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Opinion

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Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Finance Minister: Social Security Institution is a milk udder that feeds thousands of citizens

THE Public Institution for Social Security has a strange story. Despite having substantial income sources including the monthly dues that around 160,000 retirees used to pay, and the various investments, it suffers from an actuarial deficit.

The institution was once praised for its efficiency in processing transactions through the so-called "comprehensive employee" system. However, it seems that it has now caught the same illness of procrastination and inefficiency that plagues many other public institutions. It has become yet another official entity that contributes to disguised unemployment.

Based on a new policy, retirees now have to wait between five and six months to receive their first pension. The fresh retirees, as the saying goes in Sham, are left with no choice but to "hang their tongue on the wall and tie a stone to their stomachs" to ease the pain of hunger during these months of agonizing wait.

If this retiree is a debtor, his situation becomes even more severe, especially with the recent activation of the debtor arrest action, even for small amounts of debt. There is no doubt that he will be imprisoned until the debt is repaid.

May God help the personnel in police stations and detention centers, as they will face considerable congestion in the near future, especially from elderly retirees, due to the enforcement of debtor arrests and imprisonment.

It is worth noting that the creditor who extends loans to those who cannot afford repayment should be held accountable. However, the state has not considered this fact. The debtor, particularly from this category, finds himself at the mercy of the employees of the Public Institution for Social Security, usurers, or other creditors.

Returning to our topic, booking appointments

"online" at the institution has only added salt to the wound. There is a lot of talk circulating about how many of these appointments are either fictitious or reserved exclusively for friends and relatives.

This procrastination in completing transactions is a major problem for retirees who are left powerless to act.

It is important that we relieve these individuals as much as possible. Is it reasonable for the institution to take four to six months to settle the retirement account of every retiree? Where is the modern technology that we are constantly hearing about?

Retirees deserve to be treated with great care and respect. They have dedicated their entire lives to serving the country, and it is now time for them to enjoy the remaining years of their lives and their retirement salaries. A lazy employee should not add to the suffering of retirees or push them toward frustration. Employees must do their job to the fullest, as they too will eventually retire, and as they sow, so shall they reap.

These 160,000 retirees have their own financial commitments. Therefore, if the state does not take action to secure the livelihoods of retirees using the funds deducted from their salaries throughout their careers, it will lead to even greater suffering for them. As we have mentioned repeatedly, this money must be managed by brilliant minds in economics and investment to ensure that the Kuwaiti people can benefit from it.

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Kuwait's Amir receives Crown Prince, Judiciary Chief, Acting Prime Minister



His Highness the Amir



His Highness the Crown Prince

KUWAIT CITY, March 9, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received the President of the Supreme Judicial Council and President of the Court of Cassation, Counselor Dr. Adel Majed Bouresli.

Further, His Highness the Amir received Acting Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

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Indians, Egyptians top Kuwait's labor market

Kuwaitis third in workforce rankings

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Indian and Egyptian workers ranked first with 25.6 percent and second with 21.8 percent respectively in Kuwait's local labor market as of the end of the third quarter on September 30, 2024. Domestic workers and those in similar positions are not included in this data, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to labor market data released by the Central Statistical Bureau on Thursday, the combined workforce from India and Egypt exceeds one million individuals. This includes 560,787 workers from India and 478,008 workers from Egypt. In comparison, in the end of the third quarter of 2023, there were about 526,808 Indian workers, making up 25 percent of the labor market, and 478,832 Egyptian workers, accounting for 22.7 percent.

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Ramadan Timings

Iftar Monday 17:54
Imsak Tuesday 04:43

Kuwait sets conditions

Gov't to assess lifers for possible freedom

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The official gazette Kuwait Alyoum published Ministerial Resolution No. 397/2025, issued by the Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ali Al-Sabah, regarding the formation of a committee called the "Committee to Follow Up on the Conditions of Those Sentenced to Life Imprisonment", reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The committee consists of a representative from the Public Prosecution whose rank is no less than Attorney General to serve as the Chairman, along with six members including two representatives from the Public Prosecution, the Director General of the General Department of Preventive Security or their representative, the Director General of the General Department of Criminal Investigations or their representative, the Director General of the General Department of Correctional Institutions or their representative, and the Director General of the General Department of Sentences Enforcement or their representative.

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Volunteers in Kuwait prepare iftar meals for the Muslim faithful, offering a warm welcome after a day of fasting during Ramadan.

Photo by Samer Shiqr

Call for legal overhaul

Kuwait races to tighten money laundering laws

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: In light of the economic revolution that the country is currently witnessing, which involves eliminating corruption at its roots, and with the government's efforts to draft a new anti-money laundering law; a group of economic and legal experts have called for addressing loopholes in Law No. 106/2013.

In an investigative report by the newspaper, the experts affirmed the need to identify the reasons behind the failure to implement the current law effectively. They pointed out the urgency of taking comprehensive measures to combat money laundering, especially since the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) previously warned Kuwait of potential inclusion on its gray list.

These experts argue that the persistence of money laundering has serious implications for the national economy, as well as contributing to inflationary pressures.

Ali Al-Attar, a lawyer specializing in money laundering cases, stressed the importance of incorporating comprehensive and urgent money tracking mechanisms in the new law. He suggested that the forthcoming legislation should address the reasons for the ineffective enforcement of the current Anti-Money Laundering Law (No. 106/2013).

He also recommended using the real estate fraud case in Kuwait as a case study in drafting the new law. He said the new law should mandate government agencies to provide investigation authorities

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Kuwait moves toward issuing 'transit' visas to boost tourism

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Following the unprecedented success of the "Khaleeji Zain 26" Championship and its positive impact on tourism in Kuwait, as well as the importance of this sector in the national economy, informed sources revealed that Kuwait is moving towards issuing tourist "transit" visas for those wishing to enter the country for a specific number of days before continuing their travels, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The sources explained that these visas will only be coordinated through Kuwait's national airlines, and visitors must apply for and obtain the visa before arriving in Kuwait. These visas cannot be renewed.

Kuwait, as a major hub for global transit flights between Europe and Asia, stands to benefit from the large number of travelers passing through between the two continents, especially after the opening of Terminal 2 at Kuwait International Airport.

NewsWatch

JEDDAH: Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Hussein Ibrahim Taha welcomed on Sunday the resumption of Syrian membership in the organization. In a press statement, Taha affirmed that the "historic" decision by the OIC Foreign Minister council reflected its support to the Syrian people during this delicate historical crossroad.

The decision came to support Syria's peaceful political transition as well as enabling it to regain its stature amongst nations. (KUNA)

BRUSSELS: The European Union welcomed on Sunday the Gaza reconstruction plan approved by the extraordinary Arab summit held recently in Cairo. In a statement, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas said that the EU

welcomes the Arab Recovery and Reconstruction Plan presented at the Cairo Summit on 4 March and endorsed by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Kallas stressed that the plan represents a serious basis for discussions on the future of the Gaza Strip, and the European Union will discuss these ideas with its Arab partners. (KUNA)

TEHRAN: Parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said on Sunday that Iran would not negotiate the US under threat of sanctions.

During the parliament's open session, Ghalibaf indicated that his country was not waiting for any message from the US, and added that lifting the sanctions could be done by strengthening Iran and strengthening relations with other countries. (KUNA)

Regional, local challenges amplify crisis

Kuwait's domestic worker numbers plunge by 30,000

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The country is facing a worsening crisis related to the shortage of domestic workers, with official statistics revealing a significant decline in their numbers.

The latest data from the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) shows a decrease of 30,377 domestic workers over the past year and a half. By the end of December 2024, the total number of domestic workers in Kuwait reached approximately 780,930; compared to 811,307 in mid-2023.

In an interview with the newspaper, Hamad Al-Ali, an official at the Domestic Workers Recruitment Office, attributed this decline to several factors. He pointed out the reluctance of some Asian countries to send workers to Kuwait

due to the imposition of fees on workers before their arrival. He added the well-known issue of Filipino domestic workers has contributed to the situation. "Furthermore, some Kuwaiti families have opted for fewer domestic workers following a series of incidents involving domestic workers committing crimes against children and wives in recent years," he stated.

Al-Ali also referred to the increasing demand for domestic workers in the Gulf region, with many workers choosing to migrate to other countries due to the competitive job market. "Another factor contributing to the decline is Kuwait's restrictions on certain Asian nationalities, which has further limited the availability of workers," he said.

He went on to note that the number of licensed domestic worker recruitment offices in Kuwait has reached around 450 despite the ongoing challenges in replenishing the workforce.

KISR patents eco-friendly 'virus-resistant' surfaces

By Abdulrahman Al-Shimmari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) announced that its Environmental and Life Sciences Research Center has obtained a patent for a groundbreaking project aimed at developing virus-resistant surfaces using solid waste.

The innovative method incorporates solid plastic waste and biodegradable plastic, enhanced with nanomaterial coatings.

In a press statement Sunday, KISR revealed that the patent — granted by the United States Patent and Trademark Office (US 12 219 959 B1) — is a significant advancement in waste management and valorization in Kuwait. The patented surfaces are designed to resist both the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and common bacteria responsible for transmitting infectious diseases.

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SAB okays PACI's KD 23mn ID deal

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has received approval from the State Audit Bureau (SAB) to proceed with a contract for the supply of smart civil identification card models and packaging requirements, valued at KD 23.005 million for a three-year period.

This is a confirmation of the report that the newspaper published on March 5 with the headline, "KD 23 million to purchase smart civil identification cards in the custody of SAB".

PACI had earlier submitted a request for approval to SAB on Feb 24, which previously granted approval.

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2 Best wishes to Kuwaiti leadership, people and Islamic nations: Saudi envoy



5 Sons of HH late Amir host Ramadan gathering at Yamamah Palace

8 Boursa Kuwait celebrates women's achievements on Intl. Women's Day, ringing the bell for eighth consecutive year

Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:47 Asr 15:21
 Sunrise .. 06:05 Maghrib .. 17:52
 Zohr 11:59 Isha 19:09

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Warm and partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate northeasterly wind, with speeds of 06-26 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

By Night: Rather cold and cloudy to partly cloudy with light

Weather

variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	25	14
Kuwait Airport	26	14

Abdaly	27	12
Bubyan	24	12
Jahra	27	15
Failaka Island	22	14
Salmiyah	24	15
Ahmadi	22	10
Jal Aliyah	25	13
Nuwaisib	27	14



Saudi ambassador Prince Sultan bin Sa'ad with Kuwaiti ministers and dignitaries.



Saudi Ambassador Prince Sultan bin Sa'ad receives His Highness Sheikh Dr Mohammad Al-Sabah.



Saudi ambassador Prince Sultan bin Sa'ad receives Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times.



Saudi ambassador Prince Sultan bin Sa'ad in talks with the US ambassador to Kuwait Karen Sasahara.



Editor-in-Chief Al-Seyassah and Arab Times shakes hands with the Tajikistan ambassador to Kuwait.

Photos by Rizk Taufiq
Saudi ambassador with a guest.

Saudi ambassador receives the Farwaniya governor.



Saudi Ambassador Prince Sultan bin Sa'ad with ambassadors.



Saudi Ambassador meets some guests

Best wishes to Kuwaiti leadership, people, Islamic nations: Saudi envoy

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Sa'ad expressed his heartfelt greetings on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

While receiving well-wishers at the Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Ambassador bin Saad conveyed his best wishes to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid, the esteemed Kuwaiti people, and the Arab and Islamic nations. He prayed to Almighty Allah to accept everyone's fasting, prayers and good deeds dur-

ing this blessed month.

The ambassador also expressed his deep appreciation for the spirit of brotherhood and social unity he has observed in Kuwait over the years, particularly during Ramadan, with the traditions of diwanis and social visits. He commended the strength and cohesion of the Kuwaiti social fabric, which continues to grow stronger

each year, and expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome and generous hospitality that define Kuwaiti society.

In conclusion, the ambassador prayed to Almighty Allah to protect Kuwait and its people, granting them security and stability; and wished everyone acceptance and blessings in this holy month.

Kuwaiti women play major role in nation development

Minister lauds resilience during Iraqi invasion

KUWAIT CITY, March 9, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah affirmed recently that Kuwaiti women have always been a symbol of dedication and sacrifice, playing a fundamental role in the nation's development and progress.

She praised their leadership in various fields and their significant contributions to national development.

Speaking to KUNA on the occasion of International Women's Day, Al-Huwailah said that Kuwaiti women have consistently demonstrated their ability to overcome challenges, actively contributing to development efforts and

achieving accomplishments that are a source of national pride.

She added that Kuwaiti women have never hesitated to take on responsibilities, even in the most difficult circumstances. She highlighted their heroic role during the 1990 Iraqi invasion, where they displayed remarkable resilience and sacrifice, working tirelessly for the liberation and sovereignty of their homeland.

Al-Huwailah noted that Kuwaiti women were pioneers in education and the workforce, having pursued academic studies for decades and assumed leadership positions across various sectors. She emphasized that

these achievements did not come by chance but were the result of relentless efforts, strong determination, and a deep belief in their pivotal role in society.

She stressed that Kuwait's leadership has placed great importance on empowering women and enhancing their role, providing them with opportunities to actively participate in decision-making and assume ministerial and leadership positions, reflecting society's confidence in their capabilities and contributions to national development.

Al-Huwailah concluded her statement by reaffirming that Kuwaiti women will always be a source of pride and honor for the nation, calling for continued support and empowerment to enable them to achieve further accomplishments and contribute to building a brighter future for generations to come.



Dr Al-Huwailah

'Tamkeen' names winning institutions

Bid to battle violence against women in Arab world

KUWAIT CITY, March 9, (KUNA): The International Organization for the Empowerment of Women and Capacity Building (Tamkeen), in partnership with the National Center for the Prevention of Community Violence, announced Yemen's SOS Foundation for Development, Qatar's Protection and Social Rehabilitation Center (AMAN) and Lothan Youth Achievement Center (LoYAC) have won the "enough" award for the best initiative to confront violence against women in the Arab

world, in its first session in 2025. Speaking to KUNA on the International Women's Day (IWD), head of "Tamkeen" Ibtisam Al-Qaoud said the award aims to honor individuals and institutions that provided innovative solutions to protect women and empower them in the face of different types of physical, psychological, economic and social violence.

It is the first edition of the award which will be an annual event to enhance sustainable efforts in backing women and combating violence against

them, she added. The award's edition is patronized by Dr. Fayza Al-Khorafi, who is an outstanding female figure in the Arab world to devote her life in serving education, Al-Qaoud noted.

Meanwhile, head of the arbitration committee Dr. Yacoub Al-Kandari said selecting the winners was done upon varied initiatives and how they were effective in addressing issues facing women in the Arab world.

He elaborated that comprehensiveness of the winning initi-

atives was taken into account for multiple aspects of challenges facing women, noting that the winners are honorable models of humanitarian and community work in the Arab world.

Kuwait's LoYAC won the award for its economic program that aimed at empowering women economically through training them on setting up small-sized enterprises which bring income, he stated.

The official festival to honor the winners will be held in April, on the sidelines of a major event.

Other Voices

Secret Kuwaitis, Japanese link

By Ahmad alsarraf

The Japanese are known for being some of the hardest-working people. During crises and wars, they refused to stop working, whether in the private or public sectors. However, the government eventually started forcing them to take vacations, which led to a cultural shift in Japanese society.

Traditionally, refusing to take a vacation was seen as a sign of dedication to the nation or the company. Despite several decades passing since these policies were introduced, a large percentage of employees still feel hesitant to take time off due to a sense of responsibility. The tendency to overwork remains prevalent.

The average vacation for a Japanese government employee is 20 days per year. However, only about 60 percent to 70 percent of this time off is typically taken. In Kuwait, employees are entitled to 45 days of annual vacation. In the private sector, however, there is less inclination to take a full vacation, despite the government's efforts to encourage a better work-life balance by allowing individuals to take extended time off. Some employees opt to work from home during their vacation or take what is known as "silent leave" via email.

Others choose to voluntarily visit the office to complete urgent or accumulated work. This has led several organizations to implement collective mandatory leave by closing offices, imposing half-day leave, sending employees on training courses, or encouraging them to participate in volunteer activities during their vacations.

In Kuwait, it may seem logical to assume that reducing employee leave would increase productivity, which is already low.

As a result, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) sought to implement

the triple fingerprint system, which is unique globally, to monitor the commitment of public sector employees.

While we support this decision, it highlights the lack of a moral deterrent and the absence of a commitment to the idea that "work is worship" among the majority of employees. For example, we often see strict adherence to duties during Ramadan, yet employees quickly leave the office after prayer to head home.

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) had previously made amendments to the flawed leave purchase law, limiting this right to Kuwaiti workers with at least three years of service and allowing cash allowances to be disbursed only once every ten years.

The law stipulates that the employee's last three performance reports must be at least "Very Good," and that the employee must have spent a minimum of three years in the same government agency, whether appointed or transferred, not just two years. Also, the employee must not have been subjected to any disciplinary penalties.

The amendments reduced the employee's right to accumulate vacation days from 180 to 90. It now requires employees to take at least 15 days of annual vacation, rather than leaving the decision up to the individual. Compensation for unused vacation days, after 15 years of service, is capped at 70 days, down from the current 180 days. After 25 years of service, employees are entitled to 90 days, instead of 225 days, among other adjustments. It seems we are beginning to follow Japan's lead in imposing mandatory vacation policies on employees!

However, the reluctance of some employees to take vacations was not often due to a love of work or dedication, but because some had been taking vacations without officially registering them, with no one noticing! After the implementation of the triple fingerprint system, we witnessed a shift. Suddenly, taking vacation became essential for those who had previously enjoyed time off without applying for them.

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Despite challenges democracy had strong foothold in Kuwait

"TWO scenes emerge, each showing numerous paradoxes that no observer could overlook, evoking memories of the Kuwaiti Parliament and its past democracy -- a democracy that some might describe as 'the chef is a chef, and the meanings are weak,' as our brothers in the Emirates put it," Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"In a recent US Congress session, where President Donald Trump delivered his State of the Union address, as well as in the Serbian Parliament, where violent clashes broke out among representatives and tear gas bombs were thrown at opposition members who retaliated with smoke bombs,



Adel Al-Kharafi

we can reflect on what might be called a 'golden age' of democracy. While these events might seem more extreme than Kuwait's past parliamentary debates, we can still find some comparison. Kuwait's Parliament, in contrast, stands as an example of relative civility -- one worth recording in history. In our country, no representative ever raised a stick in anger or did we witness the use of tear gas or smoke bombs.

"In the US, the expulsion of Democratic Representative Allen Green from the Capitol building for booing and shouting at President Trump during his speech epitomized the limits of 'good' American democracy. Green, after repeatedly standing up, raising a stick, and shaking it in protest, was eventually escorted out. If some Kuwaiti MPs once used loudspeakers in Abdullah Al-Salem Hall to express their displeasure, this still pales in comparison to the 'disgrace' witnessed in the US Congress.

"In contrast, the Serbian Parliament's chaos was somewhat 'more civilized', embodying what some might call a 'better' form of democracy. We were also not surprised by the violent exchanges in Georgia's Parliament in Tbilisi last year, where a brawl broke out before ending in a surprising display of mutual affection. While Kuwait's National Assembly members once ran around threatening ministers, they always maintained a level of decorum. At least in Kuwait, MPs were 'smart' in their dealings, avoiding physical confrontations. However, when the government faced pressure from Parliament, it would sometimes threaten dissolution -- an action far uglier than what we saw in Serbia. Yet, Kuwait's MPs were never expelled from a session as we saw in the US Congress with Representative Green.

"The events in the US Congress and Serbian Parliament could aptly be called, 'The Battle of the Children of Freij'. The US case resonates with the popular proverb, 'My father can only beat my mother,' while the Serbian situation mirrors the saying, 'With the horses, oh blonde,' implying that instead of serving as role models, representatives became the very image of dysfunction.

"In all fairness, Turkiye's Parliament seemed less chaotic. Last year, an opposition representative was delivering a speech when a ruling party member attempted to slap him. This led to a huge brawl between the two parties, and the opposition representative ended up on the floor.

"These parliaments, though in democratic nations, seem to follow the proverb, 'He came to apply kohl on her, but he blinded her,' suggesting that they have learned little from the 'sharp' lessons of Kuwaiti democracy. It appears that, though Kuwait's democracy may have faced challenges, it never truly disappeared, -- and when it did falter, it did so with a resounding burn."

Also:

"On International Women's Day, we do not simply celebrate symbolic milestones; we spotlight the undeniable achievements of Kuwaiti women in the Cooperatives Sector. These women entered the field with determination, transcending traditional roles to become key decision-makers, overseers and a powerful force of correction. Their influence is undeniable and impossible to ignore." Cooperative Sector Financial Controller at the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies Yousef Saif wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"The involvement of Kuwaiti women in cooperative societies is far from merely ceremonial, it is rooted in courage, will power and the resolve to confront challenges head-on.

"Today, the presence of Kuwaiti women in cooperative work is not a fleeting experiment, but a powerful reality. They have risen to positions in boards of directors, as managers and as contributors to policy-making; driving changes and imprinting their vision on the cooperative landscape. While some may have doubted their capabilities initially, these women have proven that effective leadership and management are not gender-bound. Kuwaiti women in this sector have made bold decisions, shaped

new policies and implemented radical reforms.

"In the field of cooperative work, these women have set new standards in governance, transparency, oversight and service improvement; all reflecting the ideas and values of women in the region.

"In 2020, a new wave of female supervisors entered the arena, making their presence felt with significant impact. They submitted critical reports and addressed key issues, uncovering violations and abuses that might otherwise have been overlooked. Their unwavering commitment to accountability and justice brought essential change, demonstrating their courage in confronting corruption directly. Their decisions safeguarded shareholders' investments and protected the integrity of the cooperative sector.

"Despite these considerable achievements, women still face challenges in the cooperative world. Some continue to question their place and argue that their roles should be confined to narrow boundaries. Yet, the reality is clear: those women who prove their competence and determination cannot be easily excluded.

"Advancing the role of women is not achieved through empty praise, but by providing more opportunities for leadership, supporting their involvement in decision-making, and ensuring they take on more prominent positions in cooperative societies and oversight bodies. Experience has shown that cooperative work embraced their presence, because of the lasting impact they have made.

"On this day, we do not offer mere traditional greetings. We reaffirm that Kuwaiti women in the cooperative sector are not secondary players, but central partners in development and reform.

"As His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may Allah protect him, aptly stated in his eloquent speech: Real progress cannot be achieved without the effective participation of women in all areas of life.

"This is a reflection of the political leadership's commitment to empower Kuwaiti women, enhance their rights, and create an environment in which they can fully develop their talents and creativity."

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"Every year, during the blessed month of Ramadan, affection and love are rekindled among many people who have been distanced due to personal circumstances and ongoing commitments from work or never-ending family obligations," columnist Dr. Mubarak Al-Abdulhadi wrote for Al-Jarida daily.

"Everything changes during Ramadan, as if these blessed days arrive to melt away all the buildup and erase any remnants of issues that create distance between relatives and friends. It renews the spirit of affection between them and revives in their hearts the importance of these gatherings, as well as closes the chapters of the past, along with any pain or sighs they may carry.

"In just one round of diwaniya visits, everyone engages in conversations filled with happiness and longing, or gathers with family around Iftar or Suhoor tables, among other get-togethers that are not merely about food, as some might think. These gatherings hold great significance and are vital to the joy and beauty of the occasion.

"What makes it even more beautiful is the purity of hearts that turn toward the suffering of others - the poor and the needy - who, due to their difficult circumstances, face various challenges in life. Some race to support and assist them in various ways, but most importantly, they do so without embarrassing them or making them feel uncomfortable.

"Kuwaiti people are known for their love of good deeds and are always at the forefront of supporting those in need. Their homes are always open to everyone, with some diwanias remaining open, especially during Iftar, to welcome people from all nationalities. They are delighted to do so and insist on having others join the daily Iftar. These pure-hearted, sincere individuals are committed to doing good without any other considerations.

"Kuwait, with its people, continues to write an epic of humanity, solidarity, compassion, affection, and love. This spirit is reflected in everyone, creating a unique social fabric that we witness on various occasions, free of pretense.

"In the coming days of this blessed month, we will see people racing to do good, within the legal frameworks set by the Ministry of Social Affairs and other relevant authorities, to help those in need both inside and outside the country. In conclusion, we say: Humanity cannot be taught."

— Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh/Simi K. Kutty



National Guard Fire Department emergency teams provide support to the Ministry of Public Works and the General Fire Force in dealing with water pools.

KUNA photo

Over 300 cams fixed to monitor traffic flow

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Central Control Officer at the General Traffic Department (GTD) in the Interior Ministry Major Ali Al-Qattan has announced that "more than 300 cameras are installed along the main, express and side roads to monitor traffic conditions; including accidents and water pools to ensure the nec-

essary action is taken immediately."

In a televised statement when the country witnessed rainfall recently, Al-Qattan confirmed that the GTD dealt with about 260 reports related to the heavy rains. He expressed appreciation for the role that the concerned parties played; including the Ministry Public Works, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) and Patrols, Public Security and Rescue units, in handling the accumulation of rainwater on some roads.

Egyptian expat gets life in jail, fined KD2mn for money-wash

US national gets 7 years for role in crime

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The Criminal Court sentenced the head of the accounting unit of a major company, in which the state holds 25 percent of the capital, to life imprisonment. The Egyptian national was also dismissed from his job and fined two million dinars, which is twice the amount he is accused of laundering after obtaining it from his employer and using it to purchase real estate and gold bullion.

The court also sentenced the second defendant, an American national, to seven years in prison. He worked for another company and participated with the first defendant in committing the crime, receiving a five percent commission on the stolen amount.

The Public Prosecution charged the first defendant with money laundering involving one million dinars, and accused him of deliberately possessing and acquiring the funds. He collected the money from the company using forged documents, then transferred it to several countries, and used it to purchase real estate, vehicles, and gold bullion to conceal the illegal source of the funds.

The Public Prosecution charged the second defendant with participating, through agreement and assistance, in seizing public funds by providing the first defendant with the bank data of the company he managed, in exchange for the agreed-upon five percent of the total amount involved in the crime.

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Appeals ruling overturned: The Court of Cassation overturned the verdict issued by the Court of Appeals, which had obligated a woman to pay KD 20,000 to her husband because she received his monthly salary.

The man had filed a lawsuit against his wife and the bank, requesting a ruling to appoint an expert to visit the bank and verify that the wife had received KD 20,000 without justification. He also sought to compel the bank to submit the agency/authorization that allowed her to receive those funds from his account, and to determine whether the authorization granted her the right to collect the money.

The husband claimed that his wife had seized the specified amount with the help of the bank, based on an authorization in her capacity as his agent under an official power of attorney.

In response, the wife's defense argued that the appeal was based on a violation of the law, an error in its application, and a deficiency in reasoning.

The power of attorney issued by her husband granted her the authority to perform all legal actions outlined in the document, as well as actions not specifically mentioned. It was an absolute general power of attorney, meaning that the husband ratified, from the time of its issuance, all actions taken by her or her representative.

Kuwaiti citizenship revoked after DNA test report

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Director of the Research and Follow-up Department at the General Administration of Nationality and Travel Documents in the Ministry of Interior and a legal expert Colonel Abdulaziz Al-Amiri stated in an interview with Kuwait TV that "a person obtained Kuwaiti citizenship under Article One in 2019, based on a court ruling that he is related to a Kuwaiti citizen, reports Al-Anba daily.

However, a DNA test confirmed that this in-

dividual is not related to the Kuwaiti. Hence his Kuwaiti citizenship was withdrawn.

Sources revealed that the case is complex and dates back to the citizen's marriage to an Iraqi woman. The woman requested that her brother be registered as the citizen's son in the citizenship records. The citizen managed to obtain a birth certificate for the brother, intending to add him to the citizenship file, but he faced several obstacles and was unable to do so.

After the citizen's death, the supposed relative filed a lawsuit to be recognized as an heir, citing the birth certificate he held. The court ruled in his favor, and based on this ruling, a decision was made to establish his lineage and issue identification documents, which led to him obtaining Kuwaiti citizenship in 2019. Subsequent investigations by the administration revealed the truth. A genetic fingerprint test confirmed that the individual is an Iraqi, and he was conclusively shown to be unrelated to the Kuwaiti, sources said.



Dr. Al-Abdulhadi



The fire brigade at the site.

KFF photo

6-year absconder caught

Material damage in Taima house fire, no one injured

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Firefighters from the Jahra Crafts Fire Center extinguished a fire that broke out in a house in Taima, reports Al-Anba daily. A security source said the Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received a report about a fire in Taima, so firefighters immediately went to the location to douse the fire. No injuries were reported and the losses were only material.

An investigation is underway to determine the circumstances that led to the fire in the house.

□ □ □
Wanted man nabbed: An Arab expatriate, who had been missing for six years and was wanted by law for fraud and deception cases, was arrested recently. A security source revealed that the detectives apprehended the wanted man after setting an entrapment. He was then referred to the concerned authorities.

The source confirmed that detectives continue to exert tremendous efforts to arrest all those wanted by law for committing various crimes.

□ □ □
Camera stolen from tent: As per the directive of the Attorney General's representative, a case was registered as felony entitled, "Theft in an Unusual Manner," with case number 15/2025, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to the report, an expatriate, born in 1988 and residing in Jleeb Al-Suyoukh, reported the theft of a camera from his camping site in Mutlaa -- around 15 kilometers into the desert and about three kilometers from the nearest road. He disclosed that the thief entered the camping site by crawling under the outer nylon fence, which had been cut, and then severed the iron wires securing the camera to a metal pole.

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Bank reaffirms support for female leadership and career growth

CBK champions women's empowerment in banking

KUWAIT CITY, March 9, (KUNA): The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) affirmed its commitment to empowering women to play their vital and effective role in development, supporting them, and benefiting from their capabilities.

In a press statement issued on the occasion of International Women's Day, which falls on March 8 each year, the CBK emphasized its efforts to enhance women's roles within the bank through various initiatives aimed at promoting equality, encouraging female cadres,

and preparing them to assume leadership positions in the future.

The statement explained that this is achieved through a series of professional training programs designed to ensure continuous development for these cadres, enabling them to work at all job levels, including leadership and supervisory positions, both within the CBK and across the Kuwaiti banking sector as a whole.

It stated that women constitute 59.3 percent of CBK's total workforce, while

they occupy 54.8 percent of leadership positions in the bank.

The CBK added that this percentage reflects its confidence in the efficiency of national female cadres and their ability to take on responsibilities and accomplish tasks in a manner that contributes to the institution's excellence and progress.

The statement also highlighted that, in terms of education and professional development, female employees of the CBK have obtained 34.4 percent of the

total professional certificates earned by bank employees, while female cadres have benefited from 46.2 percent of the bank's study missions over the past ten years.

The Central Bank reaffirmed its commitment to continuing this approach based on equality, providing opportunities for national talent, and enabling female cadres to perform their assigned roles, serve the country from all positions, and contribute effectively to the development process.

Travel ban order

MoJ launches 'Single Trip Request' service via Sahel application

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The Ministry of Justice has launched the "Single Trip Request" service on the Sahel application which applicants (defendants) subject to a travel ban order to submit a request for a single trip, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry noted that this service is part of the list of services offered by the General Department of Sentences Enforcement at the Ministry of Justice via the Sahel application.

Kuwait Bike Park proposal faces Municipal obstacles

Council clarifies details

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: More than a year ago, Municipal Council members Alia Al-Farsi, Farah Al-Roumi, Abdullah Awaid Al-Enezi and Ismail Behbehani submitted a proposal to establish the Kuwait Bike Park.

This proposal was supposed to be carried out in cooperation with Tourism Enterprises Company (TEC), Ministry of Finance and other concerned parties.

The proposal was referred to the Kuwait Municipality in order to conduct a study on it. The Municipality then informed the council that it needed the location and size of the proposed park, and number of levels, in order to conduct the study.

In response, the council members, who submitted the proposal, explained that according to the Kuwait Municipality Law and the government's work program for the years 2022-2026 under the slogan "Safe homeland and sustainable prosperity"; the Municipality is responsible for approving and allocating project sites and determining land uses as per the State's master plan.

They argued that determining the location of the park is the responsibility of the Municipality, not the council; because the Municipality is familiar with the locations and uses of the pieces of land in the State.

Regarding the space and number of levels, they pointed out that the objectives are to develop the entertainment sector in the country and its governorates, promote sports and care for health. They also suggested using recycled tyres in creating certain floors.

In order to boost local tourism, the

park will include a garden with trees, shrubs, paths and tracks on different floors designated for cycling on three levels (beginner level for children, intermediate and advanced). "The size of each depends on the total size of the park," the proponents of the proposal clarified.

They also stressed the need to take into account the components they stated in their proposal in determining the land and its size. These components are paths, tracks, jumping lines, sports air barriers, panoramic path around the park, gardens with trees and local plants between the paths, small shops for sports supplies (commercial spaces), cafés and bathrooms (service spaces), a reception and information center, a clinic and others.

They added that the idea behind the proposal has been in effect in many countries and some Gulf countries for many years, such as the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Kuwait's Al-Rahma Int'l Society brings Ramadan aid to Gaza fasting families

GAZA, March 9, (KUNA): The Palestinian Zakat Al-Daraj Committee, with the support of the Kuwaiti Al-Rahma International Society and several philanthropists, has implemented a project to provide Iftar meals for fasting individuals in the Gaza Strip.

Chairman of the Zakat Al-Daraj Committee, Abdulqader Abu Al-Nour, stated in a press release on Friday that the relief packages included various essential food items needed by families during the holy month of Ramadan.

Abu Al-Nour added that the packages were distributed

to more than 850 families, praising the role of the Kuwaiti Al-Rahma International Society in providing food aid to the Palestinian people in Gaza, particularly in light of the difficult circumstances they are facing due to the massacres and destruction caused by the war of extermination in the Strip.

He expressed his deep gratitude to the State of Kuwait – its Amir, government, and people – for their genuine and continuous, unwavering support for the Palestinian people in strengthening their resilience on their land.



During the distribution of food parcels to displaced Palestinians.

KUNA photo

CSC registration period set for March 11-28

Education Ministry sets conditions for retired teachers' reappointment

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The reappointment of retired Kuwaiti teachers to work in the Ministry of Education has two main conditions, reports Al-Anba daily.

The first condition is obtaining approval from the Ministry of Education, which follows a personal interview and a written test for retirees seeking reappointment in specialized fields that meet the ministry's needs.

The second condition involves the ministry sending an official letter to the Civil Service Commission (CSC) during the central employment registration period to register the retirees.

The CSC does not accept individual applications during the academic year. The registration period runs from March 11-28. Once the ministry grants approval for reappointment, the CSC does not impose additional conditions. Instead, it notifies the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) to halt the retired teachers' pension. After re-registra-

tion in the central employment system, the retirees are nominated to work again in the ministry, with a portion of their salary deducted for PIFSS, as per the system for new teachers.

Sources revealed that most reappointment requests come from female teachers in fields where there is a shortage of staff.

In a related development, sources informed the daily that the reduction of government employment grades, along with the delay in generalizing the four registration periods for 2025, and the limitation to just one registration period this year, does not signal the end of citizen nominations for government positions. They clarified that the central employment mechanism is still in effect and that there is no intention to exempt the CSC from its role in executing this process in coordination with government agencies.

The sources further emphasized

that central employment is a key tool for ensuring fairness, equal opportunities, transparency, and improved government efficiency. "This system benefits both job seekers and government agencies. It is designed to distribute job opportunities across the government sector in a manner that ensures equality for all citizens," sources added.

The sources also outlined the benefits of centralized recruitment, including providing equal employment opportunities based on qualifications and competence, boosting job seeker confidence in the system's fairness, and improving satisfaction with the recruitment process.

"The system fosters trust between citizens and government agencies, enhances transparency through clear and unified standards, reduces administrative complexity, shortens appointment timelines, and helps government agencies plan job needs with accuracy.

Kuwait reaffirms commitment to regional security

Kuwait calls for watchdog action on Israeli occupation's nuclear facilities

VIENNA, March 9, (KUNA): Kuwait on Friday urged the international community to force Israeli occupation to immediately join Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and subject all its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards system.

The call was made by Member of Kuwait's Permanent Delegation to the United Nations in Vienna, Counselor Bashar Al-Duwaisan, during a meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors on the Israeli occupation's nuclear capabilities.

He stressed that all Middle Eastern countries are committed to the NPT and the implementation of the comprehensive safeguards agreement, except the occupation, which declines to subject its nuclear facilities to any international supervision or take any serious steps towards creating a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

The Kuwaiti diplomat underlined the IAEA's significant role in verifying the peaceful nature of nuclear programs and the need to keep discussing the file of the Israeli occupation's nuclear capabilities during IAEA meetings.

Al-Duwaisan emphasized the need to keep the file of Israeli occupation's nuclear capabilities under consideration.

He elaborated that the meetings of



KUNA photo

Member of the Permanent Delegation, Counselor Bashar Al-Duwaisan, delivers the State of Kuwait's speech before the work of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

the IAEA Board of Directors are being held amid the continued serious humanitarian deterioration in occupied Palestine owing to the brutal Israeli occupation aggression that has killed thousands of victims, mostly women and children.

He denounced these practices as a flagrant breach of international laws and conventions, while urging the international community to live up

to its due responsibilities and step up pressure on Israeli occupation to halt its aggression, protect the Palestinian people, and bring the perpetrators of these crimes to accountability.

The Kuwaiti diplomat concluded by underlining that Kuwait would keep backing all efforts aimed at ensuring regional security and stability, and stopping Israeli occupation violations.

Kuwait calls on HRC to ensure rights of Palestinian workers

GENEVA, March 9, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Permanent Delegation to the UN and international Organizations headquarters in Geneva called on the HRC to ensure the rights of Palestinian workers suffering under Israeli occupation injustice.

This came in a statement by Kuwaiti diplomatic attaché Fajr Al-Jassar to the 58th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC).

The Kuwaiti diplomat stressed the importance of international initiatives related to the Palestinian territories especially the International Labor Organization's (ILO) program ensuring the rights of Palestinian workers.

On the national level, Al-Jassar affirmed that Kuwait strengthens efforts for social security, indicating that it was paramount that citizens and residents alike would receive the opportunity for honest work and income.

She indicated that Kuwait's public assistance law aimed at achieving family and financial stability through social assistance, rights



KUNA photo

Diplomatic Attaché Fajr Al-Jassar during her speech on behalf of the State of Kuwait delegation.

ensured by the Kuwaiti constitution.

She affirmed that Kuwait is eager to expand cooperation with international human rights organizations to maintain human dignity and equal opportunity for all.

Outages expected

Power grid not affected during weekend rains

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy said the rain-storm that hit the country over the weekend did not affect the electricity grid, which continued to supply electricity.

Sources explained that the power outages due to technical faults that the grid experienced were within normal rates and were concentrated in Wafra Agricultural Area.

Sources affirmed that the complaints received through the unified call center of the ministry were normal, indicating the number of complaints did not increase during the rain due to the lower number of faults resulting from the rain wave.

They pointed out that the agricultural areas are more susceptible to power outages in such conditions due to their reliance on overhead lines for electricity supply; hence, they are vulnerable to any emergency in these circumstances.

VA ECMO technology plays key role

Kuwait's medical teams save 3-year-old girl with life-saving pediatric cardiac procedure

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: In a medical breakthrough that highlights the advancement of healthcare services in the country and the exceptional capability of its medical teams to manage critical cases with cutting-edge treatment technologies, the concerned teams at Chest Diseases Hospital saved the life of a three-year-old Kuwaiti girl who suffered from a sudden cardiac arrest, reports Al-Anba daily.

It has been revealed that the use of VA ECMO technology played a key role in restoring the girl's heartbeat and stabilizing her condition, ultimately leading to her recovery and discharge from the hospital after comprehensive follow-up and care.

Dr. Abdul Aziz Al-Asimi, a pediatric cardiologist and intensive care specialist at the hospital, explained that the child had been suffering from severe myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and ventricular tachycardia (VT), a condition that causes rapid and irregular heartbeats. This resulted in a sudden cardiac arrest that required emergency intervention to save her life. Thanks to the swift action of the medical team, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) was initiated without delay, utilizing the VA ECMO device. This

advanced technology is used to support both the heart and lungs when the heart is unable to pump blood effectively or ceased to function altogether.

The ECMO device works by extracting deoxygenated blood from a major vein (typically the femoral or cervical vein), passing it through a special machine to remove carbon dioxide and infuse oxygen, and then pumping the oxygenated blood back into the main artery (such as the femoral artery or aorta), ensuring continued circulation to vital organs while the heart recovers.

Following the successful resuscitation and restoration of the child's pulse, she underwent urgent cardiac catheterization, and a temporary heart pump was inserted to assist the heart's function until it regained its normal capacity. After a period of close monitoring in the pediatric intensive care unit, with the child's condition improving, the heart pump was successfully removed after eight days, and the child was discharged in good health.

This case marks one of the first instances in Kuwait where VA ECMO technology was employed as the initial step in cardiopulmonary resuscitation for a pediatric patient.

Al-Asimi commended the professionalism of the national medical and surgical teams involved in the success of this complex procedure, emphasizing that this achievement was made possible by the unwavering support of the Ministry of Health.

He particularly acknowledged the efforts of Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Abdul Wahab Al-Awadhi and Undersecretary Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi for their commitment to provide hospitals with the latest treatment technologies and foster an advanced medical environment that ensures the highest standards of patient care.

He also expressed his sincere gratitude to the management of the hospital; as well as the pediatric intensive care, pediatric cardiac surgery, nursing, physical therapy and technical teams who played an instrumental role in the success of the operation.

He thanked Head of the Department of Pediatric Cardiology and Intensive Care Dr. Mustafa Al-Qabandi, Head of the Surgery Department Dr. Faisal Al-Saeedi, and Dr. Jarrah Abdullah from the Pediatric Cardiac Surgery and Congenital Defects Department for their significant contributions to the procedure.



Sons of HH the late Amir welcome well-wishers for Ramadan at Yamamah Palace.



Sons of HH late Amir host Ramadan gathering at Yamamah Palace

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The sons of HH the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad received well-wishers at Yamamah Palace in Al-Saddiq suburb on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

Present at the gathering were His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad, alongside a large

crowd of sheikhs, officials, ambassadors, Arab and foreign diplomats, as well as citizens and expatriates. During the gathering, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf, along with his brothers Sheikhs Faisal, Abdullah and Salem Al-Nawaf, warmly welcomed the guests; expressing gratitude for their presence and wishing them a blessed and prosperous Ramadan.

The sons of HH the late Amir also conveyed their heartfelt greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, praying to Allah the Almighty for His Highness' protection, as well as for the well-being and safety of Kuwait and its people. They expressed hope that this blessed occasion will bring peace and prosperity to the Arab and Islamic nations, and to the world as a whole.



Kuwait's leadership and diplomats join Ramadan celebration at Yamamah Palace.

Photos by Mohammad Morsi

Continued from Page 1

Finance Minister:

When Dr. Noura Al-Fassam was appointed Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs, and Investment, we were optimistic because she is a seasoned expert in her field. This appointment means she is well aware of the struggles retirees are facing. Dr. Al-Fassam has the ability to use the institution's funds to improve the lives of retirees, who rely solely on their pensions for income.

Therefore, it is the minister's responsibility to prioritize the welfare of retirees while simultaneously increasing the institution's investments and profits. The institution's funds should not be used for employee bonuses. The majority of Kuwaitis eagerly await the end of each month to receive their pensions.

The Public Institution for Social Security is a source of income for approximately 160,000 citizens, and this number is steadily growing.

Indians, Egyptians

Kuwaiti workers ranked third among the top ten nationalities in Kuwait's labor market, comprising 20.6 percent of the workforce with approximately 451,404 workers, compared to 448,828 workers, making up 21.3 percent during the same period in 2023.

The data also revealed an increase in the total workforce in September 2024 to 2.93 million individuals, up from 2.89 million in the same period the previous year, marking an annual increase of 1.38 percent.

The number of contributors to the government sector saw a 0.3 percent annual increase, with 472,890 workers, compared to 471,470 workers during the same period in 2023.

Kuwait's Amir

Meanwhile, Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received on Sunday the President of the Supreme Judicial Council and President of the Court of Cassation, Counselor Dr. Adel Majed Bouesli.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received Acting Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

KISR patents

The research team, led by Dr. Sultan Al-Salem, Dr. Fadhila Al-Salamin and Dr. Mohammad Sharif Al-Iskandarani, utilized nano-coating composed of a metal mixture; including nickel, silver and copper, among other materials. The team conducted a series of experiments using various techniques

to manufacture virus- and bacteria-resistant surfaces from both pure plastic and plastic waste, as well as biodegradable plastics.

KISR revealed that this innovation is not only a major environmental shift by reducing the harmful impact of waste accumulation, but it also holds promising economic development potential. The project is expected to positively influence Kuwait's future plans, aligning with the country's long-term goals.

SAB okays

Sources revealed that following its review, the SAB communicated to PACI; stating in a letter that it has no objection to the proposed contract with the specified amount and duration. "The approval is valid for a maximum of 90 days. With this approval, PACI is now authorized to finalize the contract and begin supplying the quantities outlined in the agreement," sources confirmed.

Gov't to

According to the resolution, the committee will have the following powers:

- Examining the files of those sentenced to life imprisonment but have served at least 20 years in prison, and determining their eligibility for release if the conditions specified in the following articles are met. The committee will submit a report on their status to both the Minister of Interior and the Attorney General.

- The decision stipulated the following conditions for the release of those sentenced to life imprisonment after serving at least 20 years:

- There must be reason to trust the convict's self-evaluation.

- The convict must have demonstrated good conduct and behavior while in prison.

- The release must not pose a threat to public security.

The decision also allows the Public Prosecutor to place the released person under automated monitoring (electronic bracelets) for a period not exceeding five years, and to determine the conditions the released person must follow. Any violation of these conditions will result in the cancellation of the release.

According to the decision, the Public Prosecutor will issue conditional release orders for those sentenced to confirmed imprisonment if the committee deems them eligible for release.

Kuwait races

with sufficient and timely information about financial crimes to prevent perpetrators from evading punishment.

He emphasized that, according to

the Constitution, money laundering harms both the national economy and the country's international standing. "The issue, however, does not lie in the law's formulation but rather in its enforcement. A thorough investigation into why existing laws are not being implemented is necessary before any amendments are made. This can be achieved by reviewing previous money laundering cases brought before the courts," he explained.

He cited as a significant example the real estate fraud case, in which hundreds of millions of Kuwaiti dinars were seized illegally. "Despite convictions and fines exceeding KD800 million, no funds have been recovered. This indicates the need for investigating why government agencies have not been providing the required information and reports to the public prosecution in a timely and comprehensive manner, leading to inconsistent court rulings for identical cases," he added.

He mentioned the importance of giving attention to the role of banking institutions involved in money laundering activities. "Investigating why these entities have not faced penalties or been transparent about the origins of funds is crucial. There is also a need for government agencies to enforce judicial rulings regarding the collection of fines imposed in favor of the State," he asserted.

Former Secretary of Kuwait Transparency Society Manal Al-Kandari said the fight against money laundering is part of a global effort that requires collaborative action. "Kuwait, as part of the international framework, issued Law No. 106/2013 to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. However, some provisions of the current law must be reconsidered, particularly the process for notifying suspected individuals. As it stands, the suspected funds remain accessible to the accused until the Public Prosecution makes a decision. Clear standards for evidence to avoid Kuwait being added to the FATF's gray list are vital. As a member of the FATF, Kuwait must adhere to the recommendations aimed at strengthening control systems and improving anti-money laundering and terrorist financing procedures," she elaborated.

Al-Kandari also called for tightening measures to ensure that those engaged in money laundering are held legally accountable.

Economic expert Mohamed Ramadan acknowledged that the government has been combating money laundering under the existing 2013 law, but he questioned the rationale behind drafting a new law when the current one is still in place. He suggested clarifying why the government is moving toward a new anti-money laundering law, especially since Kuwait has faced pressure from the FATF over existing shortcomings.

27 projects set to modernize Kuwait media infrastructure

Ministry to revolutionize broadcasting

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The Ministry of Information's Engineering Affairs Sector has outlined its annual plan for fiscal 2025/2026; which includes the launch of 27 projects aimed at upgrading infrastructure, improving television transmission capabilities, and expanding the fleet of external transport vehicles.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the plan that details several initiatives, such as the design and construction of an administrative building and integrated media center in Mutlaa City. This center will consist of a fully equipped conference room, a 500-seat

theater, training halls, virtual studios, and an administrative building designed to accommodate 750 employees. The project is set to be completed within a period of two years.

The ministry also plans to implement a centralized monitoring system to oversee visual, audio and social media contents in all of its departments and sectors. This system will monitor government television and radio broadcasts nationwide.

Further developments include the modernization of external television transmission vehicles. The ministry will acquire new equipment to improve the efficiency of television transmission in mobile units, ensuring they are fitted with the latest technology.

The plan also calls for the addition of three integrated radio transmission vehicles and a medium-sized 4K-capable television transmission vehicle to develop broadcast quality and coverage.

The ministry intends to upgrade the television operation rooms and supply new broadcasting devices for the Arab-

satellite in the media complex.

Moreover, the third phase of the project includes the installation of transmission feed lines, antennas, and the terrestrial and digital television transmission devices.

Another significant project involves updating the satellite broadcast vehicle fleet to ensure high-quality image transmission.

A proposal has also been made to link all transmission stations, transportation, and warehouses to the ministry complex in Shuwaikh.

The plan includes the construction of a state-of-the-art news studio building in Shuwaikh, designed to meet international standards and equipped for multiple purposes.

This is in addition to the proposed establishment of a building dedicated to housing satellite broadcast vehicles.

Finally, the ministry is set to launch a project to supply broadcasting equipment aimed at modernizing and upgrading digital radio transmission stations, improving broadcast quality, and renovating the Al-Jiwan transmission station to enhance radio coverage.

Appointments expedited

MoH seeks CSC approval for 187 medical positions

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The Ministry of Health is working with the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to lift the ban on 187 vacant medical positions; allowing the appointment of non-Kuwaiti doctors, nurses, technicians and pharmacists, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources said the vacant positions requiring the ban to be lifted include 61 for doctors, 117 for nurses, six for technicians and three for pharmacists.

Sources confirmed that the ministry aims to expedite the process in collaboration with the CSC, ensuring the swift appointment of the necessary medical professionals.

"This effort is intended to strengthen the operational capacity of hospitals and health centers, stabilize the health sector, and address its growing demands to guarantee the delivery of high-quality healthcare services to citizens," sources added.



H.E. Ambassador Dr. Adarsh Swaika called on H.E. Noura Sulaiman Al-Fassam, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and Investment of Kuwait. Discussions pertained to bilateral investment cooperation in different sectors.

Voters will 'reward us' for the Trump-Musk DOGE cuts: Hudson

Unions ask court to stop DOGE from accessing Social Security data of Americans

WASHINGTON, March 9, (AP) — A group of labor unions are asking a federal court for an emergency order to stop Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency from accessing the sensitive Social Security data of millions of Americans.

The motion for emergency relief was filed late Friday in federal court in Maryland by the legal services group Democracy Forward against the Social Security Administration and its acting commissioner, Leland Duke. The unions want the court to block DOGE's access to the vast troves of personal data held by the agency.

Included in the filing is an affidavit from Tiffany Flick, a former senior official at the agency who says career civil servants are trying to protect the data from DOGE. "A disregard for our careful privacy systems and processes now threatens the security of the data SSA houses about millions of Americans," Flick wrote in court documents.

Karianne Jones, a lawyer for the unions and a retiree group behind the lawsuit, said it is not fully clear what kind of access that DOGE might have to personal data about taxpay-

ers. But she said the apparent scope and the lack of information about what DOGE is looking for mean the potential impact is "huge."

"Essentially what you have is DOGE just swooping in and bullying their way into access to millions of Americans private data. They cannot explain why they want this data. They can't really tell you what data they want. They just want everything. They want the source code, and they want to do it without any restrictions," she said.

The Social Security Administration did not immediately respond to a request Saturday for comment on the lawsuit, which was originally filed last month.

DOGE's work during the early stages of the Trump administration has drawn nearly two dozen lawsuits. Judges have raised questions in several cases about DOGE's sweeping cost-cutting efforts, conducted with little public information about its staffing and operations. But judges have not always agreed that the risks are imminent enough to block DOGE from government systems.

Across-the-board cuts at the Social Security Administration are prompt-



A Social Security card is displayed Oct. 12, 2021, in Tigard, Oregon. (AP)

ing questions about the possible effects on benefits for tens of millions of recipients.

Among the potential changes at the agency are layoffs for more than 10% of the workforce and the closure of dozens of offices throughout the country. It's all part of the Trump

administration's efforts to shrink the size of the federal workforce.

DOGE has accessed other government databases, including at the Treasury and IRS. The Trump administration has said generally that the efforts are aimed at eliminating what it claims is waste and fraud in

government.

On Friday, a federal judge in Washington refused to block DOGE employees from accessing Treasury systems containing sensitive personal data for millions of people. U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly did acknowledge privacy concerns about that work. DOGE is still limited by a different court order in New York.

In addition, a February agreement between the Office of Personnel Management and the IRS states that a DOGE employee, Gavin Klinger, would be allowed to have access to IRS systems, but not the personal information of taxpayers.

Also:

WASHINGTON: Almost two months into President Donald Trump's second term, the chairman of the House Republican campaign committee is already predicting his party will pick up seats in the midterm elections some 20 months away.

Rep. Richard Hudson, R-N.C., is in charge of increasing the GOP's slim majority in the House, or at least defending it. After Republicans met privately this past week with

Elon Musk, Hudson said the cuts pushed by the Department of Government Efficiency are resonating with voters.

With disruptions at GOP town halls during the recent break, Hudson and House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., have told Republican lawmakers to skip the events for now and meet with constituents elsewhere. Nevertheless, Hudson said Republicans are confident their budget-cutting is "on the side of the angels."

Meanwhile, the Environmental Protection Agency has issued new guidance directing that spending items greater than \$50,000 now require approval from Musk's Department of Government Efficiency.

The guidance, issued this week, escalates the role that the new efficiency group, known as DOGE, plays in EPA operations.

"Any assistance agreement, contract or interagency agreement transaction (valued at) \$50,000 or greater must receive approval from an EPA doge team member," the EPA guidance says, according to documents obtained by The Associated Press.

Fires rage on Long Island as NY's gov declares state of emergency



Firefighters respond to a brush fire in Suffolk County in New York's Long Island on March 8. (AP)

NEW YORK, March 9, (AP) — Fast-moving brush fires fanned by high winds burned through a large swath of land on New York's Long Island on Saturday, spewing thick gray smoke into the sky and prompting the evacuation of a military base and the closure of a major highway.

Gov. Kathy Hochul declared a state of emergency and said state agencies were responding to the fires around the Pine Barrens, a wooded area that is home to commuter towns east of New York City. She said homes, a chemical factory and an Amazon warehouse were at risk and more evacuations may be needed.

"This is still out of control at this moment," Hochul told Long Island TV station News 12. "We're seeing people having to be evacuated from the Westhampton area."

Officials said three of the four fires were fully contained, with the fire in Westhampton 50% contained. Two commercial buildings were partially burned, but officials said homes were not in the line of fire.

One firefighter was flown to a hospital to be treated for burns to the face.

"Our biggest problem is the wind," Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine said. "It is driving this fire."

'We're going to protect our citizens like never before'

Trump forces generational shift in GOP foreign policy

WASHINGTON, March 9, (AP) — US Republicans in Congress have long been intent on countering America's rivals and spreading US influence abroad. But when President Donald Trump spelled out a sharp turn from that approach in his recent address to Congress, lawmakers in his party couldn't help but stand and applaud.

Moves toward a neutral position on the war between Russia and Ukraine. Tariffs on trading partners and allies. Cuts in foreign military and humanitarian aid.

More is sure to come as Trump sweeps Washington with his "America First" agenda. "We're going to protect our citizens like never before," he told Congress.

Those ideas have produced some of the most dramatic moments in the early part of his second term, none more so than the Oval Office clash involving Trump, Vice President JD Vance and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Some Republicans who were not shy about countering Trump's foreign policy ideas during his first term are overwhelmingly standing by him now. It shows not only Trump's ability to impose his will on his party, but also the extent to which he is ushering in a potentially generational shift in global alliances and power.

"Honestly, it's a completely different way of looking at the world," said Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis. "How do we avoid having enemies and how do we turn even unfriendly adversaries into no worse than friendly rivals?"



US Sen Lindsey Graham, R-SC, speaks to reporters outside the West Wing of the White House in Washington on Feb 28. (AP)

Still, in the weeks since taking office, Trump has handled foreign policy with unpredictable starts and stops.

Twice he has pledged to implement tough tariffs on Mexico and Canada, only to pause them. He has suggested the US should take ownership of Gaza, Greenland and the Panama Canal, only to have his administration distance itself from such notions. And he has berated Zelenskyy, paused military aid to Ukraine and engaged in friendlier relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The open display of animosity between Trump and Zelenskyy had many Republicans on edge as they began the week.

Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., who is chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, repeatedly declined to speak to reporters about the exchange.

Another senior Republican who had previously been supportive of Zelenskyy, Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, seemed to make a dramatic shift. After a deal to give the U.S. access to Ukraine's mineral riches fell apart, Graham suggested that the Ukrainian president should resign.

Then, as Zelenskyy and Trump raised the prospect of revived talks, Graham praised the deal as an "implicit security guarantee" for Ukraine because it would give Trump a business incen-

tive for ensuring that Russia does not continue to take Ukrainian territory.

"President Trump's a business guy. You got to make business," Graham said, adding that the "America First" policy was a "hybrid" from the GOP's days of "Reagan Republicans."

"I see it as a reevaluation of traditional alignments, a outside-the-box view of talking to traditional foes, but the reason I support it is because I think this hybrid approach is actually smart," Graham said.

Other Republicans who are opposed to Ukraine aid were delighted to see Trump sour on Zelenskyy.

"What we're seeing, which is a bit of a shock to the system, is a president that's prioritizing American interests," said Sen. Eric Schmitt, R-Mo.

The only part of Trump's address to Congress on Tuesday night that drew more applause from Democrats than Republicans was when the president spoke of how the U.S. had sent billions of dollars in military aid to Ukraine. On the Democratic side of the House chamber, members unfurled a small Ukrainian flag and wore scarfs of blue and gold.

On the Republican side, displays of support for Ukraine were hard to find. A few members wore lapel pins with the American and Ukrainian flags.

Sen Thom Tillis, R-N.C., who was one of the only GOP lawmakers to defend Zelenskyy this past week, said he was wearing the pin to send the message that "I support Ukraine and that I think that Vladimir Putin is a liar. And the minute that we think there's any redeeming quality from him, we've made a mistake."

Macron's diplomatic comeback: from France's domestic crisis to reshaping Europe's defense

PARIS, March 9, (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron is back at the center of global diplomacy, seeking to ease relations with President Donald Trump, championing a Ukraine peace

plan alongside his British counterpart, and seeing his longstanding desire to boost European defense turning into reality.

Six months ago, Macron seemed

weaker than ever after his call for early legislative elections produced a hung parliament, sparking an unprecedented crisis. Known for his nonstop political activism, Macron shifted his focus to foreign policy, leaving domestic struggles largely to the prime minister.

Now, he appears as the one leader who speaks to Trump several times per week and takes the lead in European support for Ukraine, while positioning himself as the commander-in-chief of the European Union's only nuclear power.

Macron, 47, is one of the few leaders who knew Trump during his first term in office, maintaining despite disagreements a cordial relationship, which both describe as "friendship."

He was the first European leader to visit Trump since his reelection, seeking to persuade him not to abandon Ukraine in pursuit of a peace deal with Russia.

Macron is also a heavyweight of European politics, and shifting U.S. policies gave momentum to his longstanding views.

Since he was first elected in 2017, Macron has pushed for a stronger, more sovereign Europe.



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, (left), meets French President Emmanuel Macron on the sidelines of the European Council to discuss continued support for Ukraine and European defense, in Brussels on March 6. (AP)

Far-right front-runner in Romania's annulled presidential race files candidacy in rerun

PARIS, March 9, (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron is back at the center of global diplomacy, seeking to ease relations with President Donald Trump, championing a Ukraine peace plan alongside his British counterpart, and seeing his longstanding desire to boost European defense turning into reality.

Six months ago, Macron seemed weaker than ever after his call for early legislative elections produced a hung parliament, sparking an unprecedented crisis. Known for his nonstop political activism, Macron shifted his focus to foreign policy, leaving domestic struggles largely to the prime minister.

Now, he appears as the one leader who speaks to Trump several times per week and takes the lead in European support for Ukraine, while positioning himself as the commander-in-chief of the European Union's only nuclear power.



Calin Georgescu, the winner of the first round of presidential elections, later annulled by the Constitutional Court, speaks to media after registering his new bid for the country's presidency outside Romania's Electoral Authority, in Bucharest, Romania on March 7. (AP)

Europe

CDU, SPD eye talks: Germany's conservative Union bloc of CDU and CSU and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) on Saturday announced their intention to enter formal coalition negotiations, following the conclusion of exploratory talks.



Merz

The exploratory talks, which lasted for over a week after the federal election on Feb. 23, produced a paper outlining the basis for the two parties to form a coalition government.

CDU leader and likely the next Chancellor Friedrich Merz said at a press conference that agreements had been reached in a number of key policy areas including migration, finance, and economic issues.

Regarding migration, the parties agreed on the possibility of rejecting asylum seekers at land borders, as well as strengthened border controls. They also agreed to reform the social benefits system for the unemployed. (Xinhua)

Italian gov OK's draft law:

The Italian government approved a draft law that for the first time introduces the legal definition of femicide in the country's criminal law and punishes it with life imprisonment.

The move, announced on the eve of Women's International Day on Saturday, aims at tackling a shocking string of homicides and violence targeting women in Italy through strengthening measures against gender-based crimes like stalking and revenge porn.

The proposal, agreed on late Friday, still needs to go through parliament and be approved by both chambers to become law.

"This is an extremely significant bill, which introduces the crime of femicide in our legal system as an autonomous crime, punishing it with life imprisonment," said conservative Premier Giorgia Meloni, who strongly backed the initiative. (Xinhua)



Demonstrators protest to mark International Women's Day in Istanbul, Turkey on March 8. (AP)

Int'l Women's Day protests demand equal rights, end to discrimination

ISTANBUL, March 9, (AP) — Women took to the streets of cities across Europe, Africa, South America and elsewhere to mark International Women's Day with demands for ending inequality and gender-based violence.

On the Asian side of Istanbul, Turkey's biggest city, a rally in Kadikoy saw members of dozens of women's groups listen to speeches, dance and sing in the spring sunshine. The colorful protest was overseen by a large police presence, including officers in riot gear and a water cannon truck.

The Erdogan government declared 2025 the Year of the Family. Protesters pushed back against the idea of women's role being confined to marriage and motherhood, carrying banners reading "Family will not bind us to life" and "We will not be sacrificed to the family."

Critics have accused the government of oversteering restrictions on women's rights and not doing enough to tackle violence against women.

Erdogan in 2021 withdrew Turkey from a European treaty, dubbed the Istanbul Convention, that protects women from domestic violence. Turkish rights group We Will Stop Femicides Platform says that 394 women were killed by men in 2024.

"There is bullying at work, pressure from husbands and fathers at home and pressure from patriarchal society. We demand that this pressure be reduced even further," Yaz Gulgun, 52, said.

In many other European countries, women also protested against violence, for better access to gender-specific health care,

equal pay and other issues in which they don't get the same treatment as men.

In Poland, activists opened a center across from the parliament building in Warsaw where women can go to have abortions with pills, either alone or with other women.

Opening the center on International Women's Day across from the legislature was a symbolic challenge to authorities in the traditionally Roman Catholic nation, which has one of Europe's most restrictive abortion laws.

From Athens to Madrid, Paris, Munich, Zurich and Belgrade and in many more cities across the continent, women marched to demand an end to treatment as second-class citizens in society, politics, family and at work.

In Madrid, protesters held up big hand-drawn pictures depicting Gisele Pelicot, the woman who was drugged by her now ex-husband in France over the course of a decade so that she could be raped by dozens of men while unconscious. Pelicot has become a symbol for women all over Europe in the fight against sexual violence.

Thousands of women marched in the capital Skopje and several other cities in North Macedonia to raise their voices for economic, political and social equality for women. Organizers said only about 28% of women in the country own property and in rural areas only 5%, mostly widows, have property in their name.

Only 18 out of 100 women surveyed in rural areas responded that their parents divided family property equally between the brother and sister.

INTERNATIONAL

China's top legislature vows high-quality legislation, oversight to serve nat'l interest

BEIJING, March 9, (Xinhua): The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature, on Saturday unveiled its annual work plan for 2025, vowing to advance high-quality legislative work and conduct effective oversight to serve the overall national interest.

Chinese national lawmakers on Saturday started deliberating the work report of the NPC Standing Committee at the ongoing NPC annual session.

To ensure constitutional implementation and strengthen compliance oversight, the NPC Standing Committee will improve the systems ensuring comprehensive implementation of the Constitution and establish a system for reporting on its implementation, the report said, adding that the legislature will enhance its capacity to conduct constitutional review and normative document recording and review.

In the annual legislative plan, the NPC Standing Committee unveiled several key areas for the coming year.

In order to strengthen the legal framework for the development of the socialist market economy, the NPC Standing Committee will formulate a law on promoting the private sector, a law on national development planning, a financial law, a financial stability law, and a law on cultivated land protection and quality improvement.

It will also revise the Unfair Competition Law, the Enterprise Bankruptcy Law, the Agriculture Law, the Fisheries Law, the Civil Aviation Law, and the Banking Regulation Law, according to the report.

In the social and cultural sectors, the legislature will formulate a law promoting public awareness and education regarding the rule of law, a social assistance law, a childcare services law, and a law on public-interest litigation initiated by procuratorates.

It will also revise the Law on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases and the Law on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language, the report said.

With a focus on refining the systems concerning ecological conservation, the legislature will continue with the compilation of an environmental code and formulate a national parks law and an atomic energy law.

To modernize the national security system and public security governance mechanisms, the NPC Standing Committee will formulate a law on public health emergency response and a hazardous chemicals safety law. It will also revise the Road Traffic Safety Law, the Food Safety Law, the Cybersecurity Law, the Public Security Administrative Penalties Law, the Prison Law, and the State Compensation Law.

In regard to legislation in areas involving foreign affairs, the legislature will revise the Maritime Law, the Foreign Trade Law, and the Arbitration Law, according to the report.

The NPC Standing Committee also vowed to intensify research on legislation in emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence, the digital economy, and big data.



The third plenary meeting of the third session of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China on March 9. (Xinhua)

Aid agencies cut funding

Rohingya refugees in Bangladeshi camps brace for upcoming food reductions

COX'S BAZAR, Bangladesh, March 9, (AP): Rohingya refugees in cramped Bangladeshi camps say they are worried about a U.S. decision to cut food rations by half beginning next month, while a refugee official says the reduction will impact the nutrition of more than 1 million refugees and create "social and mental pressure."

President Donald Trump abruptly stopped most foreign aid and dismantled the U.S. Agency for International Development, which has significantly hampered the global humanitarian sector. Trump's Jan. 20 executive order froze the funding for a 90-day review.

The World Food Program, the main UN food agency, recently announced that cuts to food rations will take effect from April 1 in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, where dozens of camps are inhabited by Rohingya refugees.

More than 700,000 Muslim Rohing-

ya fled to Bangladesh from Myanmar starting in late August 2017 when Myanmar's military launched a "clearance operation." The ethnic group faces discrimination and are denied citizenship and other rights in the Buddhist-majority nation. Following a military takeover in 2021, the country has been engulfed in an armed conflict widely seen as civil war.

It was not immediately clear if the WFP's decision was directly related to the Trump administration's action.

"We received a letter that (says) previously it was \$12.50, and now it is \$6. They used to get \$12.50 per month, and from now \$6, this will greatly affect them," Shamsud Douza, additional refugee relief and repatriation commissioner of Bangladesh, told The Associated Press.

"As the food is cut, they will get less nutritious food, which may lead to a lack of nutrition. There will be social



Rohingya refugees collect food stuff distributed by the World Food Programme (WFP) at their refugee camp at Kutupalong in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh on March 6. (AP)

and mental pressure created amongst the Rohingya people in their community. They will have to look for an alternative for the food," he said.

Douza said there are more sectors where budgets have been cut beyond the food rations, but he would not say whether WFP cuts were related to the U.S. funding rollback.

"Generally, there will be less (support) for the (Rohingya) response after the funding cuts. The response already has been slowed, and some people, including Rohingya, have lost their jobs, and some services are reduced. It does not bring a good result when the available services get reduced," he said.

The interim Bangladesh government said the end of USAID payments would stop other projects in Bangladesh, but funding for Rohingya refugees will continue to flow.

The U.S. has been the top donor to

Bangladesh for Rohingya refugees, providing the U.N. with emergency food and nutrition assistance. The U.S. usually provides almost half of the aid money spent on the humanitarian response to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, which provided about \$300 million in 2024.

As the news of the impending food reductions spread through the camps in Cox's Bazar, fear and frustration gripped the refugees.

"I am afraid now about how I am going to run my family, as we don't have any income-generating opportunities here. I got scared when I heard it," 40-year-old Manzur Ahmed said. "How will I buy rice, chilies, salt, sugar and dal, let alone fish, meat and vegetables, with 700 taka (\$6)? We won't even be able to buy (cooking) oil. How are we going to get them?"

Medical treatment also is decreasing, refugees said.

Philippine ex-President Duterte brushes off possible arrest by ICC on trip to Hong Kong

HONG KONG, March 9, (Agencies): An unannounced trip by former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte to Hong Kong set off speculation on Sunday that he may be trying to evade a possible arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court over his bloody crackdown on drugs while in power.

Duterte and his daughter and incumbent vice president were the main speakers in a campaign rally at the Southern Stadium in the busy Wan Chai commercial district for the senatorial candidates of his political party ahead of the May 12 midterm elections in the Philippines. Thousands of cheering and flag-waving Filipino ex-

patriates packed the stadium to watch Duterte speak.

In his expletives-laden speech, Duterte touched on news reports about the ICC possibly issuing a warrant for his arrest and repeated that he was ready to be jailed.

"What was my sin?" Duterte asked. "I did everything in my time so Filipinos can have a little peace and tranquility."

"If this is my fate in life, it's OK. I'll accept it. I can't do anything if I get arrested and jailed," said the former populist president, now 79 and frail of health.

He told the crowd in jest to make small contributions for the construc-

tion of his monument, which he said should show him holding a gun.

The ICC has been investigating the large number of killings by police and gunmen under the former president's crackdown against illegal drugs, which left thousands of mostly poor suspects dead.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has said that Philippine law enforcement agencies would be bound to fully cooperate if the ICC seeks the custody of his predecessor.

Duterte has denied he authorized extrajudicial killings but he has openly and repeatedly threatened to kill suspected drug dealers while in office 2016-2022.

Meanwhile, the Philippines' moves to create frictions in the South China Sea are just "shadow play" to smear China, with the screenplay written by external forces and the show livestreamed by Western media, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Friday.

Infringement and provocation will backfire and those acting as others' chess pieces are bound to be discarded, Wang told reporters at a press conference on the sidelines of the ongoing session of the national legislature.

To realize good neighborliness, lasting peace and security in the South China Sea, one needs trust and also rules. The key is to implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and develop a sound Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC), said Wang.

Honduras holds primaries as voter frustration simmers over security and economy

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, March 9, (AP): Voters in Honduras were to select candidates from the three main parties Sunday to compete in November's general election for the presidency in a country that remains deeply polarized, but skeptical of leaders from the left and right who have failed to deliver on improving security and the economy.

The election comes at a time when President Xiomara Castro - Honduras' first female leader - of the leftist LIBRE party has a tense relationship with the United States.

She had raised the possibility of ending US access to an air base the US military uses for regional operations and said that she would withdraw from the extradition treaty that sent her predecessor to the U.S. on drug trafficking charges, before eventually backtracking. Her own extended family has been dogged by allegations of ties to drug traffickers.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio notably left Honduras off of his itinerary when he made his first overseas trip to Central America last month since taking up the post.

Sunday's election will offer voters choices of continuation in the form of Castro's defense minister, Rixi Moncada, who has the president's support. Moncada's refusal to resign her position to run for office has been criticized, in part because the military is charged with guarding the ballots.

Former first lady Ana García offers the possibility of a return to the recent past as she seeks the nomination of the National Party of Honduras. Her



A man hangs a poster with a photo of presidential candidate Xiomara Castro and the day's headline of her expected victory at his newspaper stand after general elections in Tegucigalpa, Honduras on Nov 29, 2021. (AP)

husband, ex-President Juan Orlando Hernández, belongs to the party.

Hernández is serving a 45-year prison sentence in the United States for drug trafficking. At her closing campaign event, she played an audio recording of her husband saying "a vote for Ana is a vote for me, a vote for a better life."

The conservative Liberal Party of Honduras features a face-off between two people who once supported Castro, but became opponents.

One of them, Salvador Nasralla, helped Castro win the presidency in the 2021 election by ending his independent candidacy to join her coalition.

He served as vice president, before leaving the administration, saying he had been marginalized.

The other is Jorge Cálix, a young lawyer and politician, who was once a member of LIBRE, but left after Castro failed to support his bid to lead Congress.

Nasralla has expressed admiration for Argentina's libertarian president, Javier Milei, while Cálix says he wants to emulate popular El Salvador President Nayib Bukele's heavy-handed security policies.

"If a millennial did it in El Salvador, why can't another millennial like me do it here," Cálix has said.

Panama releases detained deportees from US into limbo following rights criticism

PANAMA CITY, March 9, (AP): After weeks of lawsuits and human rights criticism, Panama on Saturday released dozens of migrants who were held for weeks in a remote camp after being deported from the United States, telling them they have 30 days to leave the Central American nation.

It thrust many like Hayatullah Omagh, a 29-year-old who fled Af-

ghanistan in 2022 after the Taliban took control, into a legal limbo, scrambling to find a path forward.

"We are refugees. We do not have money. We cannot pay for a hotel in Panama City, we do not have relatives," Omagh told the Associated Press in an interview. "I can't go back to Afghanistan under any circumstances ... It is under the control of the Tali-

ban, and they want to kill me. How can I go back?"

Authorities have said deportees will have the option of extending their stay by 60 days if they need it, but after that many like Omagh don't know what they will do.

Omagh climbed off a bus in Panama City alongside 65 migrants from China, Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Nepal and other nations after spending weeks detained in poor conditions by the Panamanian government, which has said it wants to work with the Trump administration "to send a signal of deterrence" to people hoping to migrate.

Human rights groups and lawyers advocating for the migrants were waiting at the bus terminal, and scrambled to find the released migrants shelter and other resources. Dozens of other people remained in the camp.

Among those getting off buses were migrants fleeing violence and repression in Pakistan and Iran, and 27-year-old Nikita Gaponov, who fled Russia due to repression for being part of the community and who said he was detained at the US border, but not allowed to make an asylum claim.

"Once I get off the bus, I'll be sleeping on the ground tonight," Gaponov said.

Chairperson of African Union Commission urges immediate end to hostilities in S. Sudan

ADDIS ABABA, March 9, (Agencies): Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat has called for an immediate end to hostilities in South Sudan.

In a statement issued Saturday evening, the chief of the pan-African bloc expressed "deep concern" over the escalating tensions in Nasir County in South Sudan's Upper Nile State. The clashes included a lethal attack on a UN helicopter and violence in other areas, all "posing a threat to the peace

process."

While urging authorities to hold those responsible fully accountable, the chairperson called for the utmost restraint by all parties, an immediate end to the hostilities, adherence to the ceasefire arrangements and engagement in national dialogue.

He said the AU is currently consulting with the South Sudanese authorities, the East African bloc Intergovernmental Authority on Development and other stakeholders to coordinate efforts

to de-escalate the crisis.

The chairperson reiterated the AU's longstanding call for South Sudanese parties to fully implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan.

On Friday, South Sudanese President Salva Kiir appealed for calm and reiterated his commitment to peace, shortly after 27 people were killed in a violent attack on government forces and a UN helicopter in Nasir County.

Kiir said the deaths, including an army general and the commander in Nasir, occurred Friday morning when the UN mission attempted to evacuate South Sudanese soldiers trapped in Nasir following clashes with the White Army, a local militia allied with the opposition Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army-in-Opposition. Enditem

Meanwhile, Qatar condemned on Saturday, in the strongest terms, the attack against an UN-affiliated helicopter in South Sudan, which led to the death of several individuals.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry released a statement denouncing this heinous act violating international law, wishing solace for the families of the victims.

The ministry called for an immediate investigation into the incident to determine who was behind it and bring those responsible to justice.



Migrants, mostly from Asian countries, arrived in Panama City on March 8, after spending weeks in a Panamanian immigration camp following their deportation from the US and being released on the condition that they leave the country within 30 days. (AP)



People gather to collect water in Khartoum, Sudan, May 28, 2023. (AP)

Kuwaiti women leaders share success stories at Boursa Kuwait event

Boursa Kuwait celebrates women's achievements on Intl. Women's Day, ringing the bell for eighth consecutive year

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Boursa Kuwait joined more than 100 stock exchanges around the world in ringing the bell for women's empowerment for the eighth consecutive year in commemoration of International Women's Day, reaffirming its commitment to women's empowerment and inclusivity.

The bourse also hosted an event under the theme "Ring the Bell for Women: Empowerment, Inclusion, and Equity," which brought together distinguished female leaders from Kuwait's financial and business sectors who have excelled in their fields and continue to serve as role models in leadership and success.

The event commenced with a welcome address by Boursa Kuwait Board member Ms. Dalal Jafaar Behbehani, followed by a panel discussion entitled "Women: A Success Story that Inspires Generations and Shapes the Future". Moderated by Mrs. Dalal AlDousari, Deputy General Manager of Investor Relations at Gulf Bank, the session featured Boubyan Capital's Chief Executive Officer Ms. Badriya Al-Humaidhi, Chief Operating Officer of Al-Wazzan Educational Company Mrs. Lujain Al-Wazzan and Mrs. Haya Boodai, Board Member and Chair of the Cultural Committee at the Kuwait Economic Society.

The event concluded with female leaders from various Kuwaiti investment firms ringing the bell in celebration of women's strength, influence and ability to shape the broader economic landscape, showcasing the vital role stock exchanges can play in advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Boursa Kuwait Board Member Mrs. Dalal Jafaar Behbehani commented on the occasion, saying: "At Boursa Kuwait, we believe that recognizing women's contributions begins with fairness and equity – an ongoing commitment that extends beyond this annual celebration. Empowering women is essential to economic prosperity and sustainable growth, and investing in them fuels innovation, fostering a diverse society capable of tackling present and future challenges."

She added, "For the eighth consecutive year, Boursa Kuwait joins over 100 stock exchanges worldwide in ringing the bell for women's empowerment, reaffirming its belief that active female participation is key to building strong, progressive societies. This initiative highlights the critical role of capital markets in driving sustainable development and underscores the seven 'Women's Empowerment Principles,' which offer practical guidance for listed companies and institutions to promote workplace and market equality and create opportunities for all without bias or discrimination."



Boursa Kuwait rings the bell for women's empowerment.



Dalal Jafaar Behbehani



Dalal AlDousari



Badriya AlHumaidhi



Lujain AlWazzan



Haya Boodai

opportunities for all without bias or discrimination."

"Through their active participation and leadership, Kuwaiti women have proven to be a driving force for progress, contributing to the growth of our national economy. Today, women represent approximately 51% of Kuwaiti employees in the public sector and 44% in the private sector – a testament to their exceptional capabilities across various industries. I invite you to celebrate this achievement for our beloved nation and recognize its ongoing efforts in this field, and I hope that this event serves as a springboard for the future, reinforcing the idea that true empowerment and equality begin with expanding opportunities, supporting female leadership, and fostering a culture of inclusivity and fairness," Behbehani said.

Chief Executive Officer of Boubyan Capital, Mrs. Badriya AlHumaidhi, also spoke on the occasion and thanked Boursa

Behbehani:

- Through their active participation and leadership, Kuwaiti women have proven to be a driving force for progress and vital contributors to the shaping of our national economy
- Female leaders discuss their achievements and the challenges of the Kuwaiti capital market during engaging panel discussion

Kuwait for organizing the event. "Women are a vital pillar of any thriving society, consistently demonstrating their ability to innovate and excel. I am grateful to Boursa Kuwait for the opportunity to share my humble experience with my sisters and colleagues and I hope it has contributed to their professional growth," she said.

"The concept of empowering and supporting women is not new to Kuwait, but one that is deeply rooted in our nation's history and present. Women have been an integral contributor to Kuwait's de-

velopment at every stage. Today, we encourage the next generation of female leaders to equip themselves with the knowledge and skills needed to elevate our country to even greater heights," said Mrs. Lujain AlWazzan, Chief Operating Officer of AlWazzan Educational Company.

Mrs. Haya Boodai, Board Member and Chair of the Cultural Committee at the Kuwait Economic Society also commented, saying: "We gather today under the theme Women: A Success Story that Inspires Generations and

Shapes the Future, with the hope of inspiring the next generation of female leaders to learn from our challenges and successes and continue the path that we have paved, empowering them to build on our experiences and take them to even greater heights to shape a brighter future for Kuwait."

Mrs. Dalal AlDousari, Deputy General Manager of Investor Relations at Gulf Bank, hailed the event, saying: "Today, we held an exceptional panel discussion entitled Women: A Success Story that Inspires Generations and Shapes the Future, which shed light on the achievements of some of the most inspiring women working in the Kuwaiti financial sector today. I would like to thank Boursa Kuwait for this wonderful initiative and I wish to express my deepest gratitude to our distinguished guests for enriching our discussions and sharing their motivational success stories."

Boursa Kuwait hosted this event

in commemoration of International Women's Day, observed globally on March 8 each year. Held under the theme "Ring the Bell for All Women and Girls: Rights, Equality, Empowerment.", the event highlighted the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment and was organized in collaboration with the World Federation of Exchanges, UN Women, the UN Global Compact, the UN Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative and the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation.

The worldwide event addressed three key issues to accelerate women's empowerment, including the advancement of women's rights and challenging all forms of discrimination, promoting gender equality and addressing systemic barriers to ensure inclusivity and empowerment as well as redefining power structures by ensuring inclusive access to education, employment, leadership, and decision-making spaces, and prioritizing opportunities for women to lead and innovate.

Boursa Kuwait is proud to be one of the first stock exchanges in the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Middle East to ring the bell for women's empowerment, a testament to its deep commitment to sustainable business practices, diversity and inclusion. The company has been a signatory of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Women's Empowerment Principles since 2019 and is a partner and supporter of the United Nations Sustainable Stock Exchange (SSE) Initiative since 2017, where women's empowerment stands as a key pillar.

Boursa Kuwait's support of this initiative falls in line with its Corporate Sustainability (CS) strategy which stipulates ensuring initiatives apply and fall in line with the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) pillars, industry best practice standards and investor expectations, creating strong and sustainable partnerships that ultimately achieve success and allow Boursa Kuwait to leverage the capabilities and strengths of other companies or organizations that have experience in different fields, and integrating sustainability efforts with the company culture, to achieve longevity and an ongoing impact that is carried on and instilled in the day-to-day operations of the stock exchange.

As part of the strategy, Boursa Kuwait has launched many initiatives in partnership with local and international organizations, focusing on support for nongovernmental organizations and charity programs, financial literacy and capital market awareness, the empowerment of women as well as environmental protection.

US economy shows solid growth despite global challenges

Trade war concerns push demand away from the US dollar

By National Bank of Kuwait

**United States
ISM Manufacturing PMI**

The U.S. ISM manufacturing survey fell to 50.3 in February, down from 50.9 and below the predicted 50.6, signalling the impact of tariff concerns on businesses. Employment entered contraction at 47.6, down from 50.3, while new orders dropped to 48.6 from 55.1. Adding to the Fed's concerns, the prices paid component surged to 62.4, significantly higher than 54.9 previously and well above the expected 56.0, indicating rising cost pressures in the sector.

Services PMIs

U.S. economic data for February showed solid growth, driven by stronger-than-expected business activity. Both S&P Global and ISM service sector reports indicated continued expansion despite global challenges, including trade tensions under President Trump. The S&P Global Composite PMI rose to 51.6 (above the 50.4 forecast), signalling modest growth. The services sector led the improvement, with the S&P Global Services PMI at 51 and the ISM Services PMI at 53.5, both exceeding expectations. Key ISM subcomponents, including business activity (54.4), employment (53.9), and new orders (52.2), reflected strength. However, inflation remained a concern, as the ISM Services Prices index surged to 62.6, indicating rising costs amid global economic uncertainty with President Trump's economic policies.

Non-Farm Employment Change

The U.S. economy added 151K jobs in February 2025, up from a revised 125K in January but below the 160K forecast. Job gains were led by health care (+52K), financial activities (+21K), transportation and warehousing (+18K), and social assistance (+11K). Meanwhile, federal government employment fell by 10K, partly due to DOGE layoffs, with further impacts expected from federal spending cuts and tariffs. Retail trade lost 6K jobs, while employment remained mostly unchanged in sectors like construction, manufacturing, wholesale trade, and professional services.

The US Dollar index closed the week at 103.838.

**Eurozone
Economic Conditions**

The Eurozone economy grew by 0.2% in Q4 2024,

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0380	1.0380	1.0888	1.0832	1.0730	1.1000	1.0887
GBP	1.2583	1.2573	1.2944	1.2920	1.2800	1.3100	1.2920
JPY	150.48	146.94	151.31	148.03	145.00	149.00	146.50
CHF	0.9017	0.8765	0.9031	0.8795	0.8560	0.8900	0.8705

slightly better than the previous estimate of 0.1%, matching Q3's growth. Household spending (+0.6%) was the main driver, alongside increases in government expenditure (+0.9%) and investment (+0.6%). However, exports and imports both fell slightly (-0.1%), and inventories dragged growth down by 0.2 percentage points. Germany (-0.2%) and France (-0.1%) saw GDP contractions, while Italy grew by 0.1% (revised up from 0%). Ireland showed a strong rebound (+3.6% vs. a previously estimated -1.3%). Austria (-0.4%), Finland (-0.2%), and Malta (-0.7%) contracted, while Latvia stagnated. Meanwhile, Portugal (1.5%), Greece (0.9%), Spain (0.8%), Lithuania (0.8%), Estonia (0.7%), Slovenia (0.6%), Slovakia (0.5%), and Cyprus (0.3%) posted growth.

Monetary Policy

The ECB cut its three key interest rates by 25 basis points, lowering the deposit facility rate to 2.50%, the main refinancing rate to 2.65%, and the marginal lending rate to 2.90%. This move reflects a reassessment of inflation and monetary policy transmission, making borrowing cheaper for businesses and households. Inflation is expected to average 2.3% in 2025, 1.9% in 2026, and 2.0% in 2027, with core inflation also nearing the 2% target. While domestic inflation remains high due to delayed wage and price adjustments, wage growth is slowing. Economic growth forecasts were revised down to 0.9% for 2025 and 1.2% for 2026, citing weak exports and investment. The ECB remains data-dependent, adjusting policy as needed to stabilize inflation around its 2% target without committing to a fixed rate path.

FX Update

The euro surged above \$1.085, its highest level since November 5, and posted a 4.6% weekly gain, the strongest since March 2009. The rally was driven by Germany's fiscal reforms, the ECB's cautious stance on future rate cuts, and a weaker dollar amid concerns over Trump's trade war threats. Germany's major parties announced plans to reform the debt brake, allowing for increased defense spending and a euro 500 billion infrastructure initiative to stimulate growth. Meanwhile, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen proposed an euro 800 billion plan to boost defense spending which is highly expected to pass through parliament. The ECB's expected 25bps rate cut signaled a shift toward a less restrictive policy, with traders anticipating one or two more cuts this year.

The EUR/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.0832.

Asia-Pacific

Australian Economic Conditions

Australia's economy grew by 0.6% quarter-over-quarter in Q4 2024, accelerating from 0.3% in Q3 and surpassing the market expectation of 0.5%. This marks the 13th consecutive quarter of expansion and the fastest growth rate since Q4 2022, primarily driven by household spending, which rebounded 0.4% after being flat in Q3. Essential expenses such as rent and healthcare continued to rise, while private investment increased by 0.3%, supported by spending on engineering, electricity infrastructure, and mining. On the trade front, exports grew by 0.7%, while imports increased by 0.1%, contributing 0.2 percentage points

(ppts) to GDP. Government spending rose 0.7%, but at a slower rate than the 1.4% rise in Q3. Additionally, inventories added 0.1 ppts to GDP after three quarters of declines, and the household savings ratio rose to 3.8% from 3.6%. On an annual basis, GDP expanded 1.3%, exceeding the 1.2% forecast.

The AUD/USD currency pair closed the week at 0.6305.

Chinese Exports

China's exports grew by 2.3% year-on-year to \$540 billion in January-February 2025, falling short of the 5.0% forecast and slowing from December's 10.7% surge. The slowdown was attributed to rising trade tensions with the U.S. and reduced activity during the Lunar New Year. Despite being the 10th consecutive period of growth, it was the weakest increase since April 2024. Exports rose for agricultural products (3.0%), mechanical and electronic goods (4.2%), home appliances (6.3%), integrated circuits (11.9%), and high-tech products (5.4%), while declining for steel (-3.9%), finished oil (-24.8%), and footwear (-18.3%). By region, exports increased to the U.S. (2.3%), EU (10.6%), and ASEAN (5.7%) but declined to South Korea (-2.6%) and Australia (-4.8%). In 2024, China's total exports grew 5.9% to \$3.58 trillion.

The USD/CNY currency pair closed the week at 7.2340.

Japanese Yen Surges

The Japanese yen strengthened past 148 per dollar, reaching a five-month high due to increased safe-haven demand amid escalating global trade tensions and uncertainty over U.S. tariff policies. Concerns about the U.S. economy led traders to move away from the dollar in favor of the yen and Swiss franc. Domestically, expectations of further interest rate hikes by the Bank of Japan (BOJ) supported the yen and Japanese bond yields. BOJ Deputy Governor Shinichi Uchida indicated that rates could rise further if economic forecasts are met, signaling the early stages of Japan's exit from its ultra-loose monetary policy. However, he also noted that monetary conditions remain accommodative, with only limited reductions in Japanese Government Bond holdings.

The USD/JPY currency pair closed the week at 148.03.

**Kuwait
Kuwaiti Dinar**

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30815.



Major General Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah and Waleed Al-Khashti at Nawaf Al-Ahmad Base.



Al-Sabah and Al-Khashti with Zain's team and Coast Guard personnel.

Zain hosts iftar banquet at Nawaf Al-Ahmad Base

In recognition of Coast Guard personnel's efforts during Holy Month

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: As part of its annual Zain Al-Shuhoor campaign, Zain hosted a Ramadan Iftar banquet at Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Base, located along the Northern Island of Jaber Al-Ahmad Bridge, in honor of the Coast Guard personnel. This initiative aimed to share the blessings of the Holy Month of Ramadan with them while expressing appreciation for their relentless efforts in safeguarding Ku-

wait's maritime borders around the clock.

The Iftar gathering was attended by Major General Sheikh Mubarak Ali Yousef Al-Sabah, Director General of the General Administration of the Coast Guard, along with Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer, Waleed Al-Khashti, Zain officials, and Coast Guard personnel stationed at the base.

This initiative reflects Zain's commitment to embracing the spirit of Ramadan and sharing its blessings with the community, including Coast Guard personnel who dedicate themselves to protecting the nation and its people 24/7. The iftar

banquet was held in their honor as a gesture of gratitude for their sacrifices, particularly during Ramadan, when they remain on duty away from their families.

Such social visits are an integral part of Zain's annual Ramadan program, during which the company's team and volunteers actively engage in visits to various entities to strengthen community bonds and foster collaboration.

Every year, Zain Al-Shuhoor evolves and expands its programs and initiatives, collaborating with various organizations across the country. Through this campaign, Zain embodies the spirit of generosity that defines the Holy Month and reflects the deep-rooted values of the Kuwaiti people in supporting others and spreading love and peace.

In support of Diraya campaign

KFH enhances financial literacy

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) continues its efforts to raise awareness of its latest services and products, as well as financial fraud, while simultaneously enhancing customer financial literacy. These efforts are part of KFH's support for the Diraya financial and banking awareness campaign, launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) in collaboration with the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) and local banks. This campaign aims to enhance customer awareness of available banking services and solutions, while promoting financial inclusion across all segments of society.

KFH successfully utilizes all its e-channels on social media platforms and its website, mobile app to disseminate awareness content. These endeavors amassed a significant interaction with customers due to the distinctive and useful contents of KFH's advanced services and products.

In conjunction with the rolling out of its new digital services, KFH has released several awareness contents. These services include the first-of-its-kind instant credit and prepaid cards printing, WAMD instant payment in collaboration with KNET, transfers via Western Union network, AFAQ instant transfer service. KFH's awareness efforts also encompassed explanatory videos on how to register a new user on the mobile app, cardless cash withdrawals, ATMs services in addition to how to benefit from KFHonline finan-



KFH & Diraya logo

cial solutions. These videos among other awareness posts are available on KFH's social media channels (@KFHgroup).

In line with the continued awareness efforts, KFH is committed to participating in initiatives and forums that focus on raising banking awareness. These include its participation in the 5th Gulf Conference and Exhibition for Cybersecurity Challenges titled "A Secure Digital Environment". During its participation, KFH shed light on the concept of fraud in general, with a specific focus on cyber fraud, explaining the various methods of fraud that pose a threat to both individuals and the community.

Housing prices surge 6.4%

GCC inflation rises to 1.7%

MUSCAT, March 9, (KUNA): GCC general inflation rose at the end of October 2024 to 1.7 percent compared with the ratio in the same month in 2023, GCC Statistical Center (GCCSC) consumer price data showed on Saturday.

The GCC annual inflation rate caused mainly by the rise in housing group prices by 6.4 percent and services and commodities group by three percent, it added.

Restaurant and hotel group rose by 1.7 percent, while culture and entertainment increased by 1.4 percent, education by 1.2 percent and beverage and food by .08 percent, it stated.

However, transport prices dropped by 3.6 percent, and household furniture and equipment, tobacco, communication, and clothes and shoes decreased by 1.9, 1.1, 0.9 and 0.4 percent respectively, it noted.

The inflation rate of the European Union at the end of October 2024 hit 2.3 percent, Brazil 4.8 percent, followed by India 4.4 percent, the UK 3.2, the US 2.6, Japan 2.3, Germany 2, South Korea 1.3, France 1.2, Italy .09 and China .03 percent, it pointed out.

The GCCSC whose headquarters in Oman is the accredited official body of data and statistics related to the GCC states.

153 new oil wells planned

Türkiye boosts oil production

ANKARA, March 9, (Xinhua): Türkiye has significantly increased its domestic oil production, reaching a daily output of 132,000 barrels as of March, Turkish Energy and Natural Resources Minister Alparslan Bayraktar told the semi-official Anadolu Agency on Saturday.

The Turkish minister announced plans to drill 153 new oil wells, primarily in the Gabar region of southern Sirnak province, eastern Van province, and southern Diyarbakir province, along with the areas near the Türkiye-Syria border.

He said the Gabar oil field, discovered in 2021 and recognized as the largest oil find in Türkiye's history, has significantly contributed to the national economy, noting that the regional production now adds 2 billion U.S. dollars annually to the

country's economy.

When elaborating on work to enhance Türkiye's natural gas production, the minister said that 7 million cubic meters of natural gas is produced daily from the Sakarya Gas Field in the Black Sea, enough to meet the needs of approximately 3 million households.

According to the minister, Türkiye plans to invest 259 billion Turkish lira (approximately 7.11 billion dollars) in the energy sector under the "2025 Investment Program."

For the program, 140.7 billion lira (approximately 3.87 billion dollars) will be allocated to oil and natural gas exploration and production, and 45.8 billion lira (nearly 1.26 billion dollars) will be used to improve natural gas storage and transmission infrastructure, the minister explained.

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: DESFA, Greece's Gas Transmission System Operator and KIPIC's partner in the operation and management of the Al-Zour LNG import terminal, hosted its first event in Kuwait titled "Unlocking the Future of Energy: A Deep Dive into DESFA" on February 12, 2025. The event focused on showcasing innovative strategies and technological advancements, as well as exploring collaboration opportunities to support the energy transition toward more sustainable and cleaner energy systems.

The event brought together industry leaders, government officials, academia and stakeholders from various sectors to explore the evolving energy landscape in Europe and Kuwait and strengthen synergies among the two countries. The forum was designed to provide an in-depth understanding of DESFA's pivotal role in the transmission of natural gas and the company's active participation in the transition toward renewable energy solutions and was implemented thanks to the ongoing support and expertise of our strategic partner in the region Energy Services Middle East - ESME and Mr. Claude Jamal, Managing Director of the company.

The event honored with their presence His Excellencies the Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic to the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Bahrain, Mr. Ioannis Plotas, and the Ambassador of Cyprus in the State of Kuwait, Mr. Andreas Panagiotou.

Opening remarks by DESFA CEO Maria Rita Galli, the Greek Ambassador Ioannis Plotas and Konstantinos Maroulis, DESFA's LNGI O&M Contractor Representative and Plant Manager at KIPIC set the stage for an insightful discussion, underscoring the strong partnership between Greece and Kuwait, as well as DESFA's expertise in managing world-class gas infrastructure. This was exemplified by the operational excellence recorded at KIPIC's Al-Zour LNG Terminal and DESFA's experience with the Revithoussa



DESFA hosts first event in Kuwait, focus on energy transition and collaboration.

LNG Terminal, a cornerstone of Southeast European energy security and supply sources diversification.

DESFA CEO, Maria Rita Galli, mentioned during her welcome note: "This day aims to present our company and showcase our extensive experience and presence in Kuwait for the past four years, operating with excellency the KIPIC LNGI Terminal. It is an opportunity for us to share our know-how as a European gas TSO, deploying our efforts to combine our key competencies and expertise to address the energy trilemma: availability, affordability and sustainability."

The company's executives had the chance to share the best practices and present the integrated energy solutions offered by DESFA, as well its efforts in sustainability and

ESG reporting, analyzing also the company's net zero master plan and commitments. During the event, DESFA highlighted its significant efforts to modernize Greece's energy infrastructure, ensuring energy security, and promoting decarbonization. The company also showcased its various initiatives aimed at integrating green energy sources, such as hydrogen, biomethane, and renewable gases, as well as innovative decarbonization solutions, like carbon capture management and storage, positioning DESFA as a central player in achieving a sustainable energy future.

A dynamic panel featured Mr. Abdullah Al-Ajmi (Team Leader Gas Operations from KIPIC), Mr. Ioannis Chomatas (Chief Asset Development Officer from DESFA) and

Mr. Konstantinos Maroulis (KIPIC/LNGI O&M Contractor Representative & Plant Manager from DESFA), offering insights into the key role of LNG as a reliable and cleaner energy source, serving as a bridge fuel on the road to energy transition for both Europe and Kuwait and the importance of advancing the carbon capture storage (CCS) value chain.

DESFA's event in Kuwait reaffirmed the company's commitment to innovation and operational excellence, as a trusted energy partner in the region, exploring collaborative efforts and synergies to accelerate the global transition to cleaner energy. We would like to extend our most sincere appreciation to all participants for attending our first event in Kuwait and especially the ones from the K companies.

Housing sector hardest hit

World Bank estimates \$11 billion needed to rebuild Lebanon after Israel-Hezbollah war

BEIRUT, March 9, (AP): The cost of reconstruction and recovery for Lebanon following the 14-month Israel-Hezbollah war is estimated at \$11 billion, the World Bank said in a report on Friday.

The report by the World Bank's Lebanon Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment covered damage and losses in 10 sectors nationwide between Oct. 8, 2023, and Dec. 20, 2024.

It estimates that of the \$11 billion in reconstruction and recovery needs, \$3 billion to \$5 billion will need to be publicly financed, including for infrastructure sectors. Private financing is required for about \$6 billion to \$8 billion of the costs, mostly in the housing, commerce, industry and tourism sectors.

Hezbollah began firing rockets across the border on Oct. 8, 2023, one day after a deadly Hamas-led incursion into southern Israel that sparked the war in Gaza. Israel responded with shelling and airstrikes in Lebanon, and the two sides became locked in an escalating conflict that became a full-blown war in late September. A U.S.-brokered ceasefire went into effect in late November.

The Lebanese army said Friday that the Israeli military escorted Israeli civilians into Lebanese territory to visit a Jewish shrine near the village of Houla without permission from Leb-

nese authorities and in violation of the ceasefire agreement.

The army statement said the incident "represents a blatant violation of Lebanese national sovereignty" and of the ceasefire agreement under which Israel was supposed to withdraw its forces from all Lebanese territory last month. The Israeli military withdrew from border villages, but stayed in five strategic overlook locations inside Lebanon. Lebanese leaders have denounced the continued presence of the Israeli troops as an occupation and a violation of the deal.

The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Israel's army radio published video Friday showing gaggles of ultra-Orthodox Jews flocking to the tomb where Rabbi Ashi, a Babylonian Jewish rabbi, is believed to be buried. It reported that the military escorted hundreds of worshippers to the site for morning prayers.

The U.N. peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon, known as UNIFIL, said in a statement that peacekeepers' view of the tomb was obscured by a screen erected by the Israeli military, but that "it appears that Israeli civilians crossed the Blue Line around the tomb" and later left.

"Any unauthorized crossing of the Blue Line is a violation of resolution 1701," the statement said, referring to the U.N. Security Council resolution

that ended a monthlong war between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006. "UNIFIL urges all actors to avoid any action that could upset the current delicate stability."

The World Bank report said the economic cost of the conflict on Lebanon totals \$14 billion, with damage to physical structures amounting to \$6.8 billion and economic losses from reduced productivity, foregone revenues and operating costs reaching \$7.2 billion.

Housing has been the hardest-hit sector with damages estimated at \$4.6 billion.

The report found that the conflict resulted in Lebanon's real gross domestic product contracting by 7.1% in 2024, a significant setback compared to a projected 0.9% growth had the war not happened.

By the end of 2024, Lebanon's cumulative GDP decline since 2019 approached 40%.

Over 4,000 people in Lebanon were killed in the war, which displaced hundreds of thousands and caused widespread destruction in the nation. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported Friday evening that Israel launched a "large-scale air aggression" targeting sites in southern Lebanon with about 20 airstrikes. The Israeli military said it struck sites "in which weapons and rocket launchers belonging to Hezbollah were identified."

Canada, Mexico seek solutions with Trump despite new tariffs

Xi Jinping avoids Trump calls, leverages strategic position

WASHINGTON, March 9, (AP): The leaders of both Canada and Mexico got on the phone with President Donald Trump this past week to seek solutions after he slapped tariffs on their countries, but China's president appears unlikely to make a similar call soon.

Beijing, which unlike America's close partners and neighbors has been locked in a trade and tech war with the U.S. for years, is taking a different approach to Trump in his second term, making it clear that any negotiations should be conducted on equal footing.

China's leaders say they are open to talks, but they also made preparations for the higher U.S. tariffs, which have risen 20% since Trump took office seven weeks ago. Intent on not being caught off guard as they were during Trump's first term, the Chinese were ready with retaliatory measures - imposing their own taxes this past week on key U.S. farm imports and more.

Escalates

"As Washington escalates the tariff, Beijing doesn't see other options but to retaliate," said Sun Yun, director of the China program at the Stimson Center, a Washington-based think tank. "It doesn't mean Beijing doesn't want to negotiate, but it cannot be seen as begging for talks or mercy."

As the world's second-largest economy, China aspires to be a great power on both the regional and global stage, commanding respect from all countries, especially the United States, as proof that the Communist Party has made China prosperous and strong.

After the U.S. this past week imposed another 10% tariff, on top of the 10% imposed on Feb. 4, the Chinese foreign ministry uttered its sharpest retort yet: "If war is what the U.S. wants, be it



President Donald Trump, left, shakes hands with China's President Xi Jinping during a meeting on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Osaka, Japan, June 29, 2019. (AP)

a tariff war, a trade war or any other type of war, we're ready to fight till the end."

The harsh rhetoric echoed similar comments in 2018, when Trump launched his first trade war with China and it scrambled to line up tit-for-tat actions. Beijing's leaders have since developed a toolkit of tariffs, import curbs, export controls, sanctions, regulatory reviews and measures to limit companies from doing business in China.

All are designed to inflict pain on the U.S. economy and businesses in response to the American measures.

That allowed the Chinese government to react swiftly to Trump's recent across-the-board doubling of new tariffs on Chinese goods by rolling out a basket of retaliatory measures, including taxing many American farm goods at up to 15%, suspending U.S. lumber imports and blacklisting 15 U.S. companies.

Beijing showed restraint in its response to leave room for negotiation, analysts say.

Xi Jinping's leadership of the ruling Communist Party spans both of Trump's terms, giving Beijing more continuity in its planning. He is the one who decided it's not yet time to speak with Trump, said Daniel Rus-

sel, vice president for international security and diplomacy at the Asia Society Policy Institute.

Leverage

"That's not a scheduling issue, it's leverage for China," said Russel, who previously served as the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. "Xi won't walk into a call if there's a chance he'll be harassed or humiliated and for both political and strategic reasons, Xi won't play the role of a supplicant."

"Instead, China is hitting back promptly - but judiciously - to each set of tariffs," Russel said.

At his annual press conference Friday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that "no country should fantasize that it can suppress, contain China while developing good relations with China."

"Such two-faced acts not only are bad for the stability of bilateral relations but also will not build mutual trust," Wang said. He added that China welcomes cooperation with the U.S., but noted that "if you keep pressuring, China will firmly retaliate."

Scott Kennedy, a trustee chair in Chinese business and econom-

ics at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, said the Chinese this time are "not psychologically shocked" by Trump's "shock-and-awe" tactics.

"They've seen this before," Kennedy said. "These are the kind of things that they've anticipated."

China's economy has slowed but is still growing at nearly a 5% annual pace, and under Xi, the party is investing heavily in advanced technology, education and other areas. It has stronger trade ties with many other countries than during Trump's first term and has diversified where it gets key products, for example, buying most of its soybeans from Brazil and Argentina instead of the U.S.

In turn, the percentage of Chinese goods sold to the U.S. has fallen.

"They are better prepared to absorb the effect of the shocks, compared to several years ago," Kennedy said.

Meanwhile, more than 80% of Mexico's exports go to the U.S., and Canada sends 75% of its exports there.

China has learned from its previous dealings with Trump, Russel said. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum are facing a reversal of Trump's previous trade policies, with tariffs imposed and then postponed twice on at least some goods.

"Beijing has seen enough to know that appeasing Trump doesn't work," Russel said. In the first go-around, Trudeau and Sheinbaum "bought a little time, but the pressure only came roaring back stronger."

Trudeau flew to Mar-a-Lago to meet Trump in December after the president-elect threatened tariffs. But in announcing retaliatory tariffs Tuesday, Trudeau sternly warned: "This is a time to hit back hard and to demonstrate that a fight with Canada will have no winners."

Sheinbaum also has said that "no one wins with this decision."

Legal challenges loom

Trump orders changes to loan forgiveness program

WASHINGTON, March 9, (AP): President Donald Trump is ordering changes to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program that would disqualify workers of non-profit groups deemed to have engaged in "improper" activities.

An executive order signed Friday directs the Education Department to modify the program to deny loan relief to some borrowers. It would exclude loan forgiveness to people whose work is tied to illegal immigration, foreign terrorist groups or other illegal activity.

Congress created the program in 2007 to encourage careers in the government or nonprofit groups. It offers to cancel any remaining student debt after borrowers make 10 years of payments while working in public service. It's open to government workers, teachers, police, religious pastors and certain nonprofit employees, among others.

More than 2 million Americans have eligible employment and open student loans, according to December data from the Education Department.

At her Senate confirmation hearing, Education Secretary Linda McMahon pledged to continue Public Service Loan Forgiveness as ordered by Congress. "That's the law," she said in response to questions from Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va.

Rules

Under current rules, nonprofits are eligible if they focus on certain areas including public interest law, public health or education. Trump's order appears to target those who work in certain fields at odds with his political agenda, including immigration.

Advocates have gone to court to defend the program in the past, and Trump's action is almost certain to face legal challenges. It drew quick backlash from advocates.

"Threatening to punish hard-working Americans for their employers' perceived political views is about as flagrant a violation of the First Amendment as you can imagine," said Aaron Ament, president of the National Student Legal Defense Network.

Updating eligibility rules typically requires the Education Department to go through a lengthy federal rulemaking process. Any new regulation that started this year would usually not take effect until 2027.

The forgiveness program has been the subject of a political tug of war since Trump's first term, when borrowers first started hitting the 10-year finish line.

The vast majority who applied for relief in 2017 were rejected because they were found to have enrolled in ineligible payment plans or failed to meet other criteria. An investigation by a federal watchdog group concluded the Education Department had failed to make the program's eligibility rules clear.

Under President Joe Biden, the Education Department loosened the program's rules through a federal rulemaking process, expanding eligibility to people who would have been denied previously.

In its final weeks, the Biden administration announced it had granted relief to more than 1 million people through the program, up from 7,000 who were granted cancellation during Trump's first term.

Changes

The Biden administration changes were assailed by Republican lawmakers who said only Congress had the authority to change the program's rules.

Biden also pushed for broader student loan cancellation but was blocked by the Supreme Court and by repeated legal challenges from Republican-led states.

Republicans have been sharply opposed to student loan cancellation, saying it unfairly passes the cost to taxpayers who already repaid their loans or didn't go to college.

Long-threatened tariffs from U.S. President Donald Trump have plunged the country into a trade war abroad - all while on-again, off-again new levies continue to escalate uncertainty.

Since taking office less than two months ago, Trump has rolled out hefty import taxes on goods coming from America's three biggest trading partners - Mexico, Canada and China - and promises that more targets are on the horizon.

Trump is no stranger to tariffs. He also launched a trade war during his first term in office, but has more sweeping plans now. Economists stress there could be greater consequences on businesses and economies worldwide this time - and that higher prices will likely leave consumers footing the bill.

There's also been a sense of whiplash from Trump's back-and-forth tariff threats and responding retaliation, including recently-postponed levies for some goods from Canada and Mexico that followed a 30-day pause for the auto industry. The uncertainty has roiled financial markets, lowered consumer confidence, and enveloped many businesses with questions that could delay hiring and investment.

Here's a timeline of how we got here:

Trump launches a trade war

during his first term in office - taking particular aim at China.

The two countries exchange a series of tit-for-tat levies affecting hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of goods. The dispute centers around U.S. allegations that China deploys underhanded tactics - including stealing trade secrets and pressuring U.S. companies to hand over sensitive technology - in an effort to supplant the U.S. in advanced fields such as quantum computing and automated cars.

Trump puts tariffs on most Chinese goods. Meanwhile, Beijing responds with its own retaliatory tariffs on U.S. products ranging from fruit, soybeans and wine to aircraft, automotive and chemical imports.

Tariffs

Separately, Trump slaps tariffs on imported solar panels and washing machines. And in 2018, he imposes taxes of 25% on imported steel and 10% on aluminum imports on national security grounds, escalating tensions with other trading partners. He also uses the threat of more tariffs to force Canada and Mexico to renegotiate a North American trade pact, called the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, in 2020.

President Joe Biden largely preserves most of the tariffs Trump previously enacted against China, but his administration claims to take a more targeted approach.

In October 2022, he issues sweeping new restrictions on selling semiconductors and chipmaking equipment to China. These curbs will be expanded in October 2023 and December 2024 - when China responds with a ban of U.S. exports for various high-tech materials like gallium and germanium.

Biden also hikes tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, solar cells, steel, aluminum and medical equipment in May 2024. And in July, he imposes tariffs on steel and aluminum shipped from Mexico but made elsewhere in an attempt to stop China from circumventing import taxes.

Biden's 2024 tariff moves come in the middle of a heated presidential campaign - with both Biden and Trump taking jabs at each other in attempts to show who's tougher on China.

On the campaign trail, Trump says that he plans to impose tariffs of at least 60% on all Chinese imports if he wins a second term. He also floats the idea of a tariff of up to 20% on everything else the U.S. imports while threatening to impose even bigger levies for specific countries or manufacturers that take their business outside the U.S.

While the Biden-Harris administration uses tariffs to target China, both Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris - who becomes the Democratic nominee after Biden drops out of the race - maintain that Trump's promise of more broad tariffs worldwide would be a mistake. Harris labels Trump's call for tariffs as a "national sales tax" - with her campaign later saying that a 20% tariff applied across the board would raise expenses for a typical family by almost \$4,000 annually.

Trump wins the U.S. presidential election. He continues to promise steep tariff hikes in the coming weeks and months leading up to his first day back in office.

Trump is sworn in. In his inaugural address, he again promises to "tariff and tax foreign countries to enrich our citizens." And he reiterates plans to create an agency called the External Revenue Service, which has yet to be established.

On his first day in office, Trump also says he expects to put 25% tariffs on Canada and Mexico starting on Feb. 1, while declining to immediately flesh out plans for taxing Chinese imports.

Trump threatens 25% tariffs on all Colombia imports and other retaliatory measures after President Gustavo Petro's rejects two U.S. military aircraft carrying migrants to the country, accusing Trump of not treating immigrants with dignity during deportation.

In response, Petro also announces a retaliatory 25% increase in Colombia tariffs on U.S. goods. But Colombia later reversed its decision and accepted the flights carrying migrants. The two countries soon signaled a halt in the trade dispute.

Order

Trump signs an executive order to impose tariffs on imports from Mexico, Canada and China - 10% on all imports from China and 25% on imports from Mexico and Canada starting Feb. 4. Trump invoked this power by declaring a national emergency - ostensibly over undocumented immigration and drug trafficking. The levies on Canada and Mexico threaten to blow up Trump's own USMCA trade deal, which allowed many products to cross North American borders duty free.

The action prompts swift outrage from all three countries, with promises of retaliatory measures.

Trump agrees to a 30-day pause on his tariff threats against Mexico and Canada, with both trading partners taking steps to appease Trump's concerns about border security and drug trafficking.

Producer prices fall sharply, pressuring companies

China faces deflation as consumer prices fall in Feb

BEIJING, March 9, (AP): Consumer prices fell in China in February for the first time in 13 months, as persistent weak demand was compounded by the early timing of the Lunar New Year holiday.

The National Bureau of Statistics said Sunday that the consumer price index dropped 0.7% in February compared with a year ago. On a monthly basis, prices were down 0.2% from January.

While many other countries wrestle with inflation, China's policymakers face flat to falling prices, and the possibility they could evolve into a deflationary spiral that would drag down the economy. The government stressed the need to increase domestic demand and consumer spending in an annual report last week to its ceremonial legislature, the National People's Congress, but held back on unveiling any dramatic new steps to boost the economy.

The Lunar New Year, a time when spending rises for travel, dining out and entertainment, came in late January this year instead of February, as it's based on the cycles of the moon. Holiday spending helped drive the consumer price index up 0.5% in January, but it then fell last month compared with 2024's elevated level.

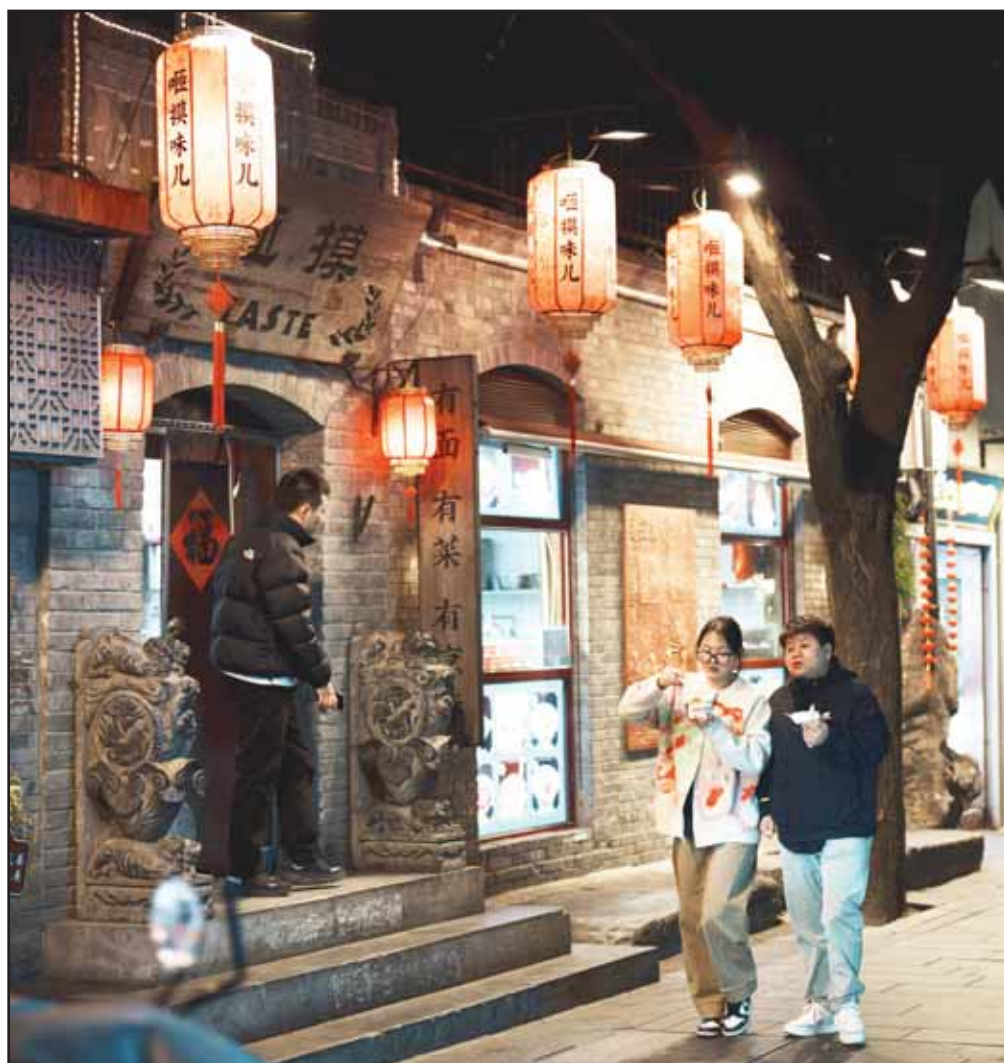
Factoring out the impact of the holiday, the index rose 0.1% last month, Dong Lijuan, a statistician at the government's statistics bureau, said in a written analysis.

That is still far lower than ideal. Last week's government annual report included an inflation target of 2% for this year, but it is likely to fall far short of that goal. The consumer price index was flat in 2024, rising 0.2%.

Besides the early Lunar New Year, two other factors contributed to falling prices in February, Dong said: Better weather boosted farm production, driving down the price of fresh vegetables and automakers also stepped up promotions to try to boost sales, reducing prices for new cars.

The producer price index, which measures the wholesale price of goods, fell 2.2% in February, the statistics bureau said. Producer prices have been falling more sharply than consumer prices, putting pressure on companies to cut labor and other costs.

The falling prices are a symptom of both weak consumer spending and a massive expansion of factories to build electric vehicles, solar panels and other green-energy products, encouraged by government subsidies.



Shoppers walk at a tourist attraction area, Nanluogu Alley in the evening in downtown Beijing, China, Saturday, March 8, 2025. (AP)

A burgeoning trade war with the United States could add to China's economic challenges, which include a prolonged real estate market crisis that is weighing on consumer confidence.

Government ministers, speaking to journalists at the National People's Congress on Sunday, pledged continued efforts to stabilize the real estate market and said that expanding employment in the current economic environment would be "a heavy task."

The employment situation is showing signs of improvement but the foundation for economic recovery remains unstable, said Wang Xiaoping, the minister of human resources and social security.

"The pressure on total employment remains unchanged," she said, noting that people are facing difficulties finding work and raising their incomes.

For real estate, a portion of this year's 4.4 trillion yuan (\$600 billion) in special local government bonds would go toward purchasing completed but unsold housing projects and converting them to affordable housing, apartments for young people, staff dormitories and other uses, said Ni Hong, the minister of housing and urban-rural development.

The government will also expand a program to rehabilitate older housing including adding all compounds built before 2000 to its urban renovation scheme, he said.

Bank rewards its customers with best banking benefits, solutions

KIB launches Ramadan 2025 cards promotion with cash prizes

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the launch of its Ramadan Cards Promotion, scheduled to run from March 1st to March 31st. The promotion aims to reward the Bank's customers, allowing them to enter a draw to win exciting cash prizes by simply using their KIB Visa Credit or Prepaid Cards.

Commenting on KIB's latest promotion, Laila Nasrallah, Senior Manager, Products Development – Digital Innovation and Data Intelligence Department at KIB, said: "As part of our ongoing strategy to enhance customer engagement, we are pleased to introduce the Rama-



Laila Nasrallah

dan 2025 Cards Promotion. Our Visa Credit and Prepaid cardholders will be able to both enjoy the card offerings and benefits, such as KIB's Cashback program and the KIB ex-

clusive card features, along with the Ramadan promotion. This reflects KIB's commitment to rewarding our valued customers and strengthening our relationships with them during the blessed month.

"The Ramadan promotion is a great way to reward consumers for using their Visa cards, which supports the Kuwaiti government's efforts to promote digital payments. With Visa's best-in-class security features and worldwide acceptance at more than 150 million merchant partners, cardholders will also enjoy peace of mind while making payments both in-store and online, whether at home or abroad. We are

delighted to partner with KIB on this exciting initiative to create more rewarding payment experiences for their Visa cardholders," said Ghadeer Ameer, Manager, Business Development for Kuwait – Visa.

The Ramadan 2025 Cards Promotions targeted to all KIB Visa Credit and Prepaid Card holders, giving them the opportunity to win cash prizes by simply using their cards during the promotional period. To be eligible to enter the draw, customers must meet a minimum spending requirement. Visa Credit Cardholders must spend a total of KD 750 or more. Meanwhile, Visa Prepaid Card holders need to accumulate at least KD 150 in purchases to

become eligible.

Once a customer meets the spending qualifier, they are entered into the draw that will yield 10 lucky winners, each receiving a cash prize of KD 500. Customers can increase their winning chances, with every KD 1 spent locally earning one entry, while international transactions earn three entries per KD 1 spent. The draw will take place on April 9, 2025, under the supervision of a Ministry of Commerce representative.

Nasrallah pointed out that participation in the Ramadan 2025 Cards Promotion is automatic, as customers need only use their eligible KIB

Visa Credit or Prepaid Cards during Ramadan to meet the minimum spending requirement and earn draw chances to win KD 500 Cash prizes. She urged customers to simply use their KIB Visa Credit/Prepaid card and be one of the lucky 10 winners.

KIB encourages all its customers to follow its social media pages and official website for the latest updates on the multiple seasonal campaigns launched throughout the year. The Bank's social media channels provide information on exceptional banking benefits and services that align with customers' aspirations, in addition to offering prizes that cater to their needs throughout the year.

20 lucky winners take home KD 2,000 each

Burgan Bank announces Kanz draw winners

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Burgan Bank announced today the names of the Kanz account monthly draw winners, who will each take home a KD 2,000 cash-prize. All Kanz customers who maintain a minimum balance of KD 200 for at least one week before the draw date, are included in the draw, and their chances of winning increase with higher deposits.

The 20 lucky winners are:

- Hagar Moustafa Mahmoud
- Neamah Mohammad Alajmi
- Bader Essam Bader Aleassa
- Ali Ahmad Alawadhi
- Nedal Alhalabi

- Latifah Abdulaziz Mohammad
- Mohammad Fraih Alshammari
- Amani Abdulsattar Saedan
- Sabah Jaballah Alrefaei
- Ahmad Mohammad Alali
- Hajar Alsayegh & Kamel Alsayegh
- Samir Mahmoud Zayed
- Hassan Abbas Ghareeb
- Abdullah Hasan Abdullah
- Asif Abbas Chougla
- Saad Sonitan Hudaib
- Mohammad Fayeze Alzarban
- Eqbal Hamad Alayyar
- Mateo Elferekh

Sabera Burhan Ravat

In addition to the monthly draw of Kanz account, Burgan Bank also offers a semi-annual KD 500,000 prize and a mega annual prize of KD 1,500,000. Kanz Account is accessible to any individual and can be opened in Kuwaiti Dinar or in major currencies (USD, EURO, GBP) with a minimum KD 200 requirement for account opening.

More information on opening a Kanz account, the draws or any of the Bank's products and services, is available at any of Burgan Bank branches, through the Call Center at 1804080 and Burgan Bank website www.burgan.com.



Burgan Bank announced the winners of the Kanz account monthly draw.



A photo from the event.

Mahammad Shaik shares his literary journey

Radio Kuwait Urdu Service commemorates National, Liberation Days with special event

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: In celebration of Kuwait's 64th National Day and 34th Liberation Day, Radio Kuwait Urdu Service hosted a special interview with internationally certified writer and record holder Mahammad Sami Shaik. The interview highlighted Mahammad Sami Shaik's extraordinary achievements, including publishing three books in just 300 days.

Conducted by RJ Nida Mirza and Razia Ashraf, the interview offered listeners an inspiring look at Mahammad Sami Shaik's literary journey.

Engineer Barkat Khan provided technical support throughout the broadcast, while Aboobacker Payyoli coordinated the program to ensure its smooth execution.

The interview was held under the guidance of Sheikha Shejoun Al Sabah (Director of Programmes, Foreign Services) and Shejoun Al Marshoud (Supervisor of Programmes, Foreign Services), who praised Mahammad Sami Shaik's commitment to raising social awareness through his writing. Broadcasting on FM 93.3 and AM 963,

the program allowed audiences to celebrate Kuwait's national festivities and gain insight into the accomplishments of a promising young author.

Radio Kuwait Urdu Service remains dedicated to delivering quality programming that uplifts and informs, particularly by featuring emerging talents like Mahammad Sami Shaik. The success of this special interview underscores the station's commitment to cultural enrichment and fostering both local and international literary achievements.

Draw to take place on July 17

March 31 is last chance to deposit, enter the AIDanah KD 1 million draw: Gulf Bank

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: As March comes to an end, so does the chance to enter Gulf Bank's AIDanah Millionaire semi-annual draw. March 31, 2025, is the last day for customers to deposit and secure their spot in the upcoming draw for a KD 1 million prize. The much-anticipated draw will take place on July 17, 2025, under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young.

Last month, Gulf Bank celebrated the winner of the AIDanah Millionaire grand prize in a spectacular event at Al Khiran Mall. The KD 2 million grand prize – officially recognized by Guinness World Records as the world's largest bank-account-linked cash prize – was awarded to Gulf Bank customer Mr. Islam Mohamed Mahmoud Khattab.

The 2025 AIDanah draw schedule offers multiple chances to win, featuring the grand prize of KD 2 million, the KD 1 million semi-annual prize, and two quarterly draws, each distributing KD 100,000 among 100 winners. Additionally, the monthly draw awards KD 1,000 to 10 lucky customers. In total, 282 winners will be rewarded through the AIDanah



A part of the monthly draw activities under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

account this year. AIDanah is one of Kuwait's most rewarding savings accounts, offering frequent prize draws and exclusive benefits. Gulf Bank recently increased the grand prize from KD 1.5 million to KD 2 million, earning a Guinness World Records title for the second time. Additionally, the quarterly draw has been enhanced, with the KD 100,000 prize now shared among 100 winners, rather than being awarded to a single customer.

A standout feature of AIDanah is its unique loyalty program, which allows customers to carry over their chances of winning from one year to the next, increasing their potential rewards. To maximize their entries, customers must maintain a minimum deposit of KD 200 or increase their balance for more chances to win in the monthly, quarterly, and annual draws.

Meanwhile, Gulf Bank has announced the winners of the February monthly draw, with 10 customers each receiving KD 1,000. The winners are:

1. Ahmed Abdullah S Al-Enezi
2. Bassam Yaqoub Jassim Bo Al Banat
3. Mohammed Ghoulum Abbas Al-Bloushi
4. Ahmed AbdulMajeed Ismeal Moqadeam (Minor)
5. Jarrah Naser Ibrahim Al-Sabah
6. Daniah Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mailam
7. Othman Ahmed Othman Al-Jeeran
8. Abdulaziz Mousa Ali Al-Majadi
9. Iqbal Hmoud Abdulaziz Al-Maqhawi
10. Adnan Mostafa Abd Al-Rasoul Al-Qallaf

20 customers win KD 1,000 each

Warba names Al Sunbula draw winners

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Warba Bank, recognized as the leading bank in corporate and investment banking in Kuwait, announced the winners in the weekly Al Sunbula draw as part of the account's 2025 campaign which offers exceptional rewards, giving twenty customers a chance to win KD1,000 each week and a grand prize of KD 250,000 for awinner in each of the six grand draws held throughout the year. This campaign comes as part of the bank's ongoing efforts to provide innovative, Sharia-compliant banking solutions that align with the aspirations of the local market.

Winners of the weekly Al Sunbula draw

The latest weekly draw was conducted in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Warba Bank employees. The 20 winners, each receiving KD 1,000, are: Mr. Hilal Obaid Shaha Al-Enzi, Mr. Ali Abdulrahman Abdulwahab Al-Tammar, Ms. Anfal Khaled Aziz Anbar, Mr. Mohammed Sayer Matrouk Al-Tawala, Mr. Lafi Salem Shatit Al-Muhailbi, Ms. Tahani Saud Hussein Sanad, Mr. Mohammad Fhaid Mohammad Al-Ajmi, Ms. Mona Arshid Hamad Shaniter Al-Azmi, Mr. Mohammed Yousef Fahad Al-Rodaini, Mr. Abdullah Akshan Arhan Al-Ajmi, Mr. Khaled Abdullah Jassim Al-Ansari, Mr. Azara Faleh Humaidi Al-Husaini, Ms. Jamila Abbas Turki Al-Enzi, Mr. Mohammed Dhafer Mohammed Al-Raqeeb, Ms. Hind Salem Mohammad Al-Hajri, Mr. Baraa Shafer Al-Deen Khaled Al-Duraini, Mr. Abdullah Mohammed Abdullah Al-Saqer, Mr. Jaber Mutaq Saleh Al-Mutairi, Mr. Khalifa Thuwaini Sayyad Al-Khalidhi, and Mr. Nawaf Saleh Hamad Al-Thuwaiikh.

Commenting on this year's Al Sunbula campaign, Mr. Abdulaziz Saud Al-Bakhait, Area Manager of the Retail Banking Group at Warba Bank, stated: "Al Sunbula's 2025 campaign reaffirms Warba Bank's commitment to enriching our customers' banking experience. Given the remarkable success of last year's campaign, we have further elevated the benefits that this account offers, expanding the number of winners and increasing the total value of prizes. In addition to these rewards, Al Sunbula offers exceptional features, including a seamless savings experience through advanced digital services that simplify daily transactions."

Al-Bakhait further emphasized that Warba Bank has consistently introduced innovative financial solutions over the years, reflecting its strategic vision for expansion and growth, while placing customers at the core of its priorities. He highlighted that this vision is embodied in the bank's slogan, "We Hear You, Let's Own Tomorrow," which emphasizes proactively understanding and fulfilling customers' evolving needs through innovative and integrated solutions.

Speaking of Al Sunbula's 2025 Campaign, Al-Bakhait stated: "This year's campaign offers customers the unique advantage of saving while having the opportunity to win, effectively doubling the benefits they receive. The campaign is designed to offer a seamless digital experience through the Warba app, where customers can efficiently manage their accounts, track their savings, and participate in draws effortlessly. The account also provides an ATM card and additional rewards that enhance the value of savings. To qualify for the weekly draws, customers must maintain a minimum balance

of KD 500 for one month, and for the grand draws, a balance of KD 500 must be maintained for two consecutive months."

Banking through the Warba App

Warba Bank's mobile app allows customers to manage their savings and participate in Al Sunbula draws with ease and flexibility. New customers can also open an Al Sunbula account electronically through the Customer Onboarding service in just five minutes, without the need to visit a branch. This is made possible by Warba Bank's advanced automated system, a unique feature in the Kuwaiti banking sector.

Leading in digital solutions

Warba Bank's strategy is focused on expanding digital banking services and developing innovative products that deliver an integrated and advanced banking experience to its customers. The bank's digital transformation is not limited to Al Sunbula account, as it continues to introduce pioneering services, including the "Afaq" unified Gulf transfer service, which facilitates faster, easier, and more secure payments and transfers across the GCC.

A firm commitment to the community

Warba Bank is one of Kuwait's leading Islamic banks, having achieved remarkable success in a short period by focusing on providing cutting-edge digital banking services for individuals and businesses. Additionally, it is one of the local banks with the largest number of shareholders, making it deeply connected to all segments of society. This success underscores Warba Bank's ongoing commitment to shaping a financial future that aligns with customers' aspirations, preserving heritage with a forward-looking vision.



Photos from the event.

Thanima hosts Iftar Saurhdathanima 2025

Thanima Kuwait's Iftar program, bounding the friendship, Saurhdathanima 2025, was organized at the United Indian School. With a social message of brotherhood and tolerance, civic leaders from various sectors of the society and members of the Thanima Advisory Committee participated.

The function, presided over by Iftar Program Convener Geomon Joseph, was welcomed by Thanima Senior Core Member Babuji Bathery and Thanima General Convener Jijimon Thomas delivered the introductory speech. Father Dr. Biju George and Vibeesh Thikkodi delivered the social message. Al Amin Sullami delivered the Ramadan message.

Considering the importance of Women's Day, Usha Dileep, Convener of Women's wing of Thanima was

honored for her comprehensive achievement of gaining the position of Chief Editor for the magazine of Asian Tug-of-War Federation. Awards were handed over to the Children's Thanima members Arpita Ann Jiji, Denzel Dominic, Emmanuel Joseph Geo, Noel Thomas Alex and Pranav Sivakumar, who are going home country from Kuwait for higher studies.

Then, Binoy Abraham, Joint Convener of Thanima, expressed vote of thanks to attendees. Thanima Advisory Members like BEC Exchange CEO Mathew Varghese, Metro Medical Group CEO Dr. Hamsa Payyannur, and Malabar Gold and Diamonds Regional Marketing Head Afzal Khan were present. Event was coordinated under the leadership of Jacob Varghese & Dominic Antony.

Most male actors at war

Ukraine's all-female theater cast keeps art alive

CHERNIHIV, Ukraine, March 9, (AP) — The 43-year-old Ukrainian actor took to the stage wearing a black leather jacket and with a moustache painted on her face.

Ruslana Ostapko was performing in multiple traditionally male roles in a recent production of the Chernihiv Regional Youth Theater. With so many men serving in Ukraine's armed forces to repel Russia's invasion, the theater has adapted to the realities of war, and women are taking the spotlight.

"We were rehearsing Shakespeare's 'King Lear' when suddenly our men were taken to the front," said the theater's 52-year-old director, Roman Pokrovskiy. "We only had the female part of the troupe left. So we thought, 'Well, if men played women in Shakespeare's times, why not give it a try?'"

The efforts of the theater in Chernihiv, the capital of a region that borders Russia and Belarus, reflect a broader reality in Ukraine where women are stepping into roles once dominated by men, sustaining not just their industries but the spirit of national resistance.

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began in 2022, four of the theater's male actors and five stage workers have joined the army, leaving the troupe short-handed. Only two men still perform on the stage, and most stage work is done by women. But the troupe has reinvented itself by adapting its repertoire, transforming its space into a hub for art and wartime volunteer work, and casting women in most roles.

An all-female cast is taking on "Hetman," a play based on the life of Ivan Mazepa, a 17th century Cossack leader who defected from the Russian Empire's army to side with King Charles XII of Sweden. Mazepa's role as the pro-independence leader, and

the theme of Ukraine aligning with European states to resist Russian control, remain salient in Ukraine more than 300 years later.

Ostapko burst into tears when asked about her friends and colleagues fighting at the front.

"This is pain, the pain of the entire nation, our pain," she said while preparing for a performance. "But our guys are doing well. We keep our fingers crossed for them. We help."

The theater's predominantly female actors and staff - including cloakroom attendants, cashiers, cleaners, and cafeteria workers - spend much of their time supporting Ukrainian soldiers, weaving camouflage nets in the theater before opening the doors to audiences at night.

Funds

The team also regularly raises funds to supply their deployed colleagues with necessary kit for the front lines. But some of those colleagues will never return to the stage.

"Our actor, Kostiantyn Slobodeniuk, went missing. Our sound operator, Dmytro Pohuliylo, disappeared in the Pokrovsk direction at the end of 2024," said Oleksii Bysh, 52, one of the theater's few remaining male actors.

Standing by a photograph of one of his former colleagues, sound engineer Vyacheslav Shevtsov, Bysh describes how he was killed in a Ukrainian counter-offensive in the Russian region of Kursk last August.

While Chernihiv remains under Ukrainian control, it has paid a heavy price for its proximity to Russia's borders. At the start of the invasion, Russian troops besieged the city, forcing residents to endure harsh winter conditions without electricity or water under constant shelling

from Russian artillery, missiles and drones.

As the war enters its fourth year, Russian strikes on Chernihiv remain frequent and culture has not been spared.

A significant number of cultural and artistic institutions in the Chernihiv region have been destroyed or severely damaged, requiring repairs or total reconstruction, said Oksana Tunik-Fryz, 46, head of the Arts and Culture Council at the Chernihiv Regional Administration.

"The enemy is destroying us from within by destroying our culture," she said. "Killing a Ukrainian is killing a person. But destroying our culture means destroying our future."

Before every performance at the theater in Chernihiv, a recorded announcement reminds audiences that the show will be paused in the event of an air raid alert.

That warning was recorded by Kostiantyn Sloode-niuk, an actor who joined the army and is now missing, theater director Ihor Tykhomyrov told the Associated Press. When the alarm sounds, which Tykhomyrov said happens at nearly every second performance, everyone inside moves into bomb shelters.

"Russian drone strikes are a problem, a serious problem, but there's an interesting thing," he said. "It brings people together."

Despite an uncertain future, the theater's team is determined to continue their art and their wartime volunteering. Reflecting on their resilience, Bysh quotes Soviet-era Ukrainian filmmaker, Oleksandr Dovzhenko.

"We are a small theater," Bysh said. "But, as Dovzhenko said, you are only small from afar. Up close, you are large."



Yulia Matrosova performs Russian czar Peter the Great on the stage of the Chernihiv Regional Youth Theater, which reinvented itself with all-female cast, with most male actors at war, in Chernihiv, Ukraine, Sunday, Feb. 16, 2025. (AP)

Interactive fest

SXSW spotlights immersive tech

AUSTIN, March 9, (Xinhua) — South by Southwest (SXSW) 2025, the annual convergence of technology, film, and music, kicked off in Austin, US state of Texas, on Friday, transforming the state's capital city into a hub of innovation showcases, tech panels and cross-cultural networking alongside a vibrant lineup of live music, comedy, and film screenings.

This year's conference section features hundreds of sessions across various tracks, covering hot topics such as artificial intelligence (AI), quantum computing, and extended reality (XR), according to the organizers.

Notable speakers include IBM Chairman and CEO Arvind Krishna, who will deliver a keynote on the intersection of AI and quantum computing, and their transformative potential for business and society.

The festival also spotlights decentralized technologies, with Bluesky CEO Jay Graber discussing the future of social media and open, decentralized networks in a keynote address.

The Future Today Institute will return to this year's festival and unveil its 18th annual Tech Trends Report, presented by futurist and institute founder Amy Webb, offering attendees a deep dive into emerging technologies, organizers announced.

Excited

"I'm excited for the immersive showcase, especially the latest in virtual reality and other emerging media like haptics," Sophia Baker, an Austin resident, told Xinhua. "There are also panels on brain health and 3D brain mapping, which I find fascinating. I'm looking forward to exploring SXSW's mix of tech and other disciplines, such as brain research."

"I love meeting up with all my industry friends and getting to network (during the SXSW). But what I'm most excited about is I'm speaking on a panel called Building Tomorrow's World, how academia teaches XR creation," Erin Reilly, a professor with University of Texas, told Xinhua.

SXSW 2025 continues its legacy of celebrating groundbreaking innovation. The SXSW Innovation Awards, featuring 55 finalists across 11 categories, offer a glimpse into the future of AI, sustainability, and community empowerment.

"I'm incredibly proud that this year's SXSW Innovation Awards finalists showcase products and projects that make a meaningful impact on society," said Hugh Forrest, SXSW president and chief programming officer.

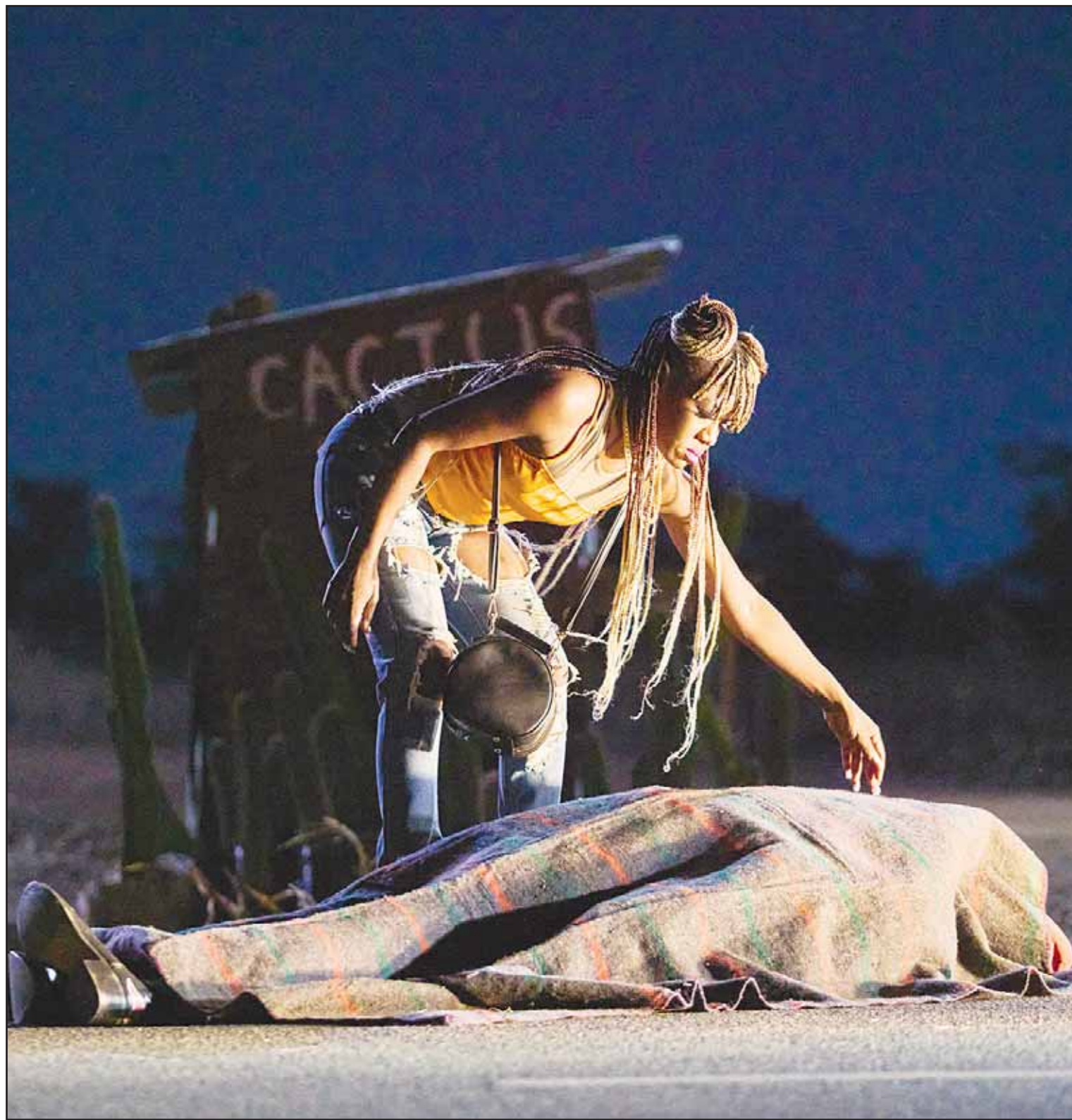
Notable finalists include Wander-craft's Self-Balancing Exoskeleton and the CMR-M1, which is thought to be among the first AI-powered movie cameras. These innovations underscore the festival's role in helping shape global tech trends, local analysts note.

The intersection of technology and entertainment remains a key focus. This year, the SXSW Film Festival will premiere groundbreaking works that push the boundaries of storytelling and technology, such as the XR Experience Program, where 31 XR films and projects will be showcased, further blurring the lines between cinema and immersive media, according to organizers.



People attend the South by Southwest (SXSW) 2025 in Austin, Texas, the United States, March 7, 2025. (AP)

Film



This image released by A24 shows Elizabeth Chisela in a scene from 'On Becoming a Guinea Fowl.' (AP)

A stylish, darkly comedic Zambian family drama

'Guinea Fowl' offers surreal reckoning

LOS ANGELES, March 9, (AP) — Shula is driving home from a fancy dress party one night when she encounters an unusual sight in the middle of a country road: her Uncle Fred's dead body.

But Shula, portrayed by Susan Chardy, does not behave in a way that we would expect. She doesn't cry out in horror or appear the least bit upset or shocked by the sight. Instead, we sit there with her in silence, her in sunglasses and a silver helmeted mask adorned with sparkling rhinestones. Shula looks straight out of a music video as she stares off into the distance. This, we realize quickly, is going to be a thing. At the very least, it's an inconvenience, ripping her out of her independent life and back into the throes of her traditional family, their patriarchal ways and all their crippling secrets.

This is the opening scene of "On Becoming a Guinea Fowl," Rungano Nyoni's darkly comedic, stylish and hauntingly bizarre portrait of a Zambian family funeral. It is perhaps the first great film of 2025 - though it's technically been awaiting its moment in the United States since 2024. It premiered last year at the Cannes Film Festival and has already had a run in the UK.

And it's a post-Oscars treat to have something this great in the cinemas to shake audiences out of their end-of-the-road awards contender boredom. What better way to do it than with something so different, so vibrant and so unforgettable as "On Becoming a Guinea Fowl," only the

second feature from the self-taught filmmaker.

Nyoni centers this story around a days-long funeral for this predominately Bemba family. Shula is in the middle of the generations involved, a reluctant but obedient participant in the rituals of the elders. The women organize all the things, make all the food, and then serve all the men who are sitting around doing nothing. Eventually, they'll all gather for a climactic, distressing scene in which they divide up Fred's assets and place blame for his death. It is, like everything else, deeply unfair and misogynistic, coming down to whomever shouts loudest.

Predator

The elder women cry and wail and are cruel to Uncle Fred's widow for not taking care of him. But there is an open secret that's bubbling up to the surface now that Fred is dead: He was a predator and a pedophile whose abuse of the young women in his family stretches back decades. This is, most of the elders agree, something that should just be forgotten and buried along with Fred.

"Do you want me to dig up the corpse and ask it what happened?" Shula's dad asks when she confronts him with the truth.

This is a society that remains bound to protecting the reputation and memory of a man whose actions continue to affect the women he violated: His wife; his young niece; Shula's grown, often drunk cousin (Elizabeth Chisela).

The women are just supposed to compartmentalize and move on - something the matriarchs seem largely on board with.

Shula reads one of her auntie's words, presumably for an obituary: "You were not just a brother, but also a father figure. ... Ever jovial and joyous. A person who was fair." Done in quick succession with her young cousin Bupe's confession that she too was a victim of the deceased, words like "father figure" and "jovial" echo with malice.

"On Becoming a Guinea Fowl" shares some spiritual DNA with "Women Talking," in which mothers pass on traumas and secrets and the cycle goes on, despite even the best of intentions. Nyoni and her cinematographer David Gallego make this a transportive, stylish and unforgettable experience that powerfully transcends the specifics of its setting, while also taking audiences into an culture that's likely unfamiliar.

The ending is not what one might call conclusive, but perhaps a litmus test for the individual viewer as to whether or not they'll exit with hope or dread for what's to come. And regardless, when you take a step back, "Guinea Fowl" cements the exciting arrival of a true filmmaker.

"On Becoming a Guinea Fowl," an A24 released in theaters Friday, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for "thematic material, sexual abuse, suggestive references and some drug use." Running time: 95 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four.

Variety

NEW YORK: Barbra Streisand, star of stage, screen and song, has triumphed in another medium: audio books.

The Audio Publishers Association has given Streisand and her memoir "My Name is Barbra" the Audie Award for audio book of the year and for best audio memoir. Streisand herself narrated the 1,000-page book that covers her extraordinary life and career.

Other winners announced Tuesday include

best work of humor to Kate McKinnon's "The Millicent Quibb School of Etiquette for Young Ladies of Mad Science," narrated by McKinnon and Emily Lynne; Whoopi Goldberg's self-narrated "Bits and Pieces" for best narration; best audio short stories to Stephen King's "You Like it Darker," narrated by Will Patton and King; and best literary fiction to Percival Everett's "James," narrated by Dominic Hoffman. (AP)



Streisand

NEW YORK: Sir Anthony Hopkins will have a memoir out this fall, its title inspired by a childhood picture.

"We Did OK, Kid" will be published Nov. 4 by Summit Books, a Simon & Schuster imprint.

"There is a photograph I keep on my phone of my father and me on the beach when I was a child. I often tell that boy: 'We did OK, kid,'" the Oscar-winning actor said in a statement released Tuesday by Summit. "I wonder how a boy from Wales, the son of a baker, got here. My entire life is a great mystery. This book is my story."

Hopkins, 87, is known for such films as "The Silence of the Lambs," "The Father," "The Remains of the Day" and "The Lion in Winter." According to Summit, he will also write about his childhood in Wales, his stage career and his personal struggles, including how his drinking destroyed his first marriage, and how he has remained sober for nearly half a century.

"He constantly battles against the desire to move through life alone and avoid connection for fear of getting hurt - much like the men in his family - and as the years go by, he deals with questions of mortality, getting ready to discover what his father called 'The Big Secret,'" the publisher's announcement reads in part.

"Featuring a special collection of personal photographs throughout, 'We Did OK, Kid' is a raw and passionate memoir from a complex, iconic figure who has inspired audiences with remarkable performances for over 60 years." (AP)

NEW YORK: An insider account being billed as an "explosive dispatch" about "seven critical years" at Facebook/Meta will be published this week. Flatiron Books announced last week that "Careless People" is scheduled for Tuesday. It was written by Meta's former director of global public policy, Sarah Wynn-Williams, who left what was then Facebook in 2018.

"Careless People" takes readers inside Meta's board rooms, private jets, and meetings with heads of state, revealing the appetites, excesses, blind spots, and priorities of executives Mark Zuckerberg, Sheryl Sandberg, and Joel Kaplan, the publisher's announcement reads in part. "Wynn-Williams paints a portrait of this group as profoundly flawed, self-interested, and careless human beings, callously indifferent to the price others would pay for their own enrichment."

According to Flatiron, Wynn-Williams will describe in detail Zuckerberg's efforts to allow Meta in China and her own efforts to get the company to monitor hate speech and misinformation on social media. She will add everything from "shocking accounts of workplace harassment and misogyny to the grueling demands and humiliations of working motherhood during the same time that Sheryl Sandberg, was winning international acclaim for urging women to 'Lean In.'" (AP)

Myths vs facts about nutrient timing

What's right time to eat: Before, after, or during exercise?

NEW YORK, March 9, (AP): If you listen to some self-proclaimed exercise experts on social media, they swear that working out on an empty stomach burns more fat.

But it's a common misconception that exercising in a fasted state improves performance or burns more calories, said Abby Langer, a dietitian in Toronto.

"The research shows that in terms of gains, it doesn't really make much of a difference," she said.

Does that mean you should load up on protein and carbs right before a workout? No, that's not true either.

Here's a look at when - and how - you should eat, before, after or even during a workout. (And remember, experts say what you eat is more important than when you eat.)

The calories in food literally are energy, so you need them to fuel your body for a proper workout. Eating too much too soon beforehand, though, can be problematic.

Exercising diverts blood from or-

gans including the stomach to the muscles, said Langer, author of "Good Food, Bad Diet." So exercising on a full stomach affects the digestive process, which could cause cramping or even make you feel sick.

That's particularly the case with meals high in fat, protein or fiber, which take longer to digest than carbohydrates. Langer recommends eating a high ratio of carbs beforehand and waiting two to three hours before intense exercise.

"You don't want to eat a big steak an hour before you play hockey," she said.

If you exercise first thing in the morning or before dinner, it's OK to have a carb-rich snack like a banana with peanut butter or yogurt with fruit beforehand. It will give you the energy to perform well, and you can fuel up afterward with a full meal.

That steak may serve you better afterward because that's when a higher ratio of protein is easier to digest, said Krista Austin, a physiologist in Colo-



A jogger is silhouetted while running on a jetty at sunrise over the Atlantic Ocean in Bal Harbour, Fla., on Sept. 19, 2020. (AP)

rado Springs.

Austin said if it will be an hour or longer before you can have a full meal,

it's better to have a high-protein snack in the meantime to help curb your appetite. The reason has little to do with

muscle recovery or nutrient absorption: Rather, people who are too hungry make poor dietary choices.

"A lot of people get very hungry about an hour after exercise, and you don't want to do that," said Austin, author of "Performance Nutrition: Applying the Science of Nutrient Timing." "You want to catch it early, or you go and overeat."

But it's another myth that you need to grab a protein shake within minutes of finishing to build the biggest muscles, Langer said.

Many exercise enthusiasts point to what's known as an "anabolic window" of about an hour within exercising that the body is primed to repair muscle. For the average person, you have a much longer window, and nutrient timing is less important than making sure you consume some protein at every meal, Langer said. The body needs a continuous supply of amino acids like protein for muscle repair and maintenance, she said, which means about 25 to 30 grams

at every meal, depending on various factors.

"Prioritizing that will help with goals, either muscle building, satiety, weight loss, all of that," Langer said.

Most people who are eating enough throughout the day don't need anything during a workout. Langer and Austin said the threshold is about an hour of intense exercise. Longer than that - say you're training for a marathon - and you can benefit from a carb-rich snack in the middle.

Instead of focusing on when to eat, Austin said to focus on what and how much. She cautioned against overcomplicating the topic and recommended following the USDA's My Plate recommendations for a balanced diet.

"The biggest thing we need to teach people is that nutrition is simple," she said. "Maybe you need to stop focusing on the concept of nutrient timing and just make sure that you're consistently eating throughout the day and focus on health."

Seed oil debate frustrates nutritionists

Experts weigh in on 'seed oils': Are they harmful or beneficial?

NEW YORK, March 9, (AP): Until recently, most Americans had never heard the term "seed oils," even though they've likely cooked with and consumed them for decades.

It's the catchy description coined by internet influencers, wellness gurus and some politicians to refer to common cooking oils - think canola, soybean and corn oil - that have long been staples in many home kitchens.

Those fiery critics refer to the top refined vegetable oils as "the hateful eight" and claim that they're fueling inflammation and high rates of chronic diseases like obesity and diabetes.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the new health secretary, has said Americans are being "unknowingly poisoned" by seed oils and has called for fast-food restaurants to return to using beef tallow, or rendered animal fat, in their fryers instead.

In response to consumer concerns, some food-makers have stripped seed oils from their products. Restaurants like the salad chain Sweetgreen have removed them from their menus. Many Americans say they now avoid seed oils, according to a recent survey from the International Food Information Council, an industry trade group.

The seed oil discussion has exasperated nutrition scientists, who say decades of research confirms the health benefits of consuming such oils, especially in place of alternatives such as butter or lard.

"I don't know where it came from



Canola oil is poured into a pan in Concord, N.H., on March 27, 2007. (AP)

that seed oils are bad," said Martha Belury, an Ohio State University food science professor.

In a Senate hearing Thursday, Dr. Marty Makary, nominated to lead the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, called for a closer review of the products.

"I think seed oils are a good example of where we could benefit from a consolidation of the scientific evidence," he said.

Simply put, they are oils extracted from plant seeds. They include eight commonly targeted by critics: canola, corn, cottonseed, grapeseed, soybean, sunflower, safflower and rice bran.

Seed oils are typically made by pressing or crushing the seeds and then processing them further with chemicals and heat to remove elements that can leave the oil cloudy or with an unpleasant taste or odor.

The result of such refining is a neutral-tasting oil that is inexpensive,

shelf-stable and able to be heated at a high temperature without smoking, said Eric Decker, a food science professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

By contrast, olive oil and avocado oil are considered fruit oils. They're often cold-pressed, which retains many of the plant-based compounds that benefit health - but also makes the oils more expensive and prone to smoking at high heat.

Seed oils are composed mostly of unsaturated fatty acids, including monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat. Most seed oils are high in one type of fatty acid, omega-6, and low in another type, omega-3. Those fatty acids are essential for human health, but our bodies don't make them on their own, so we must get them from foods.

Critics of seed oils make a range of claims that many scientists say are not borne out by research.

Some critics contend that the way the oils are produced leaves behind toxic byproducts of a chemical called hexane. Hexane is considered hazardous in a gas form, but Decker said the hexane used as a liquid solvent to extract the oil is evaporated off and that the residue that remains "is very low and would not present a risk."

Another common claim is that the seed oils' high omega-6 and low omega-3 composition causes an imbalance that may increase the risk of chronic conditions by boosting inflammation in the body.



Light shines from a total lunar eclipse over Santa Monica Beach in Santa Monica, Calif., May 26, 2021. (AP)

Best views in Americas

Watch total lunar eclipse turn moon red on Thursday night

NEW YORK, March 9, (AP): A total lunar eclipse will flush the moon red Thursday night into Friday morning across the Western Hemisphere.

The best views will be from North America and South America. Parts of Africa and Europe may catch a glimpse.

Lunar eclipses happen when the moon, Earth and sun align just so. The Earth casts a shadow that can partially or totally blot out the moon.

During a partial lunar eclipse, Earth's shadow appears to take a bite of the moon. The full moon is covered during a total eclipse and blushes coppery red because of stray bits of sunlight filtering through Earth's atmosphere.

Lunar and solar eclipses happen anywhere from four to seven times a year, according to NASA. A partial lunar eclipse graced skies in the Americas, Africa and Europe last September and the last total lunar eclipse was in 2022.

The so-called blood moon will be visible for about an hour starting at 2:26 a.m. Eastern on Friday morning. Peak viewing will be close to 3 a.m. Eastern.

To see it, venture outside and look up - no need for eclipse glasses or any special equipment.

"As long as the sky is clear, you should be able to see it," said Shannon Schmol, director of Abrams Planetarium at Michigan State University.

The setting of the moon may make it harder to see the eclipse in Europe and Africa.

"This is really an eclipse for North and South America," said astronomy expert Michael Faison from Yale University.

If you miss out, mark your calendar for Sept. 7. Another total lunar eclipse will sweep across parts of Asia, Africa, Australia and Europe. Parts of the Americas will get their next taste in March 2026.

Civilizations have viewed and interpreted lunar eclipses for thousands of years. Ancient people knew more about the celestial bodies than we give them credit for, said historian Zoe Ortiz.

"They were looking at the night sky and they had a much brighter vision than we do today," said Ortiz with the University of North Texas.

Aristotle noticed that the shadow the Earth cast on the moon during a lunar eclipse was always curved, observations proving that the Earth is round.

And a civilization in ancient Mesopotamia saw the blood red moon as a bad omen for the king. The people installed a substitute king on the throne around the time of the eclipse to protect their ruler from any bad will.

"If there's ever a movie plot," said Ortiz, "that's the one."

'Improvement'

Pope reacting well to 'care'

ROME, March 9, (AP): Pope Francis issued a message Sunday thanking volunteers for the "miracle of tenderness" they offer the sick, as he continued his recovery from double pneumonia and doctors reported some positive news: After more than three weeks in the hospital, the 88-year-old pope is responding well to treatment and has shown a "gradual, slight improvement" in recent days.

For the fourth Sunday in a row, the 88-year-old Francis didn't appear for his weekly noon blessing, but the Vatican distributed the text he would have delivered if he were well enough. In it, the Argentine pope thanked all those who were caring for him and others who are sick and experiencing a "night of pain."

"Brothers and sisters, during my prolonged hospitalization here, I too experience the thoughtfulness of service and the tenderness of care, in particular from the doctors and health care workers, whom I thank from the bottom of my heart," read the message from Gemelli hospital.

"And while I am here, I think of the many people who in various ways are close to the sick, and who are for them a sign of the Lord's presence. We need this, the 'miracle of tenderness' which accompanies those who are in adversity, bringing a little light into the night of pain," he wrote.

The Argentine pope, who has chronic lung disease and had part of one lung removed as a young man, has remained in stable condition, with no fever and good oxygen levels in his blood for several days, doctors reported in a Vatican statement Saturday.

The doctors said that such stability "as a consequence testifies to a good response to therapy." It was the first time the doctors had reported that Francis was responding positively to the treatment for the complex lung infection that was diagnosed after he was hospitalized on Feb. 14.

But they kept his prognosis as "guarded", meaning he's not out of danger. On Sunday morning, the Vatican reported he was resting after a quiet night.



Pope Francis

What is hantavirus, that killed Hackman's wife

LOS ANGELES, March 9, (AP): Gene Hackman's wife, Betsy Arakawa, died from hantavirus infection, officials in New Mexico announced Friday.

Hantavirus, found throughout the world, is spread by contact with rodents or their urine or feces. It does not spread between people. There is no specific treatment or cure, but early medical attention can increase the chance of survival.

An infection can rapidly progress and become life-threatening.

"It really starts like the flu: body aches, feeling poorly overall," said Dr. Sonja Bartolome of UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. "Early in the illness, you really may not be able to tell the difference between hantavirus and having the flu."

The virus can cause a severe and sometimes deadly lung infection called hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, accord-

ing to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The agency began tracking the virus after a 1993 outbreak in the Four Corners region - the area where Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah meet.

The majority of U.S. cases since then have been in western states, especially the southwest. Between 1993 and 2022, there were 864 reported US cases. New Mexico had the highest number over that time, at 122, followed by Colorado at 119.

The CDC has offered to test samples involved in Arakawa's case to learn more about the strain of virus that infected her and to perform pathology testing.

New Mexico reported a total of 129 cases of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome with 52 deaths between 1975 and 2023, according to the state health department. That includes seven in 2023 and another seven in 2024.

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SPORTS

Milan snaps skid, Inter survives Monza scare

Venezia snatches 3rd successive draw

MILAN, March 9, (AP): Christian Pulisic was the hero for AC Milan with his two goals helping the Rossoneri end a three-match losing streak in Serie A.

Pulisic first earned and converted a penalty to level the score at 2-2 after Lecce had been leading 2-0. The United States international - who is nicknamed "Captain America" - then scored the late winner in a 3-2 victory at Lecce.

The result saw Milan inch up to eighth in the Italian league. Lecce remained three points above the relegation zone.



Inter Milan's Hakan Calhanoglu heads the ball during the Serie A soccer match between Inter Milan and Monza at the San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy. (AP)

League leader Inter Milan also surprisingly had to fight back from two goals down to win 3-2 at home to bottom club Monza.

Milan was in deep crisis as it had also been knocked out of the Champions League by Feyenoord before its miserable run in Serie A, losing to Torino, Bologna and Lazio.

Milan thought it had got off to the perfect start at Lecce as Santiago Giménez had the ball in the back of the net after just 47 seconds but it was ruled out for offside.

Instead it was Lecce that took the early lead, within seven minutes, with a stunning Nikola Krstovic curler from 20 yards.

It was Lecce's first goal in 367 minutes, having failed to find the back of the net in its previous four matches.

Milan had more celebrations cut short in the 15th minute when Matteo Gabbia volleyed home Theo Hernández's free kick but it was again ruled out for offside.

Both teams also hit the woodwork before Krstovic doubled his and Lecce's tally in the 59th, sweeping a low cross into the bottom left corner.

However, Milan turned things round in the space of five minutes.

João Félix's effort was probably going wide but went in off Lecce defender Antonino Gallo for an own-goal and then Pulisic leveled in the 73rd with a powerful spot kick down the middle after being tripped by Federico Baschirotto.

The turn-around was complete nine minutes from time. Rafael Leão floated in a free kick from the left for Pulisic to volley in at the back post.

Monza had lost six of its last seven matches and hadn't scored a goal in nearly a month.

But Samuele Birindelli shocked Inter by firing Monza in front in the 32nd minute and San Siro was further



Lecce's Balthazar Pierret, right, and AC Milan's Yunus Musah in action during the Italian Serie A soccer match between US Lecce and AC Milan at the Via del Mare Stadium in Lecce, Italy. (AP)

stunned when Keita Balde Diao doubled Monza's lead on the stroke of halftime, with a magnificent curling shot into the top right corner - and on his 30th birthday.

However, Marko Arnautović reduced the deficit in first-half stop-

page time with a header and Hakan Çalhanoğlu equalized in the 64th.

Monza thought Stefano Turati had made a fantastic save to keep out Lautaro Martínez's diving header and the goalkeeper was being congratulated by his teammates when goalline technol-

ogy proved the ball had gone over. It went down as an own-goal from Giorgos Kyriakopoulos.

Monza remained 10 points from safety.

A last-gasp penalty saw Venezia snatch a third successive draw, holding

Cesc Fabregas' Como 1-1.

Venezia remained 19th in the 20-team league, five points from safety.

Parma inched two points above the relegation zone after two Mateo Pellegri goals saw it twice fight back to draw 2-2 against Torino.

Baribo, Union off to historic starts after win over still-scoreless Revolution

Dreyer, Ingvartsen score in stoppage time, San Diego stuns RSL

SANDY, Utah, March 9, (AP): Anders Dreyer scored in the first minute of second-half stoppage time, Marcus Ingvartsen added some insurance five minutes later and expansion side San Diego FC rallied to beat Real Salt Lake 3-1 on Saturday night.

Dreyer found the net unassisted for his third goal in his and San Diego's debut season. Ingvartsen scored for the first time in his first season.

Real Salt Lake jumped in front in the 17th minute when 20-year-old forward Ariath Piol used assists from Dominik Marczuk and Diego Luna to score his first goal in the second start and appearance of his career. Marczuk's assist was his first this season and his second in 10 career appearances. Luna notched his first assist this season and his 16th over four seasons with the club.

Tai Baribo scored his sixth goal of the season and Jovan Lukic scored his first career MLS goal to help the Philadelphia Union beat the New England Revolution 2-0.

Philadelphia (3-0-0) is off to its best start in club history. The Union leads MLS with 10 goals scored this season and their plus-seven goal differential is tied for fourth best in league history through three games.

New England (0-2-1) has been shutout in each of its first three games and has four on-target shots this season.

Baribo scored in the 76th minute to tie Ante Razov (Chicago Fire, 1999) for the most goals scored through the first three games of a season in MLS history.

Defenders Andrew Gutman and Leonardo Barroso scored two minutes apart late in the second half of Barroso's league debut and the Chicago Fire spoiled FC Dallas' home opener with a 3-1.

Logan Farrington used an assist from Anderson Julio to score for the first time this season and give Dallas the lead in the 57th minute. Farrington had four goals and eight assists in 10 starts and 29 appearances as a rookie last season. Julio picked up his first assist in his first season with the club. Julio also has a goal this season after posting 26 with six assists over four seasons with Real Salt Lake.

Rafael Navarro scored in the 18th minute and Zack Steffen had four saves



Nashville SC defender Walker Zimmerman (25) heads a ball for a shot on goal against Portland Timbers defenders Finn Surman (20) and Eric Miller (15) but misses during the second half of an MLS soccer match in Nashville, Tenn. (AP)

to help the Colorado Rapids beat Austin FC 1-0. Djordje Mihailovic played a through ball from near midfield to the edge of the penalty area and Navarro, who slipped behind the defense and timed his run perfectly, scored on a first-touch chip-shot as goalkeeper Brad Stuver charged off his line.

Andy Najar opened the scoring in first-half stoppage time, Ahmed Qasem scored his first career MLS goal and Nashville SC beat the Portland Timbers 2-0.

After a series of short quick passes, Edvard Tagseth played a ball from the edge of the area to Najar for a low one-touch finish from the right side. The 31-year-old Najar, who played in Honduras last season, scored his first MLS goal since 2021 and Nashville's first of the season.

Kévin Denkey scored his second goal of the season in the 73rd minute, Yuya Kubo added a goal and FC Cincinnati beat Toronto FC 2-0.

Denkey, who also scored in his MLS debut to power a 1-0 win over the New York Red Bulls in the opener, converted from the penalty spot to open the scoring after a handball by Toronto's Tyrese Spicer.

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Alonso Martínez and Hannes Wolf scored second-half goals to lead New York City FC to a 2-1 victory over Orlando City at Yankee Stadium.

Neither team scored until Martínez found the net unassisted in the 59th minute to give New York City (1-1-1) the lead. It was the second goal this season for Martínez, who had 16 last year as a rookie.

Christian Benteke and Hosi Kijima scored in the second half to rally D.C. United to a 2-1 victory over Sporting Kansas City ending the club's nine-match losing streak at home across all competitions dating to last season.

Jordan Morris became Seattle's career leader for goals scored, Kalani Kossari scored his first MLS goal, and the Sounders beat Los Angeles FC 5-2.

Morris scored his 87th career goal in the 77th minute to make it 3-1, moving past Raúl Ruidíaz on the club's all-time list. Ruidíaz scored 71 goals in the MLS regular season for Seattle (1-1-1), two more than Morris, a 30-year-old Seattle native.

Djokovic eliminated by lucky loser at Indian Wells

INDIAN WELLS, March 9, (Xinhua): Novak Djokovic was eliminated from the ATP 1000 Indian Wells Masters on Saturday, suffering a shock 6-2, 3-6, 6-1 loss to Dutchman Botić van de Zandschulp in the second round.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion won just 63 percent of points on his first serve while his 85th-ranked rival converted five of eight break points to prevail in just over two hours.

It is the second time in as many years that Djokovic has been defeated by a lucky loser in the Californian desert. Last year, the 37-year-old Serb fell in the third round to Italian qualifier Luca Nardi.

"I started really well, and then of course Novak came back," said Van De Zandschulp, who secured a berth in the tournament after the withdrawal of Argentine Facundo Diaz Acosta.

"In the end and in the third set I was happy to get my level back." Djokovic hit 14 unforced errors and was broken twice in the first set but he recovered to take a 3-0 lead in the second, putting himself on level terms with a trademark forehand winner.

But Van De Zandschulp broke serve again in the decider and secured victory by inducing a Djokovic unforced error on match point.

In a day of upsets, seventh seed Andrey Rublev lost 6-4, 7-5 to Italy's Matteo Arnaldi and 17th seed Felix Auger-Aliassime lost to American Jenson Brooksby 6-4, 6-2.

Zhang Shuai of China and Hsieh Su-wei of Chinese Taipei reached the women's doubles round of 16 at Indian Wells on Saturday with a 6-4, 6-4 victory over Japanese pair Eri Hozumi and Shuko Aoyama.

The fifth-seeded pairing of Zhang and Hsieh won 76 percent of points on their first serve and 52 percent on their second to take the match in one hour and 19 minutes.

Aoyama and Hozumi won just 48 percent of points on their serve and 37 percent when returning.

Zhang and Hsieh will meet American duo Makenna Jones and McCartney Kessler on Sunday for a place in the quarterfinals.

The latter advanced by beating Bethanie Mattek-Sands and Marie Bouzkova 6-2, 6-4 earlier on Saturday.

three points behind. Earlier in Argentina's top-flight on Saturday, a first-half goal from Eric Ramirez gave Huracan a 1-0 away victory over Racing Club. (Xinhua)

Dest returns from knee surgery: American defender Sergiño Dest has returned from knee surgery after more than 10 months out of action.

The 24-year-old entered in the 67th minute for PSV Eindhoven against Heerenveen in the Eredivisie on Saturday. "Of course I have to take it easy and be careful, but it felt good," Dest was quoted as saying on the club website.

Dest was loaned from Barcelona to PSV in August 2023 and agreed to a four-year contract with PSV last June. The outside back scored two goals in 25 league matches and 37 overall games before tearing an ACL in training on April 20, an injury that needed surgery. (AP)

Ankalaev wins undisputed light heavyweight belt with a unanimous decision over Pereira

LAS VEGAS, March 9, (AP): Magomed Ankalaev's plan coming into Saturday's light heavyweight bout at UFC 313 was to pressure Alex Pereira. And then add more pressure. And more.

The strategy worked, as Ankalaev scored a stunning upset with a unanimous decision to take Pereira's undisputed light heavyweight belt.

"I can't even put it into words," Ankalaev said in the ring during the post-fight interview through a translator. "It's been such a long way, and it's my dream. It's on my waist." All three judges scored in favor of Ankalaev (21-1-1), with scores of 49-46 and two at 48-47.

Ankalaev was never intimidated by his well-decorated opponent, even after enduring a barrage of leg kicks in the first round.

Rather than play things cautiously, Ankalaev went on the offensive and stayed aggressive in backing down Pereira while using an overpowering left hand that continued to stagger UFC's top active star.

Bruce Buffer's announcement with the result propelled a chorus of boos from the pro-Pereira crowd.

"I knew it would be a war," said Pereira (12-3-0), who was putting his belt on the line for the fourth time. "Every fight of mine is a war."

Pereira (12-2), who turns 38 on July 7, closed -120 at BetMGM



Magomed Ankalaev celebrates after defeating Alex Pereira in a UFC 313 mixed martial arts light heavyweight title bout in Las Vegas. (AP)

Sportsbook. As close as the fight was, UFC President and CEO Dana White had one word when asked about a potential rematch: "Probably."

In the co-main event, the No. 3-ranked lightweight and fan favorite Justin Gaethje (27-5-0) earned a unanimous decision over No. 11 Rafael Fiziev (12-4-0) in what was tabbed "Fight of the Night." Gaethje was scheduled to fight Dan Hooker, who pulled out

because of a hand injury. Gaethje dropped Fiziev with a stiff right uppercut in the second round.

Lightweight Ignacio Bahamondes (17-5-0) earned a first-round win when he made Jalin Turner (14-9-0) tap after administering a triangle choke at the 2:29 mark. Turner left the cage and waited in front of press row for Bahamondes to finish his interview, intending to return to the cage to leave his gloves and signify his retirement. Security would not let him return, however. No. 5 strawweight contender Amanda Lemos improved to 15-4-1 with a unanimous decision over seventh-ranked Iasmin Lucindo (17-6-0).

Mauricio Ruffly (12-1-0) delivered a spinning heel kick with his right foot to the temple of King Green (32-17-1) to score a vicious knockout just 2:07 into the first round of their lightweight bout.

Just after Ruffly's knockout kick and before the women's bout, a tribute video for Robbie Lawler played in honor of the former welterweight champion. Watching cageside, an emotional Lawler received a standing ovation as it was announced he would be inducted into the UFC Hall of Fame's Modern Wing as a member of the Class of 2025. The ceremony will take place as part of the 13th Annual UFC International Fight Week on June 26.

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US claims gold in mixed skeleton race at world championships

LAKE PLACID, N.Y., March 9, (AP): The U.S. won the mixed skeleton world championship for the first time, after not even medaling in the first four editions of the event.

The team of Austin Florian and Mystique Ro won at Mount Van Hoevenberg with a combined time of 1 minute, 54.53 seconds.

Britain won the silver with the team of world men's champion Matt Weston and Tabitha Stoecker finishing in 1:54.63. China got the bronze, with Dan Zhao and Qinwei Lin finishing in 1:54.81.

It was the fourth gold medal overall for the U.S. at a

skeleton world championship, joining the men's victory by Jim Shea in 1999 and women's wins by Noelle Pikus-Pace in 2007 and Katie Uhlaender in 2012.

The U.S. has also won Olympic gold in skeleton three times, with Jennison Heaton taking the inaugural men's event in 1928, then Shea winning the men's race and Tristan Gale the women's title at Salt Lake City in 2002.

The mixed team skeleton event was added to the program at the world championships in 2020 and Germany had won the competition every time before this year. But the Germans were shut out on Saturday night, after win-

ning four golds, one silver and one bronze in the first four mixed races at worlds. China joined the U.S. as first-time medal winners at Saturday's mixed skeleton worlds race. Britain medaled for the fourth time, taking the silver in the event for the third consecutive season.

It was the final major race of the international skeleton season. The bobsled and skeleton world championships in Lake Placid continue Sunday with the final runs of women's monobob and two-man bobsledding, then resume there next weekend with two-woman and four-man competitions.

Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr congratulates GCC leaders on Ramadan

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Chair of the Board of Directors of the Kuwaiti and Asian Water Sports Federations Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr Al-Sabah extended his warmest congratulations and blessings to the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

According to a press release,



Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr Al-Sabah Al-Badr

Sheikh Khaled conveyed these wishes on his behalf as well as on behalf of the Board of Directors and all members of the Water Sports Federation.

He affirmed that these blessed days serve to strengthen the spirit of brotherhood, love, and communication among all.

Sheikh Khaled, who attended the receptions held by the embassies of Bahrain and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Kuwait, explained that the GCC countries always strive to maintain such cherished ancient traditions and visits during Ramadan. These customs reflect the values of tolerance, exchanging greetings, friendly conversations, and encouraging charity, all of which are deeply embedded in their nature.

The unity and solidarity among the people of the GCC countries have always been a defining characteristic that enabled all to work together to enhance integration in various fields.

He concluded by praying to God Almighty to bless the leaders and peoples of the GCC countries with security, safety, stability, and unity.



Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr Al-Sabah Al-Badr with fellow officials.

Dembélé reaches 20 league goals as unbeaten PSG moves 16 points clear

Second-placed Marseille loses to Lens

PARIS, March 9, (AP): Ousmane Dembélé came off the bench to score twice and help a shaky Paris Saint-Germain win 4-1 at Rennes to stay unbeaten in Ligue 1.

Bradley Barcola got one goal and set up another as PSG moved 16 points ahead of second-placed Marseille, which conceded a stoppage-time goal in a 1-0 home defeat to Lens in the late game.

Third-placed Nice can move level on points with Marseille if it beats Lyon at home on Sunday.

PSG coach Luis Enrique rested captain Marquinhos ahead of the return leg at Liverpool in the last 16 of the Champions League next Tuesday. PSG lost the first leg 1-0 despite dominating.

Dembélé was joined on the bench by right back Achraf Hakimi, winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

PSG controlled the first half but made many mistakes after the break as Rennes attacked strongly, before Dembélé wrapped up the win late on.

Barcola put PSG ahead in the 28th minute when he placed the ball through goalkeeper Brice Samba's legs. Ludovic Blas almost equalized moments later and 17-year-old striker Mohamed Meité headed against the crossbar.

Barcola broke down the left again and picked out striker Gonçalo Ramos in the 50th for 2-0. Three minutes later, sloppy defending allowed defender Lilian Brassier to pull one back and it galvanized Rennes, which came close to equalizing several times.

An awful mistake from PSG defender Lucas Beraldo saw him pass to Meité, giving him an easy chance from six meters. But the young striker hesitated to shoot with his weaker left foot and his tame shot with his right was blocked.

Dembélé's stoppage-time brace took him this season to 20 league goals for the first time.

Canada striker Jonathan David moved onto 14 league goals - third in the Ligue 1 scoring charts - after scoring in Lille's hard-fought 1-0 win against rock-bottom Montpellier.

The win moved fifth-placed Lille level on 44 points with Monaco, which is ahead on goal difference, in the race for one of the four Champions League spots.



Rennes' Adrien Truffert, left, and PSG's Lee Kang-in challenge for the ball during the French League One soccer match between Rennes and Paris Saint-Germain at Roazhon Park stadium in Rennes, France. (AP)

Marseille's Mason Greenwood - second in the scoring charts with 15 goals - was named as a substitute along with Brazilian winger Luis Henrique. Both players came on at the start of the second half at Stade Velodrome.

Luis Henrique's close-range volley was expertly stopped by Lens goalkeeper Mathew Ryan in the 83rd. Moments later, he made a superb one-handed save low to his right to deny forward Neal Maupay.

Marseille paid the price when Lens launched a counterattack in the fourth minute of stoppage time and Colombia defender Deiver Machado teed up Neil El Aynaoui for a fine finish as Lens moved up to eighth.

All the players in Saturday's games had "WO=MAN" written on the back of their jerseys instead of their names as part of the French league's initiative centered around International Women's Day.

Kuwait Club continues strong form

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Kuwait Club's first handball team concluded its postponed matches in the league with a perfect record, securing the top spot with 22 points from 11 matches.

In its most recent postponed match at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex Hall, Kuwait Club defeated Khaitan 34-27. The match also saw Kazma overcoming Fahaeel 33-28.

With the postponed matches now complete, the league standings are as follows:

Kuwait Club - 22 points

Kazma - 19 points, Burgan - 17 points,

Salmiya and Al-Arabi - 14 points each

Al-Qurain, Al-Sulaibikhat, and Al-Qadisiya - 12 points each

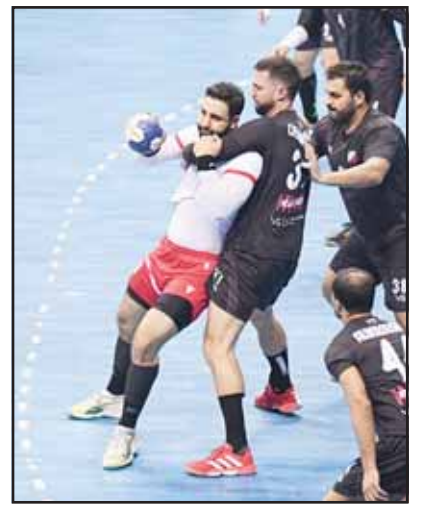
Al-Nasr - 10 points, Khaitan and Fahaeel - 8 points each, Yarmouk - 2 points

Al-Tadamon - 1 point, Al-Sahel - 0 points

The handball league had been suspended since December 6 to allow the national team to prepare for and participate in the 29th World Cup, which was recently held in Croatia, Norway,

and Denmark.

The "Blues" finished in 27th place overall in the tournament. Additionally, Kuwait Club participated in the 41st Gulf Handball Cup Champions Clubs Championship, where they finished as runners-up behind Qatar's Al-Arabi.



Kuwait Club player is held back as he goes for a shot.

Best of the Rest

Championships open in Serbia: The IBA Women's World Boxing Championships kicked off in the Serbian city of Nis, bringing together over 500 female boxers from more than 100 countries and regions to compete in 12 weight categories.

The tournament, which runs until March 16, will see the world's top female boxers vying for prestigious titles and prize money. Among them is a strong contingent from China, featuring a dozen athletes, including several national champions.

The Chinese boxers are Zhong Xueyun (48kg), Hu Meiyi (50kg), Wei Sitong (52kg), Zhao Xuan (54kg), Cai Yan (57kg), Li Qiange (60kg), Zhao Shuoyu (63kg), Zhou Pan (66kg), Li Shu (70kg), Wang Lina (75kg), Wang Xiaomeng (81kg), and Zhan Yilian (+81kg).

The event was officially opened by Nenad Borovcanin, President of the Serbian Boxing Federation, who highlighted the significance of hosting another major boxing tournament in Serbia. "This championships will showcase the strength, courage, and dedication of female boxers from around the world," he said.

Serbia had previously hosted the IBA Men's World Boxing Championships in 2021. (Xinhua)

Barcelona match postponed: FC Barcelona's La Liga game at home to Osasuna that was scheduled to be played was postponed after a member of the FC Barcelona medical team, Carles Minarro, died.

Minarro passed away on Saturday afternoon at the team hotel prior to the game, leading to La Liga postponing the league leaders' match.

"La Liga laments the death of the FC Barcelona first team doctor, Carles Minarro, and informs that for this motive the game between FC Barcelona and Osasuna scheduled for today (Saturday) has been postponed," read the communique from the competition's organizing body. (Xinhua)

Shiffrin slips from first-run lead to place 3rd

Italian star Dominik Paris shines in tight World Cup super-G for 2nd win in 3 days

KVITFJELL, Norway, March 9, (AP): After just one World Cup race win in three years for Dominik Paris, the Italian star made it two in three days Sunday.

Paris was the only racer to break clear in a super-G of tight margins, on a course shortened by fog on the mountain, and added to his downhill victory Friday.

Take Paris out of Sunday's race and the top 25 all would have been within one second of James Crawford, the 2023 world champion from Canada.

Paris was there, however, as the standout racer 0.38 faster than Crawford and 0.47 clear of third-placed Miha Hrobat.

Marco Odermatt placed fourth though his season-long super-G title was confirmed in midweek when his closest challenger, Paris's teammate Mattia Casse, was injured crashing in a training run for the downhill.

Paris, the German-speaking Italian with the French-sounding family name, is most at home on the Norwegian slope that staged the 1994 Olympics races.

He now has six of his 24 career World Cup wins at Kvitfjell, where he also completed a weekend double in downhill and super-G in 2019, and won a downhill in March 2022.

That had been a career season for Paris six years ago. He won a career-best seven World Cup races, plus his only gold medal - in super-G at the 2019 worlds - and his only World Cup crystal trophy,

for the season-long super-G title. That success all came after spending the summer recording an album as a singer in a heavy metal band, Rise of Voltage.

Odermatt earned 50 race points Sunday and has an unbeatable lead of 210 in the super-G standings before the last race March 23 at Sun Valley, Idaho. It is his third straight super-G title.

The Swiss superstar's fourth straight overall World Cup title also is assured with a 570-point lead over Henrik Kristoffersen and just six races left. Though 600 points can be won, Kristoffersen does not race in downhill or super-G.

Kristoffersen will be favored

to pick up points next weekend when the men's World Cup circuit stays in Norway for a giant slalom and slalom at nearby Hafjell.

Mikaela Shiffrin let a slalom win slip away Sunday yet set an all-time World Cup record with her 156th finish on a race podium.

Racing through steadily falling snow with a first-run lead, Shiffrin was only 25th-fastest in the second run to finish in third place, 0.19 seconds behind surprise winner Katharina Truppe.

Katharina Liensberger placed second, trailing 0.05 behind her Austria teammate, whose first career World Cup win was earned

at age 29.

"Katharina Day!" Shiffrin said in the finish area as she hugged the two racers who beat her.

Shiffrin's 156th top-3 result in her World Cup career breaks a tie with Swedish great Ingemar Stenmark. Shiffrin also took the all-time wins record from Stenmark and now has 100 to his 86.

Shiffrin needed to win the race to earn 100 race points and stay in contention - though with just a slim chance in the standings - for a ninth career season-long slalom title. She missed four races after a serious crash in giant slalom in November.

With Olympic slalom champion Petra Vlhova skipping the entire season to recover from a knee injury, the door opened for a new World Cup title winner.

The World Cup season-ending last slalom is at Sun Valley, Idaho, on March 27 with four skiers ahead of Shiffrin and within 100 points of the lead to lift the crystal globe trophy.

Title-chasing contenders Zrinka Ljutic and Camille Rast, the world championships gold medalist last month, both were below their best form Sunday and placed 10th and 11th, respectively.

Ahead of going to the United States, the 21-year-old Ljutic leads Rast in the slalom standings by 41 points and will win the title with a top-three result.

Liensberger and Rast's Swiss teammate Wendy Holdener also could win.



Italy's Dominik Paris speeds down the course during an alpine ski, men's World Cup super G race, in Kvitfjell, Norway. (AP)

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Boston Celtics forward Jayson Tatum, front left, is fouled by Los Angeles Lakers forward Dorian Finney-Smith, right, during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Boston. (AP)

Sports

Al-Fahaheel advances to Crown Prince Cup quarters

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Al-Fahaheel secured its spot in the quarter-finals of the Crown Prince Cup after defeating Al-Shabab 2-0.

With this victory, Al-Fahaheel joined Kuwait Club, Kazma, Salmiya, and Khaitan in the next round. Meanwhile, the match between Al-Jahra and Al-Jazeera was postponed, along with the clashes between Al-Arabi vs. Al-Sahel and Al-Qadisiya vs. Al-Nasr, due to Al-Arabi's participation in the Asian Challenge Cup and Al-Qadisiya's engagement in the Gulf Champions League.

Al-Fahaheel now awaits the winner of the Al-Arabi vs. Al-Sahel match.

The game started with an even contest between the two sides, but Al-Shabab suffered a setback when striker Ali Al-Dokhi exited due to injury. In the second half, Al-Fahaheel gradually gained control, with Omar Ali breaking the deadlock by converting a pass from Brazilian Vitor da Silva into the net.

Capitalizing on Al-Shabab's defensive weaknesses, Vitor extended Al-Fahaheel's lead in the 75th minute. Despite Al-Shabab's efforts to mount a comeback, Al-Fahaheel maintained its dominance and sealed its place in the next round.



Fahaheel player makes a goal attempt against Al-Shabab during the Crown Prince Cup match.

Third Ramadan Mini Golf Championship kicks off

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The third Ramadan Mini Golf Championship began the day before yesterday and will conclude tomorrow at the Farhan Al-Khaled Intermediate School Hall in Bayan. Open to Kuwaiti youth aged 16 and above, the tournament offers cash prizes for the top two winners.

Hassan Al-Khawaja, head of the Mini Golf Committee and founder of the sport in Kuwait, highlighted that the championship follows the game's successful participation in the recent Kuwaiti Sports Day. He emphasized that the event aims to attract young Kuwaitis, channel their energy into sports, and foster a spirit of friendly competition. Additionally, it seeks to strengthen social bonds within Kuwaiti society and provide an engaging outlet for mini golf enthusiasts.

Al-Khawaja noted that Ramadan tournaments play a crucial role in



Hassan Al-Khawaja

enriching the lives of young people by promoting sports culture during the holy month. He added that these events continue to grow in popularity, drawing intense competition, excitement, and high spectator engagement.

Bacic finalizes a 26-player squad for upcoming West Asian Championship

Kuwait continues Dubai training camp ahead of 2026 World Cup qualifiers

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DUBAI, March 9: The Kuwait national team is currently undergoing an intensive training camp in Dubai, UAE, which will last for 10 days. As part of their preparations, they will play a friendly match against the Chinese national team next Friday before facing Iraq and Oman on March 20 and 25, respectively, in the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Head coach Juan Antonio Pizzi is focused on ensuring the squad is fully prepared for these crucial encounters, especially with some players dealing with minor muscle injuries and others experiencing fatigue due to a demanding schedule in the Zain Premier League.

Players from Al-Qadisiya and Al-Arabi are set to join the squad next Thursday, as Al-Qadisiya participates in the Gulf Champions League and Al-Arabi competes in the Asian Challenge Cup.

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti Olympic



Kuwait Olympic team training for the upcoming West Asian Championship.

team, led by Croatian coach Dario Bacic, has finalized a 26-player squad for the upcoming West Asian Championship, set to take place in Muscat, Oman, starting March 19.

Kuwait has been placed in Group Four, where they will face Jordan. A total of eight teams are competing in the tournament, including Oman, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Kuwait.

The squad includes: Abdullah Musa, Khaled Al-Kharqawi, Fahad Al-Azmi, Hamoud Al-Sanousi, Abdullah Al-Ghaniman, Mohammed Al-Suraie, Ahmed Bodi, Mohsen Ghareeb, Abdullah Al-Awadhi, Ali Jabr, Saleh Al-Muhtab, Abdulrahman Al-Rashidi, Jarrah Al-Hilali, Nasser Al-Enezi, Salem Al-Khatlan, Bandar Al-Barazi, Omar Al-Saleem, Eid Al-Raqaba, Omar Al-Azmi, Saad Al-Ajmi, Montaser Abdulsalam, Jassim Al-Enezi, Mohammed Al-Kandari, Abdulrahman Al-Harbi, Omar Al-Matar, and Dhari Al-

Masri.

The team has begun training at the subsidiary field of Jaber Al-Ahmad Stadium and is scheduled to depart for Muscat next Thursday.

Jordan's head coach, Omar Najhi, has also unveiled his preliminary squad for the tournament, featuring players such as Murad Al-Faluji, Salama Salman, Abdulrahman Suleiman, Ali Hajbi, Ahmed Ayman, Arafat Al-Haj, Ayham Al-Samamra, Jaafar Samara, Zakaria Amro, Ibrahim Al-Jadi, Obada Kamel, Mohammed Taha, Anas Al-Khab, Ahmed Al-Maghribi, Qutaiba Al-Ajalin, Mohammed Kahlan, Hashem Al-Mobaiddeen, Saif Suleiman, Hussein Al-Rashdan, Mahmoud Yazan, Qusay Al-Mansouri, Saif Darwish, Awda Al-Fakhouri, Ali Azaiza, Ayham Hisham, Obaida Al-Namarneh, Bakr Kalbouna, Rakan Abu Al-Haj, Abdulrahman Al-Zaghba, and Ahmed Al-Harshsheh.

Curry surpasses 25,000 pts as Warriors hold off Pistons

Celtics beat Lakers after James leaves late with groin injury

SAN FRANCISCO, March 9, (AP): Draymond Green hit a go-ahead 3-pointer with 35 seconds left, then secured a loose ball moments later and converted a free throw, Stephen Curry surpassed 25,000 points and the Golden State Warriors held off the Detroit Pistons 115-110 on Saturday night.

Curry made four 3-pointers and needs seven to become the first player in NBA history with 4,000. He had 32 points, making all 12 of his free throws.

Jimmy Butler scored 15 points in the third and made a jumper with 1:22 to play on the way to 26 points, nine rebounds and five assists as the Warriors won their fourth straight and ninth in 10. Golden State is 11-2 since Butler made his debut Feb. 8 - 11-1 in games he played.

Celtics 111, Lakers 101

In Boston, Jayson Tatum had 40 points, 12 rebounds, and eight assists, and the Boston Celtics held off a late rally to beat the Los Angeles Lakers.

With LeBron James in the locker room with a strained groin, the Lakers cut a 20-point, fourth-quarter deficit to single digits. But Tatum and Jaylen Brown scored Boston's final 12 points to preserve the win.

Brown added 31 points as the Celtics earned their fourth straight victory.

James finished with 22 points, 14 rebounds and nine assists before exiting midway through the fourth quarter as the **Rockets 146, Pelicans 117**

In Houston, Dillon Brooks had 27 points, Alperen Sengun and Aaron Holiday added 20 each and the Houston Rockets sailed to a win over the New Orleans Pelicans.

Houston never trailed in its second straight victory over the Pelicans after getting a 109-97 win in New Orleans on Thursday night.

A 3-pointer by CJ McCollum got the Pelicans

within 11 with 10 seconds left in the first half before Brooks made a 3-pointer and a Pelicans turnover gave Houston the ball back.

Hawks 120, Pacers 118

In Atlanta, Trae Young had 36 points and Caris Lavert added 26 off the bench as the Atlanta Hawks held off the Indiana Pacers for their third win in four games.

Oneka Okongwu had 16 points and 16 rebounds for the Hawks.



Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (30) gestures after making a 3-point basket during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Detroit Pistons in San Francisco. (AP)

The Hawks led by 20 points after the first quarter and 17 at halftime, but the Pacers took the lead midway through the fourth quarter before Atlanta made the key plays down the stretch.

Magic 111, Bucks 109

In Milwaukee, Paolo Banchero scored 29 points. Cole Anthony added 22 and the Orlando Magic beat Milwaukee to end a five-game skid and snap the Bucks' four-game winning streak.

Orlando took the lead for good just over three minutes into the game and led 95-80 with less than nine minutes left before the Bucks rallied.

The Magic were clinging to a 111-109 lead when Milwaukee's Taurean Prince stole the ball from Anthony, a backcourt turnover that led to the Bucks rebounding the ball from in front of Orlando's bench with 6.6 seconds remaining.

Wizards 118, Raptors 117

In Toronto, Jordan Poole scored 34 points and the NBA-worst Washington Wizards won their second straight game, beating Toronto when Raptors guard Jamal Sheard's running layup at the buzzer was ruled to be late.

The teams will meet again Monday night in Toronto.

Bilal Coulibaly added 18 points and 10 rebounds to help Washington improve to 13-49 with its second straight victory. The Wizards beat Utah at home Wednesday night before heading off to Toronto for the start of a seven-game trip that also has a two-game set in Detroit and games at Denver, Portland and Utah.

Hornets 105, Nets 102

In Charlotte, Miles Bridges scored 26 points and the Charlotte Hornets used a finishing 12-0 run to beat the Brooklyn Nets 105-102 on Saturday night and snap a nine-game losing streak.

Bridges added 12 rebounds, five assists and a huge blocked shot in the closing seconds for the Hornets, who trailed 102-93 with under 3 1/2 minutes remaining. Nick Smith Jr. scored 19 points while shooting 6 for 17 (3 for 9 from 3-point range) and 4 of 4 from the free-throw line.

Rivals Bayern, Leverkusen falter in Bundesliga title race



Bayern's Serge Gnabry, right, and Bochum's Tom Krauss fight for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between Bayern Munich and VfL Bochum at the Allianz Arena in Munich, Germany. (AP)

BERLIN, March 9, (Xinhua): Raphael Guerreiro's brace wasn't enough as 10-man Bayern Munich squandered a 2-0 lead to lose 3-2 to bottom side Bochum, while second-placed Bayer Leverkusen lost 2-0 to Werder Bremen.

The game began with Bayern on the front foot, fielding an attacking lineup. The strategy paid off early on as Raphael Guerreiro's well-struck shot put the hosts ahead in the 14th minute.

Bayern had a chance to double their lead from the penalty spot but Serge Gnabry, hit the post in the 22nd minute. Guerreiro made amends for Gnabry's miss minutes later, heading home a brace to make it 2-0.

Despite Bayern's dominance, Bochum made the most of a rare attacking opportunity. A poor clearance by Thomas Muller saw the ball bounce off his thigh and land at the feet of Bernardo, who set up Ivan Ordets for a powerful finish to cut the deficit to 2-1 on the half-hour mark.

A key moment came just before the break when Joao Palhinha was shown a straight red card for a high challenge on Takuma Asano, leaving Bayern with ten men in the 43rd minute.

Bochum came out of the break with renewed confidence and quickly equalized. Kostas Stafylidis found Christopher Antwi-Adjei, who delivered a pinpoint cross for Takuma Asano to head past Manuel Neuer six minutes into the second half.

Guerreiro came close to restoring Bayern's lead soon after, but his shot just missed the target on the hour mark.

Sensing the need for a change, Vincent Kompany introduced Harry Kane, Jamal Musiala and Michael Olise moments later.

The substitutions almost paid off when Konrad Laimer tested Riemann with a fierce shot. However, a defensive lapse soon proved costly. Laimer lost possession in midfield, allowing Patrick Osterhage to set up Kevin Stoger for Bochum's third goal in the 71st minute.

Bayern pushed desperately for an equalizer, but despite late pressure, the German giants were unable to break down Bochum's well-organized defense and suffered their first home defeat of the season in the Bundesliga.

The result gave Bochum a vital win in their relegation battle and dealt a blow to Bayern's title hopes.