gave Williamson a regulation catch at point, and van der Dussen couldn't read a delivery that spun away just enough to have him clean bowled, as South Africa slipped to 161-3 in the 27th over.

Heinrich Klaasen (3) was then caught off Santner by a diving Matt Henry, who hurt his right shoulder while completing a brilliant diving catch. Aiden Markram gave a tame return catch to Ravindra and the chase got derailed.

With wickets falling all round him, Miller raised a personal milestone with his late assault. Ravindra and Williamson set the platform for a strong total with a 164-run second-wicket stand after Lungi Ngidi deceived Will Young with a slower ball and had him caught at mid-off in the powerplay.

Ravindra and Williamson rotated the strike and punished any loose ball from fast bowlers by boundaries. Both batters used their feet well against left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj, who returned his second most expensive figures of 0-65 in ODIs since his debut against England in 2017.

Ravindra, who made three hundreds at the 2023 World Cup in India, and also a century against Bangladesh in the group game of the Champions Trophy at Rawalpindi, was dismissed when he edged Kagiso Rabada after hitting 13 boundaries and a six.

Williamson took his time to settle down and got a lucky escape on 56 when wicketkeeper Klaasen couldn't hold onto a sharp chance.

Williamson took 61 balls to complete his half century, but pushed the scoring rate and raced to his 15th ODI hundred off the next 30 balls when he scooped Wiaan Mulder behind the wicket for a boundary before falling to the same shot shortly after.

Daryl Mitchell (49) and Phillips (49 not out) cut loose in the death overs and despite both missing out on their half centuries they helped New Zealand accumulate 110 runs off the final 10 overs.

Phillips smashed Marco Jansen for four successive boundaries before New Zealand surpassed Australia's tournament record in the last over. Ngidi (3-72), Rabada (2-70) and Jansen (0-79) all proved expensive while Mulder gave away 48 runs off his six overs.

"New Zealand were above par," Bavuma said. "We had one or two good partnerships but not enough ... New Zealand really put us under pressure from the get-go."

FIFA to distribute 1 bln dollars in prize money to 2025 Club World Cup teams

Indonesia naturalizes 3 footballers to boost national team for WC qualifiers

JAKARTA, March 6, (Xinhua) - The Indonesian Football Association (PSSI) has recruited three soccer players of Indonesian descent through naturalization to bolster the national team ahead of the third round of the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers for the Asian zone, the association announced in a press release on Thursday.

According to the statement, the Indonesian House of Representatives approved the naturalization applications of Dean Ruben James, Joey Mathijs Pelupessy, and Emil Audero Mulyadi at the parliament building on Thursday.

The next step involves submitting the naturalization documents of the three players to President Prabowo Subianto for the issuance of a presidential decree, a requirement for their oath-taking as Indonesian citizens. According to Arya Sinulingga, a member of the PSSI executive committee, President Prabowo is scheduled to sign the presidential decree for the three players on Friday.

"We are informed that the presidential decree will be signed by the President tomorrow (March 7), to be immediately then processed in preparation for the swearing-in of Indonesian citizens



In this file photo, FIFA President Gianni Infantino, left, and Vice President Vittorio Montagliani stand with the FIFA World Cup trophy in New York. (AP)

scheduled no later than March 10," Sinulingga said in the press release.

PSSI chairman Erick Thohir expressed his gratitude to parliament for approving the naturalization process and conveyed his optimism about the enhanced strength of the Indonesian national team following the inclusion of the three players.

□ □ □

World's football governing body FIFA announced on Wednesday that a total of one billion U.S. dollars prize money will be distributed to teams taking part in the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup.

The first edition of the 32-team FIFA Club World Cup will be hosted in the United States from June to July 2025.

FIFA said its new flagship tournament

is expected to generate two billion U.S. dollars in revenue, with one billion being distributed to participating clubs and provision for a solidarity mechanism that will be dedicated to club football across the world.

"The FIFA Club World Cup will not only be the pinnacle of club football, but also a vivid demonstration of solidarity that will benefit clubs at large to a scale that no other competition has ever done," said FIFA President Gianni Infantino.

"All revenue generated by the tournament will be distributed to the participating clubs and via club solidarity across the world as FIFA will not keep a single dollar." FIFA also said that the new FIFA Women's Club World Cup will take place in 2028, and will feature a competitive format with 19 of the world's top clubs involved.

In addition, FIFA announced the bidding process for 2031 and 2035 Women's World Cup, with member associations affiliated to Africa and North America invited to bid for the 2031 edition, while African and European associations are invited to bid for the 2035 tournament.

'Aaqib analysis hilarious'

Gillespie says he was undermined before quitting as Pakistan coach

ISLAMABAD, March 6, (AP) - Jason Gillespie says he was undermined before quitting as Pakistan test cricket coach last December.

Gillespie was a fast bowler who played 71 tests and 97 one-day internationals for Australia from 1996-2006 before going into coaching.

He was appointed last April for two years as Pakistan's test coach but quit before a series in South Africa less than eight months later after an unsuccessful start.

He was the second foreigner to leave Pakistan's program in less than two months after South African Gary Kirsten stepped down as limited-overs coach in October.

Aaqib, Pakistan's national selector and interim head coach, acknowledged this week after Pakistan's failure to reach the knockout stage of the Champions Trophy - following losses to New Zealand and India - that the chopping and changing hasn't helped the national team.

"We have changed nearly 16 coaches and 26 selectors in the last two years or so," he was quoted as saying at a news conference to announce the latest overhaul of Pakistan's limited-overs squads. "You put that formula on any team in the world, I think they will also be in the same situation."

"Until you get consistency right from the top down to the bottom, from the chairman down, then your team will not progress."

Gillespie responded to those comments by posting an Instagram story late Wednesday describing the analysis as "hilarious."

"Aaqib was clearly undermining Gary and I behind the scenes campaigning to be the coach in all formats," Gillespie posted.

Aaqib, a former Pakistan cricket international, had been acting as interim coach of the limited-overs squads following Kirsten's departure when he took over the test squad from Gillespie.

Aaqib's contract initially ran until the Champions Trophy but he is set to continue in the role while the Pakistan Cricket Board searches for a full-time replacement.

'We are improving in key areas, but it takes time'

Wavering Dortmund plagued by form, fitness issues

BERLIN, March 6, (Xinhua) - The injury loss of winter arrival Daniel Svensson is adding to Borussia Dortmund's struggles.

With progress in the 2024-25 UEFA Champions League in jeopardy following a disappointing 1-1 draw in the first leg of the round of 16 against Lille, the 23-year-old Swedish full-back's three-week absence is another challenge for coach

Niko Kovac.

In addition to concerns about the second leg in France next Wednesday, tensions remain high in the Bundesliga. Despite a recent slight improvement, the club still sits only tenth in Germany's top flight.

While the Champions League campaign could provide additional income, Dortmund does not appear to be in shape to compete for the

2025 title. More concerning is the growing possibility of missing out on one of the four qualification spots for next season's competition.

In the Bundesliga, Dortmund trails the top four by six points and is struggling with visible fitness issues. Although Kovac has kept the results of a recent fitness test private, media reports suggest the findings were concerning.

These reports align with the difficulties seen on the pitch against Lille last Tuesday. Dortmund striker Karim Adeyemi, who scored the opening goal, spoke about fatigue but refused to use it as an excuse.

After half-time, Dortmund lost control of the match, continuing a pattern of inconsistency that has plagued the season. German sports magazine Kicker noted that Kovac is dealing with burdens from the past and questioned the squad's fitness levels.

"We have a good start, miss some chances, but then energy and concentration seem to run out," Kovac rued.

Despite setbacks, the coach is working to build confidence among his players. "This requires a collective effort," the 53-year-old said. "It's still possible, but it takes 100 percent from everyone. We are improving in key areas, but it takes time - we can't just flip a switch." Meanwhile, future challenges loom. Reports suggest Dortmund will need to make significant budget cuts if the team fails to qualify for the Champions League, potentially leading to the departure of key players such as Adeyemi, Jamie Gittens, Gregor Kobel, Serhou Guirassy or Nico Schlotterbeck.

Media outlet Sport Bild reported that players under contract could face salary reductions of up to 15 percent if targets such as qualification for the 2025-26 Champions League are not met.



Dortmund's Jamie Bynoe-Gittens, left, and Lille's Bafode Diakite go for the ball during the Champions League round of 16 first leg soccer, between Borussia Dortmund and Lille at the Signa-Iduna Park in Dortmund, Germany. (AP)

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In this file photo, Kazma player shoots the ball as an opponent defends.

Sports

Al-Salmiya eyes redemption against Burgan in Crown Prince Cup

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: The preliminary round of the Crown Prince Cup Championship continues Friday, with two key matchups. Kazma faces Yarmouk at Thamer Stadium at 9:30 pm, while Al-Salmiya takes on Burgan at Al-Sadaka and Al-Salam Stadium at the same time. The action extends into Saturday with a single clash between Fahaheel and Al-Shabab at Nasser Al-Osaimi Stadium, also at 9:30 pm.

Meanwhile, several matches have been postponed, including Al-Jahra vs. Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabi vs. Al-Sahel, and Al-Qadisiya vs. Al-Nasr. The rescheduling is due to Al-Arabi's participation in the Asian Challenge Cup and Al-Qadisiya's involvement in the Gulf Champions League.

Kazma and Yarmouk head into their showdown under similar circumstances, both struggling this season and facing relegation battles in the Zain Premier League. They are set for a crucial league clash at the end of March, followed by another meeting in the fourth-round league stage in April. The only previous encounter this season ended in Kazma's

favor with a 2-0 victory. Kazma now looks to assert dominance and bounce back from inconsistent league form, while Yarmouk seeks a long-awaited first win after drawing six and losing ten of its 16 league matches.

In the other fixture, Al-Salmiya eyes a spot in the quarter-finals at Burgan's expense. However, Croatian coach Ante Misa and his squad acknowledge the challenge ahead, having suffered a 2-0 defeat to Burgan in December 2023. Burgan, delivering strong performances in the First Division League, aims to repeat that success against the Sky Blues.

Fahaheel and Al-Shabab lock horns in their first meeting

of the season. Their last encounter was in the 2024 Amir Cup, where Fahaheel cruised to a 4-1 victory. Both teams have been in solid form—Fahaheel has secured a Premier League spot, while Al-Shabab leads the Zain First Division League.

Historically, their Crown Prince Cup encounters have been memorable. In the 2015-2016 edition, Al-Shabab triumphed 3-1 on penalties after a 1-1 draw. Their most famous showdown came in the 2014-2015 quarter-finals, where a 2-2 draw led to a dramatic penalty shootout, ultimately won by Fahaheel (14-13).



The Kuwaiti Special Winter Olympic delegation.

Kuwaiti delegation heads to Italy for Special Winter Oly

KUWAIT CITY, March 6, (KUNA): The head of Kuwait's Special Olympic delegation Khaled Al-Nasser, affirmed on Thursday that Kuwaiti athletes are determined to excel in the Special Winter Olympic Games in Turin, Italy.

Speaking to KUNA before the team's departure, Al-Nasser highlighted that Kuwait will compete in the 12th edition of the event, held from March 8 to 15. He emphasized that the athletes had undergone intensive training camps in the UAE and Egypt under expert supervision.

The Kuwaiti team features Mariam Dhiab in snowboarding and Hajar Al-Rashidi in snow running, both aiming for strong performances on the international stage.

Hoda Al-Khaldi, Executive Manager of Al-Tomoooh Sports Club for Intellectual Disabilities, expressed confidence in Kuwait's delegation, stating that she expects the athletes to achieve remarkable results in Turin.

Dr. Ismail Habash, a specialized emergency physician accompanying the team, noted that his participation aligns with the Ministry of Health's commitment to supporting athletes with special needs.

The Special Winter Olympic Games in Turin, set to commence on March 15, will host 1,500 competitors and 1,000 trainers from 100 countries, fostering inclusivity and excellence in sports.

Wasteful PSG stumbles against Liverpool

Bayern routs Leverkusen as 10-man Barcelona beats Benfica

MANCHESTER, England, March 6, (AP): Harvey Elliott scored less than a minute after coming on as a late substitute to fire Liverpool to a stunning 1-0 win at Paris Saint-Germain in the first leg of the Champions League round of 16.

Runaway Premier League leader Liverpool had survived a barrage of attacks at Parc des Princes to keep the score at 0-0 going into the final stages.

Elliott was sent on to replace Mohamed Salah in the 86th minute and became an unlikely hero by sweeping a low shot into the corner of the net with his first touch of the match.

"To go away with a win over here was probably a bit more than we deserved," Liverpool coach Arne Slot admitted after watching goalkeeper Alisson pull off a string of saves in a match dominated by PSG.

Bayern Munich took a big step toward the quarterfinals with a 3-0 win against German champion Bayer Leverkusen and 10-man Barcelona beat Benfica 1-0.

Inter Milan won 2-0 at Feyenoord. PSG's players will be left wondering how they failed to take a lead into next Tuesday's second leg at Anfield after creating a slew of chances.

January signing Khvicha Kvaratskhelia was outstanding and repeatedly forced Alisson into action in each half.

The Brazil goalkeeper later de-



Munich's Harry Kane celebrates after scoring the opening goal during the Champions League round of 16 first leg soccer match between FC Bayern Munich and Bayer 04 Leverkusen in Munich, Germany. (AP)

scribed it as possibly the performance of his life after also denying Ousmane Dembele in a one-on-one and stopping another effort from Desire Doue.

The one time Alisson was beaten - by a curling shot from Kvaratskhelia in the first half - the goal was ruled out by VAR for offside.

"It's difficult to think about the match in a positive way. We deserved to win, clearly," said PSG coach Luis Enrique. "Football many times is unfair and we have to accept that, but we are ready to (go to) Liverpool."

"We don't have anything to lose."

It was the first time PSG had been beaten in 23 games in all competitions.

Watching on from the stands was former PSG player David Beckham.

Despite signing a host of superstar players like the ex-England captain, Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappe, the French giant is yet to win the Champions League.

Liverpool, meanwhile, has lifted the trophy on six occasions and underlined its know-how in this competition by soaking up the pressure before delivering a late sucker punch.

An inspired substitution by Slot helped as well.

Salah had been unusually ineffective and looked frustrated as the signal came up for him to leave the field. But moments later, Elliott came up with the decisive moment.

"For us, the only way over here with their fans behind them was to defend as we did and now we are hoping of course that our fans at Anfield will help us," Slot said.

Lautaro Martinez became Inter's all-time leading scorer in the Champions League with his 18th goal in European club soccer's most prestigious competition, overtaking club great Sandro Mazzola's record.

Brazilian Adriano also scored 18 goals in the Champions League, but that included qualifying games.

Martinez's landmark goal is notable, given some of the iconic forwards to have played for Inter, including Ronaldo, Christian Vieri and Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

He fired high into the corner of the net in the 50th minute in Rotterdam to double Inter's lead after Marcus Thuram struck in the 38th.

The 2023 finalist could have been in an even more commanding position after the first leg, but Piotr Ziel-



Liverpool's Luis Diaz, left, and PSG's Nuno Mendes jump for the ball during the Champions League round of 16 first leg soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Liverpool in Paris, France. (AP)

inski's penalty in the 65th was saved by Timon Wellenreuther.

Raphinha scored a second-half winner as 10-man Barcelona got the better of Benfica again.

The Brazil forward had scored twice in a thrilling 5-4 come-from-behind win at Benfica in the league phase and he was on target again at the Stadium of Light.

Intercepting a loose pass by de-

fender António Silva outside the area, Raphinha sent a left-footed shot into the far corner in the 61st.

Victory came despite Pau Cubarsi's red card in the 22nd.

Bayern is eyeing the quarterfinals after a comfortable 3-0 win over 10-man Leverkusen, which had defender Nordi Mukiele sent off in the 62nd.

Harry Kane scored twice to end his four game-scoring drought and

Jamal Musiala capitalized on a mistake from Leverkusen 'keeper Matej Kovar to give Bayern a big advantage going to Leverkusen for the second leg next Tuesday.

Kane's second goal was a penalty, his 30th successful spot kick in a row.

It was Bayern's first win over a Leverkusen team coached by its former player Xabi Alonso at the seventh attempt.

Al Arabi seeks to finish the job against Al Seeb in Asian Challenge Cup 2nd leg

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 6: Al Arabi delegation is set to depart for Muscat, Oman, next Monday in preparation for its second-leg clash against Al Seeb in the Asian Challenge Cup quarter-finals. The match is scheduled for next Wednesday.

In the first-leg encounter at Jaber Al Mubarak Stadium, Al Arabi secured a 1-0 victory thanks to Bandar Al Salamah's stoppage-time goal.

Al Arabi head coach Nasser Al Shatti described the one-goal win as convincing, emphasizing the strength of Al Seeb, which features 10 international players. He also highlighted his team's performance despite the absence of a natural striker.

Moroccan forward Hamza Khaba played the final 15 minutes of the

match. Al Shatti praised his players'



Al-Arabi and Al-Seeb players fighting for the ball.

determination and expressed confidence in their ability to deliver a strong performance in Muscat. He noted that the tie remains open, but Al Arabi will fight to secure qualification and bring joy to their fans.

Regarding officiating, Al Shatti welcomed the use of VAR technology in the Challenge Cup and other AFC tournaments.

Al Seeb player Ahmed Al-Khamisi acknowledged Al Arabi's home advantage but remained hopeful that his team could turn the tie around in the return leg to advance to the semi-finals.

The winner of the Al Arabi vs. Al Seeb clash will face either East Bengal (India), the 2024 Indian Super Cup champion, or Arkadag (Turkmenistan), who is making its debut in AFC competitions.

Best of the Rest

Cerro Porteno gains edge: Midfielder Robert Piris da Motta converted a first-half penalty to give Paraguay's Cerro Porteno a 1-0 win over Peruvian side Melgar in the first leg of its Copa Libertadores qualifier on Wednesday.

Piris da Motta held his nerve in the 34th minute at the Monumental stadium after Carlos Caceda brought down Juan Iturbe with a bad foul in the area.

The hosts controlled 66 percent of possession and had 17 shots on goal but failed to find a way past Paraguay international goalkeeper Gatito Fernandez. "Our players showed great character to get this result given that we haven't been at our best lately," Cerro Porteno manager Diego Martinez told a post-match news conference.

"Melgar is a tough opponent with an established way of playing. But we were up to the challenge and the players deserve a lot of credit." The second leg will be played in the Paraguayan capital Asuncion on March 12. (Xinhua)

Barcelona SC beats Corinthians: Janner Corozo scored twice as Ecuador's Barcelona SC edged toward the Copa Libertadores group stage with a 3-0 home win over Brazilian side Corinthians in the first leg of its qualifying playoff on Thursday.

Ecuador international winger Corozo converted a penalty on the stroke of halftime at the Monumental stadium in Guayaquil and Octavio Rivero doubled the advantage with an 80th-minute header after Bryan Carbali's cross.

The host put the result beyond doubt when Corozo's powerful shot deflected off the outstretched right leg of goalkeeper Hugo Souza six minutes from time. "This is a result that keeps our dream alive. It's an advantage. But we haven't won anything yet, and we now have a big game ahead of us in Brazil," Barcelona SC manager Segundo Castillo told a post-match news conference. (Xinhua)