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Amir praises Armed Forces, National Guard



Amiri Diwan photo
His Highness the Amir, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during a visit to the headquarters of the Ministry of Defense.



Amiri Diwan photo
His Highness the Amir, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during a visit to the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) headquarters.



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Dear Minister of Justice, the state is not a debt collection agency

IN Kuwait, debtors are often portrayed as major criminals, as though they committed the worst possible crimes. They find themselves targets not only of some scholars and preachers but even the General Department of Sentences Enforcement. The debtor is left with few allies, because he encountered a desperate situation of financial need.

Some imams and preachers have indirectly warned debtors of hellfire and a grim fate if they fail to repay their debts. On top of this, the law imposes a travel ban on debtors, even if the loan was for essential purposes like medical treatment. In addition, the court may demand a debtor pay ten percent of the total loan in one lump sum. This raises the question: where is a person supposed to find such a large amount when they are already insolvent? How can such a law be justified when it demands a debtor pay such a high percentage in one go?

A debtor in Kuwait is also threatened with imprisonment, especially with the activation of the arrest and detention law, even for debts less than KD 100.

For instance, if someone issues a cheque without sufficient funds in the account due to usurious debt, they may face a three-year prison sentence. Unfortunately, tragic stories have emerged from this practice. Many families have disintegrated because the wife, under pressure from her husband, issued cheques without a balance. As a result, she ends up in prison after being divorced by her husband, who then marries another woman.

The problem is further compounded by the fact that penalties are not combined. For example, if a debtor issues ten cheques without sufficient funds, they will face 30 years in prison, as the law calculates three years per cheque.

This approach is unique to Kuwait, as it adheres to an outdated law that many countries abandoned decades ago. In European and Arab countries, the issuer of a bounced cheque is not typically imprisoned if their intentions were not fraudulent. In these countries, the penalty is aimed at those who grant loans easily without properly assessing the debtor's ability to repay. Even non-Islamic nations have adopted similar practices.

While bank loans are secured by mortgages and guarantees, which protect the lender from the risk of loss, there is still a banking term known as "bad debts".

A notable example of such bad debts is the infamous "Souk Al-Manakh" stock market debts, which amount to approximately seven billion dinars.

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'Embrace modernization, expand strategic ops'



Amiri Diwan photo
His Highness the Amir signs the registry of honor during a visit to the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) headquarters.

KUWAIT CITY, March 11, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah paid a visit on Monday to the headquarters of the Ministry of Defense.

Accompanied by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir was received by Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah Ali Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Mubarak Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief of General Staff of Kuwait Army Air Vice Marshal Sheikh Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

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Cabinet taps Al-Dhubaibi to head review body

Kuwait forms grievance committee for citizenship revocation

KUWAIT CITY, March 11, (KUNA): Kuwait's Cabinet issued a decree Tuesday establishing a grievance committee for the withdrawal and revocation of Kuwaiti citizenship.

The Committee is responsible for receiving and considering grievances submitted by those whose Kuwaiti citizenship certificate has been withdrawn or revoked, and preparing the necessary recommendations thereon, and submitting proposals within the framework of the applicable laws, regulations and decisions.

The Committee shall hold its meetings at the headquarters of

the General Secretariat of the Cabinet, and may hold its meetings in any other place by decision of its Chairman.

The Committee shall meet upon the invitation of its Chairman, and whenever necessary.

The Committee's meeting shall be valid if attended by an absolute majority of its members, including the Chairman or his Deputy.

The Committee's deliberations shall be confidential, and an absolute majority of the members present shall issue its decisions.

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Ramadan Timings

Iftar Wednesday17:55
Imsak... Thursday04:41

Day by Day

IN countries around the world, people are required to live 500 meters away from the beaches. No buildings are allowed to be built directly on the shore, as the Kuwaiti proverb goes, "The wave pushes it."

Beaches are considered public property for everyone, and individuals cannot own them. Even houses built along the shore in ancient times became public property, designated for recreational use such as restaurants, cafes, or hotels. No changes are allowed to be made to their features, and they are not for private use. This is for the awareness of the state and the municipality. ... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait strongly denounced the continued practices of the Israeli occupation forces and their collective punishment policy against the Palestinian people, the latest of which was cutting off electricity in the Gaza Strip, thus violating and continuing to violate the most basic rights.

Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on the international community, especially the Security Council, to intervene immediately and stop the violations of the Israeli occupation forces, allow the entry of humanitarian aid, and stop the policy of starvation and deprivation pursued by the occupation authorities. (KUNA)



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Sheikh Abdullah, Sheikh Mubarak greet well-wishers



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Al-Ghanayem Family hosts warm Ramadan gathering in Andalus

5th Ring Road towards Salmiya gets upgraded with new low-lying tunnel

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: Director General of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) Khaled Al-Osaimi said a new low-lying road (open tunnel) on the Fifth Ring Road towards Salmiya was inaugurated at dawn on Tuesday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He revealed that the project was carried out with the cooperation of the General Traffic Department and under

the direct guidance and oversight of the Minister of Public Works and the acting Minister of Electricity and Water Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan.

Al-Osaimi confirmed that this project is part of PART's plan to modernize and develop the country's road network for contributing to improved traffic flow.

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Kuwait backs Syria's unity with integration deal

KUWAIT CITY, March 11, (Agencies): Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its support on Tuesday for an agreement integrating all civil and military institutions in northeastern Syria under the administration of the Syrian state.

The ministry described the agreement as a significant step toward rebuilding state institutions and enhancing security and stability in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Kuwait reaffirmed its firm stance in support of Syria's sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity.

Syria's interim government signed a deal Monday with the Kurdish-led authority that controls the country's northeast, including a ceasefire and the merging of the main U.S.-backed force there into the Syrian army.

The deal is a major breakthrough that would bring most of Syria under the control of the government, which is led by the Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham that led the ouster of President Bashar Assad in December. The deal was signed by interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa and Mazloum Abdi, the commander of the U.S.-backed, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces.

The deal to be implemented by the end of the year would bring all border crossings with Iraq and Turkey, airports and oil fields in the northeast under the central government's control. Prisons where about 9,000 suspected members of the Islamic State group are also expected to come under government control.

Continued on Page 5

National Guard chief meets Turkiye envoy

KUWAIT CITY, March 11, (KUNA): The Chief of the National Guard, Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, discussed Tuesday with the Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait, Tuba Nur Sonmez, a number of topics of common interest.

This came during a meeting between the KNG Chief and the Turkish ambassador, said the National Guard in a statement.

In turn, the Turkish ambassador lauded the strong relationship between Kuwait and Turkiye and mutual cooperation in all fields.



KUNA photo
Chief of the Kuwait National Guard receives the Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait.

Mosques 'empower' worshippers with emergency WhatsApp communication

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs, through the Mosques Directorate, has allocated WhatsApp numbers for emergency cases to facilitate communication between worshippers and mosque administrations in all six governorates, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This allows individuals to report emergencies, including maintenance issues and violations, or submit suggestions that could help revive the

role and significance of mosques in society.

The ministry has announced the contact numbers for each governorate as follows:

- Capital Governorate: 50255882
- Hawalli Governorate: 99106211
- Farwaniya Governorate: 24890412
- Jahra Governorate: 66806464
- Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate: 65911990, 97998951
- Ahmadi Governorate: 60666671

Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:44 Asr 15:21
 Sunrise .. 06:03 Maghrib .. 17:54
 Zohr 11:58 Isha 19:10

Local

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Warm with light to moderate northwesterly wind speeds of 12-32 km/h.

By Night: Rather cold with light to moderate northwesterly wind,

with speeds of 10-30 km/h.

Station

Max Exp

Min Rec

Kuwait City

Kuwait Airport

Abdaly

Bubyan

21

16

26

26

22

Jahra 26

Failaka Island 23

Salmiyah 21

Ahmadi 21

Jal Aliyah 26

Nuwaib 21

17

16

17

12

14

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Fine for driving without valid license is KD75, reminds Mol

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: The Ministry of Interior has once again reminded the public about the implementation date for the new Traffic Law – set for April 22, reports Al-Anba daily.

In awareness brochures available in several languages, the ministry specified that the fine for driving without a valid driver's license, or with a license that does not permit the individual to operate the vehicle, or if the license is

withdrawn or suspended, will be KD75. If the case is referred to court, the penalty may include imprisonment for up to three months and a fine ranging from KD150 to KD300, or one of these penalties.

It is important to note that the new law, which takes effect on April 22, stipulates strict penalties and fines for a range of violations with emphasis on serious offenses.

Empowering women top priority: minister

Pivotal role in hi-tech arena: Al-Huwailah

NEW YORK, March 11, (KUNA): The Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthar Al-Huwailah reaffirmed on Monday Kuwait's commitment to empowering women in sustainable development, highlighting their achievements across various sectors with political leadership support.

Minister Al-Huwailah made this statement to KUNA following the launch of the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69), held from March 10 to 21, with the participation of 45 countries to discuss women's empowerment and equity issues.

The 69th session aims to review the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the most effective global framework for advancing women's rights. The commission focused on social development, supporting family stability, and promoting women's participation in scientific and technological fields, while also urging the UN to expand technical support for women's empowerment, especially in developing countries.

Minister Dr. Al-Huwailah affirmed that Gulf women play a key role in technological development.

Speaking during an event organized by



Dr Al-Huwailah

Kuwait as the chair of the current session of the GCC States, on the sidelines of the 69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69), Al-Huwailah said Gulf women have proven their excellence in multiple technological sectors and contributed to making accomplishments in domains like artificial intelligence, engineering, programming, cybersecurity, medicine, science and technology.

This helped boost GCC State's positions on the world digital map, Al-Huwailah pointed out.

Kuwait believes that empowering women technologically is a main factor to push digital economy and technological progress, she noted.

Kuwait continues efforts to enhance innovation and digital entrepreneurship, and back women's participation in the merging sectors like cybersecurity, AI and space, she stated.

She stressed the need of increasing regional collaboration and sharing expertise to ensure empowering more women to lead technological future in the GCC states.

The minister praised Gulf women's efforts as an inspiring model regionally and internationally. She vowed to support empowering women for further growth and making fingerprints in technological and digital excellence.

Speaking at the same event, Chairperson of the Kuwait Society for Inventors and Inventors' Support Dr. Fatimah Al-Thalab said that Gulf women are pioneering in the domain of medical technology and have made inventions that enhance sustainable development.

She added that Kuwait has provided women with a high-quality education and honed their technological skills which helped them make technological achievements not only on the national level but also on the international level.

Sheikh Abdullah, Sheikh Mubarak greet well-wishers



Top and above: Some pictures taken at the event.

Photos by Rizk Taufiq

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali and his brother Sheikh Mubarak welcomed well-wishers on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan in their diwaniya in Qortuba.

Present at the gathering were HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad and a number of ruling family members, ambassadors, diplomats, social figures and a group of citizens.

All those present exchanged greetings and wishes for blessings on the advent of the holy month, as they called to mind the authentic customs of the people of Kuwait in terms of communicating and showing compassion for others, especially during Ramadan. They affirmed that such gatherings promote love and harmony among different segments of society. They also implored Allah Almighty to return Ramadan to Kuwait and the Arab and Islamic nations with goodness, blessings and prosperity.

Other Voices

Donations and the 'fashionistas'

By Ahmad alsarraf

DUE to its geographical location, the generosity of some wealthy citizens, the circumstances of its establishment, and the diverse people who have settled in and considered it their homeland, Kuwait has been particularly generous in responding to the needs of the less fortunate.

With the emergence of the oil era, Kuwait became a hub for charity societies. The number of such societies in Kuwait is higher than in any other country when compared to its population.

It is undeniable that many of the founders or leaders of these societies, who still hold positions of authority, have accumulated enormous wealth for themselves, their families, and even their political-religious affiliations. A scholar and preacher once described them as "fashionistas."

The month of Ramadan is considered the best opportunity for beggars and most charity societies to collect the largest amount of donations, which in turn leads to an increase in fraudulent activities, along with the honorable and sincere individuals working in the charitable sector. Only a few are driven solely by the desire to help the needy without seeking personal gain. It was encouraging to see the government's announcement calling for individuals to report beggars. I hope the news is true!

In this regard, the Egyptian writer Abdul Khaliq Farouq penned an article in which he said, "We see emotional heartbreaking advertisements that bring tears to the eyes, and make you feel that the Egyptian people are divided into three categories: cancer patients, the needy, and the homeless, all in urgent need of donations."

However, you will be surprised to learn that the cost of a 30-second commercial on an Arab TV channel, especially during Ramadan, is 150 million pounds, and the cost on less famous channels is no less than 120 million pounds. And you will shake your head in disbelief. But you will swallow your surprise when you find out that the to-

tal value of Egyptians' donations last Ramadan amounted to four and a half billion pounds!"

It's a huge pie that "hyenas" compete for, fight over, and rush to grab, all by exploiting the kindness and love of people to help the needy, and taking advantage of the weak culture of collective charitable work among Egyptians in general.

Last year, 15.8 million families out of 18.4 million Egyptian families (86 percent) donated a total of 4.5 billion pounds. This year, donations are expected to increase by almost half to reach roughly seven billion pounds. However, the problem is that 55 percent of the donations made via text messages are deducted by the telecommunications company and the TV channel that owns the advertisement. Only 45 percent of the collected donations actually reach the beneficiaries.

Raising awareness could help cut off the corruption networks that involve communication, media, and religious institutions, which often oversee these charitable activities. The key is for each donor to personally search for those in need and deliver the donations directly to them.

The problem is that this is not an easy process and, of course, is nearly impossible to implement. If it were that simple, there wouldn't be a single charity in the world. Reaching those in need is a very difficult task.

The Ministry of Social Affairs has allocated a website for the needy to apply for assistance, which will allow charitable organizations to access these requests. This is a positive step that deserves praise, despite its serious shortcomings. It seems that the flaws in this system have affected the majority of charitable organizations, donors, and most importantly, the needy, including those facing serious circumstances, patients, prisoners, non-Kuwaitis, and especially the poorest segments of society. Unfortunately, the ministry's system has tragically deprived them of receiving aid. Perhaps this is a subject for another article.

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Approve tender, CAPT urged

Ramadan 'ghabqa' honors pioneering Kuwaiti women

By Inaas Awadh/ Mohammad Ghanem
 Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: A Ramadan ghabqa with the theme, "Be Yourself with Merit," was held recently in Kuf Al-Salehiya to honor accomplished and pioneering Kuwaiti women.

The event was organized by Alaa Al-Saeedi, founder of Al-Jadara Law Firm, with a number of distinguished Kuwaiti female figures in attendance.

Al-Saeedi affirmed the significant role that Kuwaiti women play in the country's development, pointing out that their dedication and hard work enabled them to hold numerous important positions.

Inspired by the many creative and impactful Kuwaiti women around her, Al-Saeedi decided to organize this special celebration to coincide with International Women's Day.

This year's celebration recognized seven prominent Kuwaiti women: Dr. Maryam Al-Awadhi, writer Amna Al-Ghanim, inventor Khadija Al-Rifai, family medicine doctor Dr. Alaa Abel, social activist Dr. Mona Bin Ali, Vice Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the People's Cooperative Society Haya Al-Maqroun, and educational activist Shawq Al-Ali.

Al-Saeedi acknowledged the challenges women face in the workplace, particularly in the legal profession; but emphasized that Kuwaiti women view these challenges as opportunities for growth and advancement.

She concluded by stating that every woman is capable of making valuable contributions to society, and that the event was a celebration of all women who have done so.

□ □ □

'Approve tender': The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has asked the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to approve the tender for Subiya Station Project (Phase IV) with a production capacity of 900 megawatts; since it has completed an accurate response to the agency's inquiries.

Sources revealed the ministry is relying on the implementation of this vital project as per the timetable to improve its electricity production capacity, in light of the delay in implementing other production projects. Sources explained that "once the Board of Directors of CAPT approves the tender, a date will be set for completing the remaining procedures to push for the implementation of the project."

Regarding the tender to appoint a consultant for Nuwaiseeb Station (Phase One), sources confirmed that the ministry has completed its response to the queries of CAPT in order to set the date for bidding.



KUNA photo
 Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets the outgoing Benin ambassador.

Deputy FM receives Benin envoy

Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Monday

Ambassador of the Republic of Benin Moudgaidou Soumanou Issoufou who ended his tenure in Kuwait. (KUNA)

Minister visits many cooperatives for check on food supplies, prices

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel recently conducted an inspection tour of Al-Qayrawan, Ishbiliya and Yarmouk cooperatives, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The minister was accompanied by Chairman of the Union of Cooperative Societies Ghaireeb Al-Adhan, Vice Chairman of the union Talal Al-Kishti, and the Commercial Control Sector team.

The primary aim of the tour was to assess the availability of goods, prevent price manipulation, and ensure that cooperatives adhere to

established standards – all in an effort to maintain market stability and meet consumer needs.

The tour covered several cooperative societies in different areas; during which Al-Ajeel was briefed on the availability of food supplies, pricing strategies, and the cooperatives' commitment to avoid unjustified price hikes.

The minister underscored the importance of maintaining a steady flow of basic goods in sufficient quantities, particularly in light of the anticipated increase in demand in the holy month of Ramadan.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

President Trump ... and Putin bid to secure western borders

"PRESIDENT Donald Trump threatens the international situation in a very frightening and dangerous way. He interferes in the internal affairs of other countries. He wants Canada to join the United States as its 51st state, wants to buy Greenland and occupy the Panama Canal. He even interfered in the jurisdiction of a Brazilian judge who wanted to arrest former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro," **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Also, European Union is upset with his political decisions. The Europeans and Americans are supposed to confront Russia as they have always done in the past, but we see him supporting Putin against Ukraine.



Al-Dawas

"Every day, he issues strange and even violent decisions that will destabilize the international situation. He imposed customs duties on imports. In the near future, we might hear him threatening Arab countries and interfering in their internal affairs.

"Trump did not just suggest, but decided, to displace Palestinians from Gaza to rebuild it, so that its coast will become attractive to tourists. When the Arabs met in Egypt to develop Gaza, he rejected their decisions and his action sparked responses from many writers. Writer William Galston says in the Wall Street Journal that 'Trump believes, however, has power when dealing with others, and if you have power, use it to the fullest extent.'

"Writer Simon Tisdall says in the British newspaper, The Guardian: 'Trump seems constantly angry, says whatever comes to mind, and respects only power and money. Is he mentally ill?'

"In Foreign Policy magazine, writer Ravi Argual said 'Trump blames the Ukrainian president, telling him that he will cause World War III, and does not say that Putin is the cause of the Ukrainian war.'

"I wrote a detailed article about that war, but here I will summarize the events: The Ottoman Empire occupied the Crimean Peninsula, East of Ukraine. When the Turks got weak, the Russians attacked and occupied Crimea in 1771, and established a base for their naval fleet overlooking the Black Sea, but Ukraine later became independent from the Soviet Union.

"If we look at Ukraine, we find that the eastern part of it sympathizes with Russia, and the western part shares borders with European countries, so the feelings of the Ukrainians were divided between the East and the West.

"Years ago, the Russian Parliament authorized President Putin to deploy military forces in Crimea to protect the lives of Russian citizens. Thus, Russia reoccupied part of Ukraine because it considers Ukraine an important country for its national security. It controls Russia's outlet to the Black Sea and then to the Mediterranean. Ukraine is also a vital route through which Russian oil pipelines pass to Europe, because energy (gas) has become a tool for influencing and controlling other countries. Europe is thirsty for energy, which puts it in a position of dependence on Russia and allows Russia to exert pressure on Europe.

"Russia accused America and Britain of inciting Ukrainians to demand joining the European Union and trying to drag Ukraine into NATO. Russia saw these Western practices as an attempt to encircle and destroy the Russian Federation.

"Therefore, it is trying to push its borders to the West as much as it can to create a buffer zone.

"After World War II, Russia pushed its borders to the center of Germany, and today it has retreated to the East. It seeks to push it as far West as possible. For example, NATO countries were about 1,600 kilometers away from St. Petersburg, Russia; but they are now less than 150 kilometers from the Russian border. President Putin's strategy is to increase Russia's strength, not to be in a defensive position. The forces around it are very strong, which made Russia seek to achieve a form of control over Ukraine, to be a buffer zone between Russia and others, so that forces hostile to Russia do not control Ukraine and threaten Russian security.

"Russia's foreign policy on this issue has made the European Union cohesive, as well as NATO. If I may express an opinion, I believe that Trump will not continue as president."

Also :

"As granting or revoking citizenship is the sovereign right of any country, we have no right to delve into this matter, whether to criticize or support, considering the government is 'special' in terms of what it regards as public interest," Kuwaiti

writer **Abdulrahman Khaled Al-Hamoud** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Nevertheless, I monitor some surprises and the reactions of some women who were Kuwaiti for more than a quarter of a century ago, then became mothers and grandmothers, and adapted until they forgot their birthplace. I specifically mention the Gulf women among them.

"Here are some tragedies. I will begin with the story I heard when I started writing this article about a Gulf woman (I will not mention her country). When she found that her citizenship was revoked, she went to the nearest police station and said: I have been married to my relative for a quarter of a century. I love him. We have children and grandchildren.

"Our financial situation is envied by many. We own more than one property outside the country. However, I hope you will help me divorce him immediately, because I did not ask him to grant me citizenship when we got married, but he insisted that our passports be unified as we travel frequently.

"Now, I am being punished as if I betrayed my country or committed acts that anger the Lord of Glory and Majesty. What will be my position towards my children, grandchildren and the people closest to me? I also hope that you will take the necessary steps to return my passport that you received when I was granted Kuwaiti citizenship."

"The second asked: How will I restore the identity of my fathers and grandfathers after they passed away, which I gave up in writing in my hometown in accordance with the laws of my country, Kuwait, that does not allow dual citizenship? How can I become a stranger to my children and grandchildren, as I have become a 'Bedoun' even though some of them hold the highest positions?"

"The third, who will not be the last, announced her readiness to give up her retirement benefits, her share of housing, and everything the State provides for free to citizens, including burial fees 'in exchange for restoring my citizenship, because I am proud and honored to pledge loyalty to this priceless country!'

"I conclude with the reaction of that woman who said: I was like others who feared death, but now, since I heard about this decision, and realized that it includes me, I hope that Allah will hasten His judgment because I have no one but Kuwait, which I love, and there is no escape from Allah except to Him."

"In light of the above, our consolation is that the guardian, may Allah protect him, has protected the material and moral rights of each of them."

"The issue of dead trees by the streets and surroundings is neither new, nor a major problem, but it is a matter that requires a specialized decision and serious follow-up. While it has been a long-standing concern, no radical solution has been implemented to address it. However, it is not a large-scale crisis. What is needed is a focused study to determine the most suitable types of plants and trees for Kuwait's climate and environment," columnist **Dr. Reem Ahmad Al-Hazeem** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"An effective decision to launch an appropriate afforestation campaign, along with serious follow-up, is necessary for rehabilitating a green and healthy environment in Kuwait.

"Neglecting Dr. Al-Hazeem afforestation and failing to resolve this issue can lead to several negative consequences, including the randomness of tree species and agricultural areas, which wastes both public funds and effort. This also distorts the visual appeal of streets, which becomes apparent to all.

"One notable example is the fate of the palm tree, which is a symbol of Kuwait's heritage. It was once a towering and noble tree that, after years of neglect, stood until its final breath, and was dying while still upright.

"The palm tree, though once a symbol of strength and resilience, is a pampered tree that requires great care and attention. It needs consistent irrigation with fresh water, regular pruning, fertilization, and periodic follow-up. Its natural habitat is in homes, gardens, and farms, not for street decoration.

"Unfortunately, when planted in urban areas, it often becomes ineffective. It lacks sufficient shade, accumulates dust, pollutants from car exhaust, and exposure to harmful substances like lead, all of which harm the environment and public health."

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

How do police identify a junkie?

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: Some might think that detecting a single narcotic pill will be challenging for security personnel; but recently, a 25-year-old Kuwaiti man was apprehended by a police patrol in Sabah Al-Ahmad residential area with just one Lyrica pill in his possession, reports Al-Anba daily.

He was referred to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) at the Interior Ministry.

Under such circumstances, one may wonder how do security personnel determine if someone is carrying narcotics and decide to conduct a thorough search of the individual and his vehicle.

A security source cited three main indicators that suggest someone may be in possession of drugs. The first is a person showing signs of addiction, which security officers,

relying on their experience, can easily identify. This prompts them to conduct a more extensive search. The second is the 'confusion' exhibited when the person is stopped.

Those carrying drugs or intoxicants often show signs of anxiety, confusion and fear and tend to search for a place to hide the narcotics. This behavior signals to security personnel that a closer inspection is needed. The third indicator is when a person stops on the side of the road. Drug use can impair concentration, making it difficult for the user to continue driving.

As a result, they may pull over due to drowsiness or lack of focus. When this happens, patrol officers stop the vehicle to ensure the driver's safety. If the individual appears to be under the influence, it could lead to further investigation, potentially revealing the presence of narcotics.

Kuwait vows to continue fight against drugs



The 68th session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotics under way. KUNA photo

Treatment center opened

VIENNA, March 11, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Vienna Talal Al-Fassam affirmed Kuwait's firm commitment to combating drugs and enhancing international cooperation.

In a speech delivered at the 68th session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna, Al-Fassam said that Kuwait adopted an integrated approach that includes strict legislative measures, preventive and rehabilitation programs, and enhanced international cooperation to confront cross-border challenges in this field.

He added that the recently opened center for addiction treatment in Kuwait reflected the country's commitment to providing treatment and rehabilitation services according to the latest medical and scientific standards. Ambassador Al-Fassam renewed Kuwait's commitment to supporting international efforts to combat drugs, calling for intensified joint cooperation to achieve security, stability and sustainable development for all peoples.



Al-Fassam

Seizure order revoked 20 yrs on

Kuwaiti acquitted of insulting mom-in-law

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: The judiciary has revoked a precautionary seizure order issued more than two decades ago on goods bearing a global trademark, which had been monopolized by a local company.

According to the grievance papers, the local trademark agent issued an order in 2000 to seize all goods bearing the trademark through various customs ports. As a result, Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) implemented the seizure order on any goods imported in accordance with the applicable circulars at the time.

An importer of goods bearing the same trademark filed a grievance after the KGAC refused to release a shipment he imported,



Dr. Al-Khatib

preventing him from receiving the goods. The importer then resorted to the judiciary with the help of his lawyer, Attorney Dr. Fawaz Al-Khatib.

Al-Khatib argued that the seizure order violated several laws, including the Code of Civil Procedure, Commercial Agencies Regulation Law, Trade Law, and Competition Protection Law.

After exhausting all legal avenues, the complainant obtained a final and binding ruling to annul the precautionary seizure order and lift the monopolistic restrictions on the goods.

Al-Khatib stated that this ruling highlights the effectiveness of the judiciary in protecting economic entities and fostering a competitive and fair investment environment in line with the latest economic laws. It also enhances the confidence of traders and investors in the integrity of Kuwait's legal framework, he added.

Man acquitted of libel: The Court of Appeals upheld the acquittal of a citizen who was accused of insulting his mother-in-law.

According to the case files, the defendant's mother-in-law filed a complaint; claiming

that the defendant insulted her. The incident reportedly occurred after the defendant filed a report against his wife, alleging that he had seen her with a stranger in a public street. He followed the pair to her mother's house, where he quickly entered the premises. The mother-in-law, along with the defendant's wife and other witnesses, subsequently went to the police station to file a report against him.

During the trial, the defendant's defense lawyer, Attorney Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan, argued that there was no evidence to substantiate the accusations. He pointed out that the case documents contained no conclusive evidence that could legally support the claim of insult.

Al-Qattan also emphasized that the evidence presented by the Public Prosecution – primarily the complainant's allegations – lacked credibility and appeared to be motivated by malice or fabrication.

The defense attorney stated that the defendant vehemently denied the accusations and asserted that he had not made any insulting or defamatory remarks towards his mother-in-law.

As a result, the Court of Appeals upheld the decision to acquit the defendant.

Trio beats up Kuwaiti, steals car, bank card at gunpoint

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: Just hours after the Criminal Security Sector in the Interior Ministry resolved the case of a doctor's vehicle theft by arresting an unemployed citizen, a similar incident occurred in Jahra, reports Al-Anba daily.

A 28-year-old citizen reported to Jahra Police Station that he was robbed at gunpoint and had his 2000 South Korean model vehicle stolen.

The victim disclosed that the suspects beat him, stole his mobile phone and bank card, and used the card to purchase items at local grocery stores. The case, which is classified under robbery,

forgery of a bank document and kidnapping, was detailed by the victim, who revealed that at approximately 1:00 am on Wednesday, while his vehicle was parked near a wedding hall in Jahra, three unidentified individuals forcibly stopped him, demanded he exit the car, and drove away with his vehicle.

The perpetrators also took his iPhone 15, wallet containing personal documents, and bank card. The victim stated that his bank card was later used to make purchases totaling KD11. He provided a medical report confirming injuries he got due to the assault, including pain and bruising to his legs and shoulders.

He also submitted details of his vehicle and the one used by the thieves – a white American car – as well as a bank statement showing the fraudulent purchases at a grocery store.

A security source confirmed that the deputy public prosecutor ordered the case to be registered as a felony.

Detectives were instructed to investigate the matter, locate the suspects, and circulate the description of the stolen vehicle.

Jahra detectives also visited the crime scene to review security camera footage around the wedding hall in hopes of quickly resolving the case.

Travel ban on ex-MP lifted

Expat staying in country on forged IDs sent to jail

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: The Criminal Court has decided to lift the travel ban imposed on former MP Muhannad Al-Sayer and has adjourned his case, which includes charges of challenging the powers of His Highness the Amir and spreading false news, until Sunday.

The Public Prosecution had released Al-Sayer on a bail of KD 1,000 on January 7. Al-Sayer denied all the charges against him.

Illegal ID forger jailed: An expatriate, who has been in violation of the Residency Law since 2018, was referred to the Central Prison to serve a one-year sentence for breach of trust, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a security source, the expatriate was found in possession of counterfeit civil identification cards belonging to other individuals with his photo substituted, as well as fraudulent contracts.

The source added that the accused is wanted for multiple charges, including fraud, deception and forgery of official documents. He also owes a citizen KD1,850 and has been wanted by residency affairs investigators, sources disclosed.

I needed it, so I kept it!

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: An expatriate defended his action in a breach of trust case by claiming that he seized a motorcycle to negotiate with the company for an undisclosed amount, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to reports, the legal representative of a delivery company filed a complaint regarding a breach of trust involving a black 2023 Honda motorcycle. The complainant identified the accused as an expatriate born in 1993.

A security source revealed that the case was referred to the Criminal Investigation Department at the Ministry of Interior.

When contacted, the accused voluntarily appeared at the Maidan Hawally Police Station. Asked about the accusation, he admitted to taking the motorcycle. When asked why he kept the motorcycle instead of returning it to the company, he explained that the company had been demanding money from him, and he was attempting to use the motorcycle as a negotiation tool. He also mentioned that he needed a means of transportation.



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Staff must pledge to protect confidential information or face legal action

Education ministry enforces strict data security measures

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: The Information Systems Department at the Ministry of Education issued a declaration of its pledge to regulate the handling of data in the correspondence system in order to guarantee the confidentiality of information and protect it from any violation or unauthorized use, warning that any violation or misuse of data may lead to legal and disciplinary measures against the violator.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the declaration, in which the ministry stated that all users are obligated to read it and agree to its terms before using the system to ensure compliance with security standards and protect the information circulated. The declaration includes a set of controls that prevent sharing data or accounts with any unauthorized parties, in addition to holding the user fully responsible for the accuracy of the data entered into the system. The most important regulation for dealing

with data is classifying all entered information as highly confidential; hence, it is prohibited to disclose it to any unauthorized party. The user bears responsibility for the accuracy of the information he enters, while verifying its correctness before including it in the system. The account is automatically deactivated if it is not used for three months, with the possibility of reactivation upon request. It is prohibited to share personal accounts or passwords with anyone to guarantee data security. The system is only for official purposes au-

thorized by the ministry; so it is prohibited to use for personal or illegal purposes. Users are required to adhere to all policies approved within the ministry regarding information protection and compliance with privacy laws. The form requires documenting the declaration in writing, where the user reads and agrees to the following text: "I, the user, acknowledge that I have read and understood all the terms contained in this declaration, and that I agree to abide by them."

The user must also provide his personal data, including full name, job title, civil identification number, email and signature to ensure full compliance with this pledge. The department stressed the importance of adhering to these regulations to guarantee a safe and confidential electronic environment, warning that any violation will lead to strict legal action. It also affirmed that this is part of the ministry's efforts to enhance digital governance and protect data from breach or misuse.

'Pharmacists essential to Kuwait's health progress'

Al-Awadhi backs pharmacy development

By Marwa Al-Bahravi
Al-Seyassah/ Arab Times staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi affirmed the importance of developing the work of pharmacists in both the public and private sectors, due to the crucial role played by pharmacy professionals, which reflects in the advancement of health services in Kuwait.



Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi delivers his speech.

provide the best services while staying updated with the latest research and developments in the pharmaceutical field, and handling any challenges to further enhance the profession in all its aspects.

The minister stated that the pharmacy sector is one of the most important sectors in the ministry, with pharmacists playing a vital role that the ministry relies on, from requesting medications to distributing, dispensing, and safely disposing of them.

Dr. Al-Awadhi stressed that the ministry's role is to support all sectors, whether during working hours or on social occasions, adding that the ministry is open to any proposals from the Kuwait Pharmaceutical Association and its members aimed at developing the pharmacy profession, and dealing with the challenges they may encounter in their work.

In conclusion, he praised the efforts of pharmacists currently working in hospitals and primary care centers.

In a press statement issued during the Ramadan Ghabga organized by the Kuwait Pharmaceutical Association, Dr. Al-Awadhi commended the outstanding efforts exerted by pharmacists in various health facilities, including hospitals, specialized centers, primary care, and central depart-

ments. He affirmed the ministry's commitment to enhancing the role of professional pharmacists and ensuring they



Minister of Health and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Pharmaceutical Association during the award ceremony.



Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi and the Chairman and Members of the Pharmaceutical Association.



Minister of Health and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Pharmaceutical Association with number of attendees.

New initiative to offer flexible housing options

PAHW inks consultancy contract to develop 3 key residential sites

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) has taken the first executive steps regarding the real estate developer system in a bid to move towards a sustainable housing vision.

Acting Director General of PAHW Rashid Al-Enezi on Monday signed a contract to prepare a consultancy study for the development of three residential sites, marking a milestone in the institution's plan for the initial phase of the real estate developer project.

Minister of State for Municipal and Housing Affairs Abdullah Al-Mishari was present at the signing ceremony, which was held at the PAHW building. He pointed out that this step is part of the plan to implement the real estate developer project in three strategically located sites near the existing urban areas. "These sites are under evaluation, with consultants reviewing their feasibility for the project," he added; while affirming importance of selecting model sites that are close to urban areas to encourage citizens to settle in these areas.

He expressed his satisfaction with the progress, describing it as "a shift in the housing issue," stating that the real estate developer initiative is central to the sustainable housing plan. He said the objective is to provide diverse housing options that cater to varying family needs and preferences. "Housing should not be limited to a single standard," he asserted.

He underscored the importance of flexibility in house sizes; such that families can choose from a plethora of options, including 400-square-meter or 375-square-meter units, ensuring that there is diversity in housing choices, much like the variety available when purchasing a car.

He revealed that the project will initially focus on providing suitable housing alternatives for Kuwaiti families, with plans to expand in order to cover other segments, including unmarried women, if time permits. He acknowledged the challenges in implementing the project, but emphasized that the PAHW has made significant progress. "The collaboration with various government agencies, including the Ministry of Finance, Kuwait Investment Authority and Central Bank of Kuwait, has been crucial to overcoming obstacles related to real estate financing," he added.

He also addressed some challenges posed by Law No. 118/2023, which must be amended to facilitate the project's implementation. "Despite these hurdles, the PAHW has achieved an integrated vision within just four months of the ministry's leadership. This accomplishment is a result of the efforts of the institution's team. We are proud of what we have achieved," he said, expressing confidence in the team's ability to overcome any remaining challenges.

He also pointed out the significant coordination with the private sector, including several real estate development companies and the Real Estate Union, whose feedback was incorporated into the law. He assured that additional policies will be introduced as part of the real estate developer system.

He reiterated that housing remains Kuwait's most pressing issue, with all ministers involved in supporting the PAHW's efforts to fulfill the nation's housing vision.

He considers Law No. 118/2023 as a significant step, facilitating the establishment of companies to develop residential areas economically. "The signing of the consultancy contract is a tangible move toward realizing this vision, with new investment opportunities now opening up," he asserted.

He confirmed that the Board of Directors has approved the activation of three key residential areas -- Nawaf Al-Ahmad, Al-Khiran and Al-Sabriyah; and the initial plans for the main infrastructure in these areas, which will include 150,000 residential units. However, he acknowledged that the real estate developer initiative faces certain restrictions, such as financing mechanisms and land availability. "The ministry is working hard to develop a clear framework to address these issues within the project's execution plan," he said.

He went on to say that while solving the housing problem will inevitably have an impact on the real estate market, the PAHW's goal is to mitigate this impact as much as possible. He also revealed that three sites have been allocated for workers' cities, some of which fall under PAHW's supervision, while others are managed by various other government entities.

Moreover, on behalf of the consultancy firm 'Strategy & Middle East Limited', Karim Abdullah expressed his enthusiasm about being selected as a partner in the development of the three residential sites.

Abdullah, whose company has been operating in Kuwait for more than 25 years, emphasized the importance of this contract; particularly since it is the first to be implemented under the new law, which fosters flexibility in public-private partnerships. He assured that his company will design a model that aligns with PAHW's goals of securing national housing needs, while making the project attractive and feasible for the private sector.



Al-Enezi

Campaign targets outdoor storage violations

Municipality steps up safety inspections

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: Kuwait Municipality has announced the launch of its inspection campaigns by field teams from the safety departments, with the aim of inspecting outdoor storage sites and ensuring that regulations and measures are being implemented, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Public Relations Department at Kuwait Municipality explained that the supervisory team from the Safety Department of Ahmadi Governorate conducted the first field inspection campaign in South Sabahiya, as part of efforts to intensify field tours and ensure compliance

with demolition controls, while addressing safety violations.

The first campaign resulted in the issuance of one violation and five warnings for non-compliance with safety requirements, after inspecting seven demolition sites in South Sabahiya.

Kuwait Municipality has urged all concerned parties to adhere to its regulations and laws, affirming that the safety departments in all governorates will continue to intensify their inspection campaigns to monitor violations and ensure compliance with safety procedures.

PAAET to honor outstanding graduates

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) will soon hold a ceremony to honor outstanding graduates for the academic year 2023/2024.

This recognition demonstrates the authority's appreciation for

the academic achievements of its students. College graduates with a GPA of 3.95 or higher, while institute and course graduates with a perfect 4.0 GPA, will be honored.

All eligible graduates must update their data at the main office of the authority in Shuwaikh Educational Area -- Public Services Building (first floor) from March

11-27, 2025 at 11:00 am until 2:00 pm.

They must submit a personal photo with a white background (size 4 x 6) and a copy of their civil identification card.

PAAET also reaffirmed its commitment to support outstanding students, wishing them continued success in their future endeavors.

No ads in mosques

Awqaf calls for strict adherence to Fatwa

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: The Mosques Sector at the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has urged imams and muezzins to comply with the fatwa issued by the Fatwa Authority; which states it is prohibited to use mosques as platforms for advertising or promoting commercial products or goods, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a recent circular, the sector reiterated the guideline provided by the General Affairs Committee at the Fatwa Authority, which is part of the Fatwa and Sharia Research Sector, regarding the practice of offering free services in mosques by profit-driven entities.

This guideline, issued last year in response to an inquiry, clearly stated that mosques should not serve as venues for commercial advertising.

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: The Emergency Unit at Seef Hospital recently admitted a 60-year-old patient with a history of chronic diseases, suffering from severe breathing difficulties and a rapid heartbeat, reports Al-Anba daily.

Upon arrival at the hospital, the patient's condition quickly deteriorated, putting him in a critical state. The hospital's medical team, including doctors and nurses, acted quickly to stabilize the patient.

Dr. Asim Abdullah, a cardiologist and a fellow at the University of Maxtra in Canada specializing in heart muscle weakness, immediately initiated a series of tests to assess the patient's condition. This included an electrocardiogram and an ultrasound to evaluate the heart muscle's overall health,

identify the root cause of the symptoms, and determine the best course of treatment.

Following the tests, Asim revealed that the patient was suffering from severe heart muscle weakness, with a functioning efficiency of less than 15 percent. This critically low level meant the patient was in a life-threatening condition.

Asim, who oversees the patient's care in the hospital's heart clinic, began immediate and intensive treatment to improve the heart muscle's function.

Over the following months, the patient's condition showed significant improvement, thanks to the dedication of the medical team and strict adherence to international treatment protocols recommended by the American and European Heart as-

sociations. After rigorous treatment and close monitoring, the heart muscle's efficiency increased from 15 percent to 63 percent, surpassing the minimum normal efficiency of 55 percent.

In addition, Public Health Consultant and Head of the Medical Authority at the hospital Dr. Mahmoud Dashti affirmed the hospital's commitment to remain at the forefront of medical advancements. "Seef Hospital continues to evolve by adopting the latest diagnostic and therapeutic technologies. One of the key factors in our success is attracting the best medical professionals and specialists, which allows us to provide top-tier healthcare services under one roof for all our patients," he concluded.

Swift treatment leads to life-saving recovery

Seef Hospital revives critical heart patient

MoSA unveils charity debt relief campaign

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: The Charitable Societies and Charities Department in the Ministry of Social Affairs has asked the boards of directors of the charitable organizations registered in the country to participate in the third national campaign to collect donations for paying the debts of citizens, which will start on March 14 -- in the middle of the holy month of Ramadan, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting sources from the ministry.

Sources disclosed that the ministry, in coordination with the charitable societies and charities, is in the process of completing the regulations and conditions for benefiting from the campaign; indicating that the payment method will be through a unified automated link or through a group of links specific to each charitable organization participating in the campaign.

Sources said the campaign is in compliance with the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to localize charitable work and direct its proceeds locally.

Minister Al-Mutairi sends blessings to Kuwaiti leadership and people

Al-Ghanayem Family hosts warm Ramadan gathering in Andalus

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: The Al-Ghanayem Family hosted a Ramadan gathering at their diwaniya in Andalus, welcoming well-wishers from all segments of society, including sheikhs, officials, citizens and expatriates.

Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi affirmed that such Ramadan gatherings exemplify the strong social bonds in Kuwait, particularly during the holy month. He said these

gatherings promote social cohesion, and strengthen relationships among families and community members.

Al-Mutairi explained that the tradition of exchanging Ramadan greetings and hosting ghabgas in diwanias reflects the authentic values of the Kuwaiti people, fostering love and tolerance.

He expressed greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad

Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah and all the Kuwaiti people, praying for security and safety in Kuwait and the Islamic nation. He added Kuwait will always remain a country of love, peace and humanity; and will continue its path towards development and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince. He wished everyone a blessed Ramadan filled with goodness and blessings.



Minister Al-Mutairi warmly welcomes well-wishers at Al-Ghanayem Ramadan gathering.

Photos by Samer Shaquair

Continued from Page 1

Dear Minister

These debts have essentially become lost and exist only as book entries because the debtors are either deceased, the debt is not inheritable, the heirs cannot repay, or the heirs themselves have passed away.

What is particularly striking is that the entire system appears to be designed to favor the creditor, irrespective of whether the creditor is a usurer, a fraudster, or someone pursuing a questionable agenda.

This does not negate the fact that some debts are legitimate and have valid reasons, such as a failure to provide spousal support. However, if the husband is insolvent, the responsibility falls on zakat houses and charitable organizations. The core principle is to assist individuals in meeting their needs, including those of debtors, the insolvent, and others who struggle to find their daily sustenance.

Unfortunately, this principle is often overlooked when investigating the reasons behind borrowing. The prevailing attitude seems to mirror the harsh sentiment expressed in Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice", where the debtor's flesh is metaphorically cut from their body, rather than receiving assistance. This stands in stark contrast to the example set by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), who passed away with his armor mortgaged to a Jew for thirty sa' of barley.

A few days ago, the Sahel application was modified to allow one trip for the debtor. While the name of the application suggests that it is designed to facilitate people's affairs, the reality is quite the opposite when implemented. The requirement for a certificate from a citizen, even if they leave the country, forces them to return, as they have no homeland other than this one.

Minister of Justice, we are now in an era that should focus on mercy for people. The government should seek to correct errors in the laws, and ensure that we work to ease the lives of citizens rather than filling prisons with the insolvent. Show mercy to those on earth, so that the One in heaven may show mercy to us.

Dear Minister of Justice, in the enforcement courts, when a citizen wants to travel, they are required to pay ten percent of their debt. It is often joked that they claim to be going for medical treatment, but they are still forced to pay this percentage. The cost of treatment may not exceed KD 5,000, yet the person is saddled with a debt of one million dinars, meaning they would have to pay KD 100,000... and we repeat that they are insolvent.

Dear Minister of Justice, is this really a solution? What law justifies preventing a citizen from traveling once, twice, or even three times? Why subject them to such torment? Isn't the pain of the debt enough, especially when some mosque

imams threaten them with hell in the afterlife for not paying?

5th Ring

He emphasized that PART continues to implement its vital projects in line with the highest standards of quality and safety, with the aim of providing a more efficient and sustainable road network.

Kuwait forms

At its first meeting, the Committee shall establish its working system and determine the period for the topics within its jurisdiction.

The Committee has the right to contact any party to obtain the data necessary to carry out its work, and the parties must cooperate.

The Committee's term of office shall be one year, starting from the date of its first meeting. This term may be extended for similar periods by a decision of the cabinet whenever necessary.

All concerned parties shall implement this decree, which shall be effective from the date of its issuance and published in the Official Gazette.

Kuwait's Cabinet issued a decree Tuesday forming a grievance committee for withdrawing and revoking Kuwaiti citizenship, headed by Counselor Ali Musaed Ali Al-Dhubaibi.

The committee is headed by Counselor Ali Musaed Ali Al-Dhubaibi and Abdulwahab Abdulrahman Yousef Al-Muzaini as Vice President, Counselor Khaled Abdulrahman Ahmed Al-Baker, Jamal Khalifa Al-Reesh and Fawaz Suleiman Al-Mashaan as members.

All concerned parties shall implement this decree, and it shall be published in the Official Gazette.

Kuwait backs

Syria's Kurds will gain their "constitutional rights" including using and teaching their language, which were banned for decades under Assad. Hundreds of thousands of Kurds, who were displaced during Syria's nearly 14-year civil war, will return to their homes.

Amir praises

In a speech, His Highness the Amir said "It is a pleasure to us - and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah and the companions - to meet with the Defense Ministry's personnel to congratulate you on the

holy month of Ramadan".

His Highness the Amir prayed to Allah to accept good deeds of all in this month, and return this occasion to the Arab and Islamic nations with goodness and blessings.

His Highness the Amir expressed pride for Kuwait's Armed Forces, its command and personnel as the fortress to safeguard and protect the dear homeland's safety, security, stability and independence.

"In this regard, we are keen on boosting the efficiency and potential of our armed forces and enabling them to achieve their sacred duties and missions in safeguarding the country by air, sea and land. Our support will continue to develop the homeland's capabilities and readiness with keeping pace the development of armament and preparation in line with the high-standards technological standards," His Highness the Amir noted.

His Highness the Amir, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, also visited the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) headquarters, Monday.

Accompanied by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir was received by KNG Chief Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, KNG Deputy Chief Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and KNG Undersecretary Lieu. Gen. Hashim Al-Refai.

During his speech, His Highness said that he was proud of the National Guard for its decades of history and achievements, wishing the KNG's Chief, Deputy Chief, and all officers in the Guard success, as well as congratulating them on the blessed month of Ramadan.

He noted the great effort of the officers and chiefs in various military, security, administrative fields for defending the homeland, supporting security services, protecting vital facilities, and providing support to state institutions.

He appreciated the Guard's support for a number of essential state agencies, including the Ministry of Electricity and Water, the Ministry of Public Works, the Oil Tanker Company, Kuwait Aviation Fueling Company (KAFCO), and others.

His Highness also appreciated the Guard's military exercises that enhance its capabilities and performance, especially the Nasr 20 Command Center Exercise (CPX), with the participation of the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and the United Kingdom.

He admired the Guard's good governance as well as its social responsibility initiatives.

Housing distribution shift despite 100K applications

Disparities seen amid rising demand

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: Despite reaching the milestone of 100,000 housing grant applications, the distribution of housing units over the past seven years has been marked by significant disparity and fluctuation.

A total of 37,255 housing units were distributed -- including 36,735 plots and 520 apartments -- in South Sabah Al-Ahmad, South Saad Al-Abdullah and Jaber Al-Ahmad City projects.

According to housing researcher Hadi Al-Ajmi, whose statistics were obtained by the newspaper, distribution numbers have varied considerably, with some years seeing high distributions while others experienced

notable declines. These fluctuations can be attributed to a variety of factors.

Fiscal 2018/2019 topped the list in terms of distribution with 9,745 plots allocated in South Sabah Al-Ahmad, the highest number during this period. This reflects the government's push at the time to expedite plot delivery for this major project.

In contrast, fiscal 2020/2021 recorded the lowest distribution in seven years, with only 350 apartments distributed in Jaber Al-Ahmad City. Housing specialists attribute this sharp decline to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to delays and disruptions in the implementation of housing projects.

In the current fiscal year (2024/2025), distribution reached its second lowest point, with just 2,601 plots allocated in South Saad Al-Abdullah. This decline followed a more than six-month suspension in housing distributions, as the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW)

temporarily halted work on this file.

In fiscal 2019/2020, a total of 2,951 plots were distributed in South Sabah Al-Ahmad; while the following year, 2021/2022, saw a modest increase with 4,077 housing units allocated, including 110 apartments and 3,967 plots.

Fiscal 2022/2023 marked an uptick with 8,984 plots distributed in South Sabah Al-Ahmad, South Saad Al-Abdullah and Jaber Al-Ahmad; signaling efforts to recover from previous years' slowdowns. Fiscal 2023/2024 followed closely behind with 8,547 housing units distributed -- the second highest after fiscal 2018/2019.

An analysis of the data reveals that the South Sabah Al-Ahmad project accounted for the largest share of distributed units, with other projects seeing varying numbers. While some years featured strong distribution figures; others faced considerable slowdowns, underscoring the ongoing challenges in the country's housing development efforts.



Group photo during the Ramadan Firefighters' Futsal Championship.

KFF photo

Ramadan Firefighters' Futsal Championship concludes

The Ramadan Firefighters' Futsal Championship, organized by the Kuwait Fire Force Sports Union, concluded on Monday evening at the Martyr Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Hall in Al-Daiya.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), the championship, which was held from March 6 to 10, witnessed the participation of eight teams representing various sectors and departments of KFF.

At the end of the final match, Major General Talal Al-Roumi awarded the first and second place trophies to

the winning teams.

The closing ceremony was attended by several senior officials, including the acting Vice President of KFF for the Finance and Administration Sector Brigadier General Mohammad Ali Shamsan, Director of the Ahmadi Governorate Prevention Department Brigadier General Mohsen Muslim Abdullah, Director of the Health Affairs Department and Head of the Sports Federation Colonel Fayed Abdul Aziz Ahmed, along with other senior KFF officials.

'83% of agency's programs gone'

Purge of USAID programs complete: Rubio

WASHINGTON, March 11, (AP): US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Monday the Trump administration had finished its six-week purge of programs of the six-decade-old U.S. Agency for International Development, cutting 83% of them, and said he would move the remaining aid programs under the State Department.

Hours later, a federal judge said President Donald Trump had overstepped his authority in shutting down most foreign assistance, saying the administration could no longer simply sit on the billions of

dollars that Congress had provided for foreign aid. But Judge Amir H. Ali stopped short of ordering Trump officials to use the money to revive the thousands of terminated program contracts.

Rubio made his announcement Monday in a post on X, in one of his few public comments on what has been a historic shift away from U.S. foreign aid and development, executed by Trump political appointees at State and Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency teams.

Rubio in the post thanked DOGE and "our hardworking staff who

worked very long hours to achieve for this overdue and historic reform" in foreign aid.

Trump on Jan. 20 issued an executive order directing a freeze of foreign assistance funding and a review of all U.S. aid and development work abroad. Trump charged that much of foreign assistance was wasteful and advanced a liberal agenda.

Rubio's social media post Monday said that review was now "officially ending," with some 5,200 of USAID's 6,200 programs eliminated. Those programs "spent tens of billions of dollars in ways that did not serve, (and in some cases even harmed), the core national interests of the United States," Rubio wrote.

He said about 1,000 remaining contracts would now be administered by the State Department.

Democratic lawmakers and others call the shutdown of congressionally funded programs illegal, saying such a move requires Congress' approval.

In his preliminary injunction Monday, Ali said Trump could not simply ignore most of what is roughly \$60 billion in foreign assistance funding that was given to USAID and State by Congress, which under the U.S. Constitution has authority to spend money.

"The constitutional power over whether to spend foreign aid is not the President's own - and it is Congress's own," Ali wrote.



United States Agency for International Development (USAID) supporters hold banners as USAID workers retrieve their personal belongings from the USAID's headquarters in Washington on Feb 27. (AP)

CR will pass: Johnson

Republicans march ahead with govt funding bill

WASHINGTON, March 11, (AP): Republicans will face a critical test of their unity when a spending bill that would avoid a partial government shutdown and keep federal agencies funded through September comes up for a vote.

Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., is teeing up the bill for a vote as soon as Tuesday despite the lack of buy-in from Democrats, essentially daring them to oppose it and risk a shutdown that would begin Saturday if lawmakers fail to act.

Republicans will need overwhelming support from their members in both chambers - and some help from Senate Democrats - to get the bill to President Donald Trump's desk. It's one of the biggest legislative tests so far of the Republican president's second term.

"The CR will pass," Johnson told reporters Monday, using Washington shorthand to describe the continuing resolution. "No one wants to shut the government down. We are governing, doing the responsible thing as Republicans. It's going to be up to Chuck Schumer and the Senate Democrats to do the right thing."

The strategy has the backing of Trump, who is calling on Republicans to "remain UNITED - NO DISSENT - Fight for another day when the timing is right."

House Republicans said the bill would trim \$13 billion in non-de-



US House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-NY, (center), flanked by Rep Pete Aguilar, D-Calif. (left), and Rep Katherine Clark, D-Mass., the House minority whip, speaks to reporters outside the House chamber as Republicans prepare a spending bill that would keep federal agencies funded through Sept. 30, at the Capitol, in Washington on March 10. (AP)

fense spending from the levels in the 2024 budget year and increase defense spending by \$6 billion, which are rather flat changes for both categories when compared with an overall top line of nearly \$1.7 trillion in discretionary spending. The bill does not cover the majority of government spending, including Social Security and Medicare. Funding for those two programs is on auto pilot and not regularly reviewed by Congress.

Democrats are mostly worried about the discretion the bill gives the

Trump administration on spending decisions. They are already alarmed by the administration's efforts to make major cuts through the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, run by billionaire Trump adviser Elon Musk. And they say the spending bill would fuel the effort.

"This is not a clean CR. This bill is a blank check," said Rep. Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee. "It's a blank check for Elon Musk and President Trump."

'Trump like a flaming freight train that is igniting everything in its path'

Trump revives fortunes of governments and leaders that talk tough against him

TORONTO, March 11, (AP): Canada's governing Liberal Party appeared poised for a historic election defeat this year. Then Donald Trump declared economic war and threatened to annex the entire country as a 51st state. Now the Canadian Liberals and their new prime minister could come out on top.

Then there's Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, facing a groundswell of visible support at home for her approach to Trump's tariff threats. There's Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who visited the White House last month and was knocked on his heels, then went back to Europe to receive what many offered as a hero's welcome. Even Emmanuel Macron's comeback in French polls might be linked, some say, to his taking a more robust approach with the new US president during recent weeks.

Saying the United States will always do what's best for the United States first, Trump has shaken up decades of international order. In weeks, he has sent leaders of other nations scrambling to shore up their own economies, partnerships and defenses against a Russia threat - and solidify their own polls at home, too.

"Trump is like a flaming freight train that is igniting everything in its path," said Kory Teneycke, a conservative Canadian campaign director. "It's not just a big thing. It's almost the only thing that is moving the electorate right now."

Everyone, it seems, is responding to Trump. But nearly two months after his blizzard of executive orders, threats and trade wars, some leaders are steadying their messages with defiance and plans - not that they will necessarily change the Trump admin-



US President Donald Trump speaks to reporters aboard Air Force One as he travels to New Orleans on Feb 9. (AP)

istration's approach to it all.

For great swaths of the European continent, Trump's reversal of three years of support for Ukraine after Russia's invasion was received as an existential matter. Trump's false claim that Zelenskyy started the war - and the American president's thrashing of Zelenskyy in the Oval Office Feb. 28 - undermined 80 years of cooperation with Europe on the understanding that the U.S. would help protect those nations from the Russian threat after World War II. Trump also limited Ukraine's access to intelligence and weaponry.

The confrontation laid bare the limits of a full-court press by America's allies aimed at reshaping Trump's determination to end Russia's invasion even if the terms are not to Ukraine's liking. And a lot of Europe didn't like it much.

Leaders immediately backed up the Ukrainian president on social media. Visual confirmation came the next day, when British Prime Minister Keir Starmer enveloped Zelenskyy in a hug in front of 10 Downing Street for all to see. It was a visual hint at what one historian suggests could happen: "Oddly enough, NATO might become kind of an anti-Trump alliance," said Robert Bothwell, a professor of Canadian history and international relations at the University of Toronto. "He's doing a good job of creating that."

That could happen reasonably quickly; some European leaders are already understanding that Trump is setting them adrift to face Russia alone.

For years, Trump had complained that NATO allies weren't contributing enough to Europe's defense.

Transition will be quick after meeting with Trudeau: Carney

TORONTO, March 11, (AP): Canada's next prime minister met with outgoing prime minister Justin Trudeau on Monday and vowed a quick transition.

Mark Carney said he had a long meeting with Trudeau in which they discussed US-Canada relations, national security issues and the timing of the handover in power.

"That transition will be seamless and it will be quick," said Carney, adding there would be an announcement soon.

Carney, a two-time central bank chief, will become prime minister after the governing Liberal Party elected him its leader Sunday in a landslide vote with 85.9% support.

Carney, 59, replaces Trudeau who announced his resignation in January but remains prime minister until his successor is sworn in.

Carney is widely expected to trigger a parliamentary election in the coming days or weeks amid US President Donald Trump's sweeping tariff and annexation threats. Or the opposition parties in Parliament could force one with a no-confidence vote later this month.

Carney is a former Goldman Sachs executive with no experience in politics.

He navigated crises when he was the head of the Bank of Canada from 2008, and then in 2013 when he became the



Canada's Liberal Leader Mark Carney, (left), arrives at the West Block of Parliament Hill with Liberal member of Parliament Marco Mendicino in Ottawa, Canada, on March 10. (AP)

first non-citizen to run the Bank of England since it was founded in 1694. His appointment won bipartisan praise in the UK after Canada recovered from the 2008 financial crisis faster than many other countries. He helped manage the worst impacts of Brexit in the UK.

Ukraine-US talks on ending war with Russia start in Saudi Arabia as Kyiv launches huge drone attack

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, March 11, (AP): High-stakes talks between senior delegations from Ukraine and the United States on how to end Kyiv's three-year war with Moscow opened in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, hours after Russian air defenses shot down 337 Ukrainian drones over Russia.

Two people were killed and 18 were injured, including three children, in the massive drone attack that spanned 10 Russian regions, officials said. No large-scale damage was reported.

In the Red Sea port city of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, journalists briefly entered a room where senior Ukrainian delegation met with America's top diplomat for talks on ending Europe's biggest conflict since World War II.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio smiled for the cameras. Asked what his expectations for the meeting were, Rubio gave a thumbs up and replied, "Good."

Ukrainian officials, including the country's top diplomat and defense chief, sat without expression at a table across from them as the meeting got underway at a luxury hotel. There was no immediate comment from Ukrainian or US officials on the



From left: US National Security Advisor Mike Waltz, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, Saudi National Security Advisor Mosaad bin Mohammad al-Aiban, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha, and Ukrainian Head of Presidential Office Andriy Yermak hold a meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on March 11. (AP)

drone attack.

However, Ukrainian presidential aide Andriy Yermak commented to reporters that the most important

thing was "how to achieve a just and lasting peace in Ukraine." He said security guarantees were important to prevent Russia from invading again

in the future. In 2014, Russia seized Crimea from Ukraine.

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister was on hand for the talks as American, Saudi and Ukrainian flags stood in the background. Officials did not answer any of the shouted questions.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the United States will inform Russia about the results of the Jeddah talks, which he described as "normal practice." The talks offer an opportunity for Kyiv officials to repair Ukraine's relationship with Trump's administration after an unprecedented argument erupted during President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's Feb. 28 visit to the White House. Critically, Ukraine needs to persuade Washington to end the subsequent U.S. suspension of military aid and some intelligence sharing. U.S. officials have said that positive talks in Jeddah could mean it may be only a short suspension.

Ukrainian officials told The Associated Press on Monday that they will propose a ceasefire covering the Black Sea, which would bring safer shipping, as well long-range missile strikes that have hit civilians in Ukraine, and the release of prisoners.

Polls open in Greenland for parliamentary elections as Trump seeks control of island

NUUK, Greenland, March 11, (AP): Polls opened in Greenland for early parliamentary elections Tuesday as US President Donald Trump seeks control of the strategic Arctic island.

The self-governing region of Denmark is home to 56,000 people, most from Indigenous Inuit backgrounds, and occupies a strategic North Atlantic location. It also contains rare earth

minerals key to driving the global economy.

Unofficial election results should be available soon after polls close at 2200 GMT Tuesday, but they won't be certified for weeks as ballot papers make their way to the capital from remote settlements by boat, plane and helicopter.

While the island has been on a path

toward independence since at least 2009, a break from Denmark isn't on the ballot even though it's on everyone's mind. Voters on Tuesday will instead elect 31 lawmakers who will shape the island's debate on when and if to declare independence in the future.

The single polling station in Greenland's capital city, Nuuk, is ready.

This big Arctic island with a tiny population holds early parliamentary elections Tuesday that are being closely watched. Trump has made clear he wants to take control of the region that occupies a strategic North Atlantic location and contains rare earth minerals key to driving the global economy.

Now, Greenlanders are debating the best way to ensure they control their future.

"I think most of us have been scared since the new year because of (Trump's) interest," Pipaluk Lyngge, a member of parliament from the ruling Inuit Ataqatigiit, or United Inuit party, told The Associated Press. "So we're really, really looking to Europe right now to see if we could establish a stronger bond with them to secure our sovereign nation."

Opinion polls show most Greenlanders favor independence.



NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte speaks during lecture at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Sarajevo, Bosnia on March 10. (AP)

NATO chief vows 'unwavering' support for Bosnia's integrity

NATO's secretary general on Monday pledged the military alliance's "unwavering" support for Bosnia's territorial integrity after a series of Bosnian Serb separatist moves raised tensions nearly 30 years after the end of a bloody war.

Mark Rutte spoke in Sarajevo after meeting the three members of the Balkan country's multi-ethnic

presidency, an institution established in a peace accord that ended the 1992-95 conflict among the Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats after more than 100,000 people died.

"Three decades after the Dayton Peace Agreement, I can tell you: NATO remains firmly committed to the stability of this region and to the security of Bosnia and Herzegovina," Rutte said. "We will not allow hard-won peace to be jeopardized."

Rutte called any actions that undermine the accord, the constitutional order or national institutions "unacceptable," and added: "Inflammatory rhetoric and actions are dangerous. They pose a direct threat to Bosnia and Herzegovina's stability and security." (AP)



People vote during an early voting for Greenlandic parliamentary elections at the city hall in Nuuk, Greenland on March 10. (AP)

Surprise arrest sparks commotion at airport

Ex-president Duterte arrested in Philippines on ICC warrant over drug killings

MANILA, Philippines, March 11, (AP): Former Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte was arrested Tuesday on a warrant from the International Criminal Court accusing him of crimes against humanity over deadly anti-drugs crackdowns he oversaw while in office, the Philippine government said.

Duterte was taken into custody at the Manila international airport after arriving from Hong Kong with his family, becoming the first former Asian leader to be arrested by the global court. He was later driven to the nearby Villamor Air Base. It was unclear where he would be taken next by authorities.

Clad in a dark jacket, an irate Duterte protested his arrest after arrival and asked authorities the legal basis of his being taken into custody. His lawyers immediately asked the Supreme Court in Manila to block any attempt to transport him out of the Philippines to be handed over to the ICC in Europe.

"Show to me now the legal basis for my being here," Duterte asked authorities in remarks captured on video by his daughter, Veronica Duterte, who posted it on social media. "You have to answer now for the deprivation of liberty."

The surprise arrest sparked a commotion at the airport, where lawyers and aides of Duterte loudly protested that they, along with a doctor and lawyers, were prevented from coming close to him after he was taken into police custody. "This is a violation of his constitutional right," Sen. Bong Go, a close Duterte ally, told reporters.

The ICC has been investigating mass killings in crackdowns overseen by Duterte when he served as mayor of the southern Philippine city of Davao and later as president. Estimates of the death toll of the crackdown under Duterte as president vary, from more than 6,000 that the national police have reported up to 30,000 claimed by human rights groups.

"Upon his arrival, the prosecutor general served the ICC notification for an arrest warrant to the former president for crime against humanity," the government said. "He's now in the custody of authorities."

The warrant of arrest sent by the ICC to Philippine officials, a copy of which was seen by The Associated Press, said "there are reasonable grounds to believe that" the attack on victims "was both widespread and systematic: the attack



Salvador Panelo, center, former presidential spokesman and chief presidential legal counsel during the Duterte administration tries to enter the gates of Villamor air base where former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte is being held after he was arrested on March 11, near Manila, Philippines. (AP)

took place over a period of several years and thousands of people appear to have been killed."

Duterte's arrest was necessary "to ensure his appearance before the court," according to the March 7 warrant, adding that the former president was expected to ignore court summons.

Although Duterte is no longer president, he "appears to continue to wield

considerable power," it said.

"Mindful of the resultant risk of interference with the investigations and the security of witnesses and victims, the chamber is satisfied that the arrest of Mr. Duterte is necessary."

There was no immediate comment on Duterte's arrest from the court or the ICC prosecutor's office in The Hague, Netherlands.

Duterte's arrest and downfall stunned families of slain victims of his crackdown and drove some to tears. Some immediately gathered in a street rally to express their relief.

"This is a big, long-awaited day for justice," Randy delos Santos, the uncle of a teenager gunned down by police in a dark riverside alley during an anti-drug operation in suburban Caloocan city in August 2017 in the capital region, told the AP.

"Now we feel that justice is rolling. We hope that top police officials and the hundreds of police officers who were involved in the illegal killings should also be placed in custody and punished," delos Santos said.

Three of the police officers who killed his nephew, Kian delos Santos, were convicted in 2018 for the high-profile murder, which prompted Duterte at the time to temporarily suspend his anti-drugs crackdown.

The conviction was one of only around three so far against law enforcers involved in the anti-drugs campaign, reflecting the concerns of families of victims of suspected extrajudicial killings that they would not get justice in the Philippines, hence their decision to seek the help of the ICC.

Former Sen. Antonio Trillanes, one of the harshest critics of Duterte who led the filing of a complaint against him before the ICC said the arrest was historic and a major blow to state impunity and tyranny anywhere in the world.

"This is like the downfall of an emperor," Trillanes told the AP. "The next step now is to make sure that all his followers who have committed criminal transgressions like him should also be held to account."

The government said the 79-year-old former leader was in good health and was examined by government doctors following his arrest.

'Nervous and rushed'

Fukushima plant cleanup exposes workers to high radiation

OKUMA, Japan, March 11, (AP): The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant's radiation levels have significantly dropped since the cataclysmic meltdown 14 years ago Tuesday. Workers walk around in many areas wearing only surgical masks and regular clothes.

It's a different story for those who enter the reactor buildings, including the three damaged in the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. They must use maximum protection - full facemasks with filters, multi-layered gloves and socks, shoe covers, hooded hazmat coveralls and a waterproof jacket, and a helmet.

As workers remove melted fuel debris from the reactors in a monumental nuclear cleanup effort that could take more than a century, they are facing both huge amounts of psychological stress and dangerous levels of radiation.

The Associated Press, which recently visited the plant for a tour and interviews, takes a closer look.

A remote-controlled extendable robot with a tong had several mishaps including equipment failures before returning in November with a tiny piece of melted fuel from inside the damaged No. 2 reactor.

That first successful test run is a crucial step in what will be a daunting, decades-long decommissioning



Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings (TEPCO) employees speak as they take AP journalists to the area at the Unit 5 reactor pressure vessel, which survived the earthquake-triggered tsunami in 2011, at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, run by TEPCO, in Futaba town, northeastern Japan, on Feb. 20. (AP)

that must deal with at least 880 tons of melted nuclear fuel that has mixed with broken parts of internal structures and other debris inside the three ruined reactors.

Akira Ono, chief decommissioning officer at the Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, which manages the plant, says even the tiny sample

gives officials a lot of information about the melted fuel. More samples are needed, however, to make the work smoother when bigger efforts to remove the debris begin in the 2030s.

A second sample-retrieval mission at the No. 2 reactor is expected in coming weeks.

Operators hope to send the extend-

able robot farther into the reactor to take samples closer to the center, where overheated nuclear fuel fell from the core, utility spokesperson Masakatsu Takata said. He pointed out the target area as he stood inside the inner structure of the No. 5 reactor, which is one of two reactors that survived the tsunami. It has an identical design as No. 2.

Radiation levels are still dangerously high inside the No. 2 reactor building, where the melted fuel debris is behind a thick concrete containment wall. Earlier decontamination work reduced those radiation levels to a fraction of what they used to be.

In late August, small groups took turns doing their work helping the robot in 15- to 30-minute shifts to minimize radiation exposure. They have a remotely controlled robot, but it has to be manually pushed in and out.

"Working under high levels of radiation (during a short) time limit made us feel nervous and rushed," said Yasunobu Yokokawa, a team leader for the mission. "It was a difficult assignment."

Full-face masks reduced visibility and made breathing difficult, an extra waterproof jacket made it sweaty and hard to move, and triple-layered gloves made their fingers clumsy, Yokokawa said.

Groups urge United Nations probe of its Myanmar envoy

BANGKOK, March 11, (AP): Activist groups are calling for the United Nations to investigate its special envoy to Myanmar over possible conflicts of interest, after a report detailed her consulting company's alleged ties to Chinese mining and construction companies with interests in the country.



Bishop

Justice for Myanmar wrote to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres following a report in Australia's The Saturday Paper outlining what it said were Julie Bishop's links to Chinese state-owned companies that operate in Myanmar. Since then, multiple other groups have joined the call for a probe.

Bishop, a former Australian foreign minister and current chancellor of the Australian National University, has not commented on those links. There was no response to a query sent to her consulting

company.

Myanmar, also known as Burma, is embroiled in a civil war where the country's military rulers are fighting pro-democracy and other forces. China is one of the major suppliers of weapons to the military, which seized power from democratically elected Aung San Suu Kyi in 2021. Chinese-backed mining and construction projects are also a major source of revenue for Myanmar's military government.

Bishop's links to Chinese and other companies with interests in Myanmar create "unacceptable conflicts of interest that must be fully investigated," Justice for Myanmar wrote to Guterres.

"The loss of trust of Myanmar civil society is a critical issue for the special envoy's position since her mandate involves engagement with civil society, among other relevant stakeholders," the group's spokesperson Yadanar Muang told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

In a statement sent to The Australian newspaper, Bishop's company said it was "a private-advisory firm engaged to provide strategic analysis and guidance."



Emergency officials stand next to a bus that overturned on a highway in Johannesburg, South Africa on March 11 killing multiple people and injuring some. (AP)

South Africa bus accident kills 12

JOHANNESBURG, March 11, (AP): A bus overturned on a highway Tuesday and passengers were thrown out of it, killing at least 12 people and injuring 45 in the South African city of Johannesburg, emergency services said.

Emergency crews were trying to lift the bus back onto its wheels to see if any more victims were trapped underneath it, said William Nthladi, a spokesperson for the city's Ekurhuleni Emergency Management.

"On arrival we found patients lying across the road," Nthladi said.

The early-morning crash happened on a highway near Johannesburg's main O.R. Tambo International Airport. The bus was lying on its side near the edge of the highway.

Guatemala's Volcano of Fire erupts, forces evacuations

SAN JUAN ALOTENANGO, Guatemala, March 11, (AP): Guatemala's Volcano of Fire is erupting, and authorities have evacuated nearly 300 families while warning that another 30,000 people in the area could be at risk.

The eruption started overnight. There is no immediate report of casualties. The 12,300-foot (3,763-meter) high volcano is one of the most active in Central America. It last erupted in June 2023.

The volcano spewed gas and ash far into the sky Monday, leading authorities to close schools in the vicinity and a key road connecting communities.

Claudine Ugalde, secretary of the disaster agency, said "some 30,000 people more or less are at risk in these three (jurisdictions) and we are trying to have them evacuate or self-evacuate," she said.

The biggest danger from the volcano are lahars, a mixture of ash, rock, mud and debris, that can bury entire towns.

A 2018 eruption killed 194 people and left another 234 missing. Isaac García, 43, a resident of El Porvenir on the slopes of the volcano, had that tragedy in mind when he and his family decided to heed authorities' warnings to evacuate early Monday.

"We were a little worried because a few years ago the volcano became active," García said, referencing the 2018 eruption, as he spoke with a mask to protect against the falling ash. He came to a shelter opened in San Juan Alotenango with his mother, wife and their three children, as well as other relatives.

The volcano is 33 miles (53 km) from Guatemala's capital.



The 'Volcan de Fuego,' or Volcano of Fire, blows a cloud of ash seen from Palin, Guatemala on March 10. (AP)

Uganda deploys troops to S.Sudan

KAMPALA, Uganda, March 11, (AP): Uganda has deployed an unknown number of troops to South Sudan in a bid to protect the fragile government of President Salva Kiir as a tense rivalry with his deputy threatens a return to civil war in the east African nation.

Ugandan special forces have been deployed to Juba, the South Sudanese capital, "to support the government of South Sudan" against a possible rebel advance on the city, said Maj. Gen. Felix Kulayigye, a spokesperson for the Ugandan military.

"We sent a force there two days ago," he said. "We are not there for peacekeeping."

In deploying Ugandan soldiers to South Sudan underscores rising tensions in the oil-producing country that has been plagued by political instability and violence since it gained independence from Sudan in 2011.

The U.S. on Sunday ordered nonemergency government personnel to leave Juba. The U.N. is warning of "an alarming regression that could erase years of hard-won progress" in South Sudan.

Castillo, detained since Dec. 7, 2022 after a televised speech in which he declared the dissolution of Congress and his intent to rule by decree, said on his social networks that he has begun a hunger strike to protest "injustices committed against me."

Castillo claimed that Judge Norma Carbajal, who previously stated armed rebellion "does not require physical violence," has prejudged his case



Waves lap the beach where remains of Afeli Bernice Adzo's family home stand after it was destroyed by coastal erosion in Avegadzi, Ghana, on March 5. (AP)

'We don't have anywhere to go'

Rising seas, waves sweep away homes in Ghana

AGAVEDZI, Ghana, March 11, (AP): Pieces of this coastal Ghana community disappear into the sea when heavy waves batter the shore - sweeping away houses and land, threatening to unearth bodies buried in cemeteries and devastating parts of Agavedzi, where generations of families have built homes and lives.

Rising seas and stronger tidal waves, made worse by climate change, have eroded miles of coastline, chewing inland at an alarming rate, say residents, who have pleaded with government officials for sea barriers.

The latest blows came in recent weeks, with waves destroying another 51 houses and displacing about 300

people in Agavedzi and nearby communities, local officials say.

At times the waves hit Makafui Atayi's house so hard that the walls shake, so the family sleeps outside. Some people wander the streets until morning.

Her father's first house "was utterly destroyed" by tidal waves in 2019, forcing many family members to relocate to the current house, which is over 80 years old and where her father lived for years before he died.

At one time, 25 people lived in what once was a 10-unit home. After the battering in recent weeks, there are two rooms and about 11 people left, Atayi said, adding "We don't have anywhere to go."

Atayi also owns a hair salon in a building that's on the verge of collapse. When that happens, she will be out of business.

The waves usually came in the evening, washing against the walls of the home where Afeli Bernice Adzo and her family slept. Sometimes they would subside for a week, sometimes months or years before hitting them again.

Recently, the walls collapsed and the 10-room home owned by her grandparents - where she was born and raised - was left in shambles, partial walls standing in the sands and much of it swept out to sea. They've been sleeping in a fuel station nearby, knowing they can be kicked out at any time.

Former Peruvian president announces hunger strike

LIMA, Peru, March 11, (AP): Former Peruvian president Pedro Castillo said Monday that he was beginning a hunger strike in protest of the start of an oral trial against him for the alleged crime of rebellion. The prosecution has requested 34 years in prison for the former president.

Castillo, detained since Dec. 7, 2022 after a televised speech in which he declared the dissolution of Congress and his intent to rule by decree, said on his social networks that he has begun a hunger strike to protest "injustices committed against me."

Castillo claimed that Judge Norma Carbajal, who previously stated armed rebellion "does not require physical violence," has prejudged his case

by "forcing the criminal type of 'rebellion' against him."

Castillo, 55, described his trial as "politicized" and a "pantomime" in previous sessions, and has refused legal counsel provided by the judicial system.

He denied committing rebellion during the trial's opening last week, claiming, "The only thing I did was convey the people's desire through a political speech."

The Public Ministry accused Castillo for his attempt to dissolve Parliament on Dec. 7, 2022 to avoid a vote seeking his removal due to allegations of "permanent moral incapacity" to govern. Castillo did not achieve his goal because Congress removed him, he was sent to jail and his then vice president Dina Boluarte assumed power. More than 50 civilians died during three months of protests in the Andean country.

Castillo, a former union leader and rural school teacher who won Peru's 2021 election with a surprise victory over the nation's political establishment, faces another investigation by the prosecutor's office for alleged acts of corruption during his government.

Kuwait oil price rises to \$73.61 pb

KUWAIT CITY, March 11, (KUNA): The price of Kuwait oil went up by 58 cents on Monday as opposed to Friday's USD 73.61 pb, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday.

The prices of the Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate each went down by USD 1.08 and USD 1.01 to settle respectively at USD 69.28 per barrel and USD 66.03 pb.

Business

In an interview with Global Finance magazine

AlShamlan: Kuwait's economic reforms pave the way for significant opportunities for financial institutions

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: Group CEO of Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Khaled Yousef AlShamlan said that in 2024, Kuwait's economy demonstrated resilience amid global economic challenges. He added that the banking sector in Kuwait maintained stability, benefiting from increased financing activity and improved asset quality.

"Looking ahead to 2025, Kuwait's economy is expected to continue its positive trajectory, driven by diversification efforts. The banking sector is likely to experience further growth through digital transformation initiatives and increased investment in non-oil sectors, presenting opportunities for innovation and expansion," AlShamlan explained in an interview with Global Finance magazine. "There will be more reliance on AI and robotics as adopting generative AI promises improvements in decision-making, profitability, fraud detection and prevention, and better risk man-

agement." Meanwhile, AlShamlan said that "Kuwait's economic reforms are paving the way for significant opportunities for financial institutions. Initiatives aimed at enhancing the business environment, such as public-private partnerships and regulatory simplifications, will facilitate greater investment inflows. Moreover, the push for digital banking and fintech solutions presents avenues for institutions to enhance service delivery and customer engagement. Overall, these reforms create a conducive environment for sustained growth and collaboration in the financial sector."

He added that Kuwait is now finalizing a new mortgage law. This would positively impact KFH and the banking sector in general.

Regarding sectors with the greatest growth potential, AlShamlan noted opportunities in those critical to global economic infrastructure and energy needs, specifically oil and gas, construction, and related



Khaled AlShamlan

services. These sectors offer particularly strong growth prospects in the coming years.

He further said that innovation and technology represent some of the most dynamic sectors for growth. "As digital transformation accelerates, the potential for innovation to drive economic progress is significant. The technology sector is



KFH branch

crucial for this transformation, with advancements in areas such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, fintech, cyber security, and automation that reshape the future."

"At KFH, we capitalize on the

long-term potential in these sectors by leveraging our strong financial expertise. We are committed to supporting the growth and transformation of these industries, while also contributing to their sustainability

and efficiency," he added.

Challenges

During the interview, AlShamlan discussed challenges of current global uncertainty, inflation, and market volatility. He emphasized that KFH has effectively managed these challenges through a comprehensive approach centered on asset and liability management, hedging strategies, repricing strategies, capital adequacy, stress testing, and active oversight.

Moreover, he highlighted that one of the operational challenges is for banks to ensure that the changing business models adhere to the state-of-the-art cyber security standards going forward to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of the digital assets and protect them from the threat of malicious actors. "Also, the rapid change of the financial landscape could be a challenge, thus banks should keep abreast of development by increasing productivity through digital economy and sustainable finance," AlShamlan concluded.

Boursa Kuwait closes lower, general index plunges 0.87%

Major 50 index falls by 0.95%

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: Boursa Kuwait closed trading on Tuesday with its general index dropping 70.48 points (0.87%) to settle at 7,996.88 points. A total of 418.3 million shares changed hands through 19,319 transactions, amounting to KD 118.5 million (\$364.9 million).

The Main Market Index slipped 49.12 points (0.65%) to

7,461.37 points, with 307.5 million shares traded in 10,140 transactions valued at KD 73.2 million (\$225.4 million).

The Premier Market Index saw a steeper decline, losing 79.35 points (0.92%) to close at 8,525.33 points. It recorded a turnover of 110.7 million shares across 9,179 transactions, worth KD 45.2 million (\$139.2 million).

Meanwhile, the Major 50 Index dropped 70.41 points (0.95%) to 7,366.79 points, with 289.5 million shares traded in 8,957 transactions, totaling KD 70.6 million (\$217.4 million).

PIF drives growth in Saudi tourism

Saudi PIF unveils Al Waha Duty-Free, first Saudi-owned retailer

RIYADH, March 11, (Xinhua): Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF) announced Monday the launch of Al Waha Duty-Free Company, a travel retailer and the first Saudi-owned duty-free operator.

"By establishing Al Waha as a national travel retail champion, PIF intends to grow the Saudi travel retail industry and further support its ambitions for the tourism sector in Saudi Arabia," PIF's Head of Consumer Goods and Retail in the MENA Investments Division, Majed Al-Assaf said in a statement.

According to the statement, Al Waha will develop luxury retail outlets at select locations across the country, offering a diverse range of merchandise, including premium Saudi products.

The company will operate duty-free airport outlets and explore expansion opportunities at land border crossings, seaports, and inflight shopping channels.

The announcement follows a series of investments by the PIF in tourism, aviation, and retail.

MENA investors dominate DAMAC's \$750 mln Sukuk allocation

Warba arranges Sukuk Issuances for Sharjah Islamic Bank and DAMAC Real Estate Development Limited

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: Warba Bank announced the successful issuance of Sharjah Islamic Bank's USD 500 million Senior Unsecured Sukuk offering, which attracted large regional and global subscription. The Sukuk was issued at a fixed profit rate of 5.20%. The issuance was priced at a discount, with a reoffer price of 99.566% to yield 5.30%.

The Bank acted as Joint Lead Manager and Joint Bookrunner on the transaction alongside Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank, Ajman Bank, Bank ABC, Dubai Islamic Bank, Emirates NBD Capital, HSBC, Mashreq Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector.

Books opened on Wednesday, February 19th, 2025, and closed on the same day, after receiving great interest from regional and international investors, and reaching USD 1.7 billion, three times the issuance size.

Warba Bank also announced the successful issuance of DAMAC Real Estate Development's USD 750 million Senior unsecured Sukuk, which matures in three and a half years. The Sukuk was issued at a fixed profit rate of 7.00%. The transaction was jointly led by Abu Dhabi Com-



Thuwaini Al-Thuwaini

mercial Bank, Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank, Dubai Islamic Bank, Emirates NBD Capital, Goldman Sachs International, HSBC, J.P. Morgan, Mashreq Bank and Warba Bank. The Sukuk were listed on the Global Exchange Market of Euronext Dublin.

The strong demand for DAMAC Sukuk was supported by its diverse allocation, which saw large participation from institutional investors across the globe. Banks, specifically private banks, acquired the largest share of 52% of the total issuance allocation, a clear indication of the banking sector's confidence in DAMAC's credit profile. Fund Manag-

Al-Thuwaini:

- The strong participation in both transactions reflects growing investor confidence in Sharia-compliant financial instruments
- Warba's expertise in Sukuk has gained global recognition, strengthening its position as a leader in providing Islamic debt instruments to investors and issuers

ers accounted for 43% of the total allocation, underscoring the increasing appetite in Sharia-compliant assets. Corporates, central banks and public institutions, in addition to insurance companies and pension funds collectively represented the remaining 5%, showing strategic interest in the Sukuk as it enables balance sheet management and diversification of assets.

As for geographic distribution, investors from the Middle East and North Africa region were the largest subscribers, accounting for 56% of the total issuance, followed by the United Kingdom, Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and lastly the United States.

Speaking of the issuance, Chief Investment Banking Officer at

Warba Bank, Thuwaini Khaled Al-Thuwaini, said, "We have successfully closed the Sukuk issuance with a strong participation and confidence from markets. This clearly demonstrates the credibility of Warba Bank's strategic vision, its contributions, and its remarkable success in completing this issuance, which not only reflects a solid offering but also serves as clear evidence of the market's confidence and the growing diversity in the Sukuk sector."

Al-Thuwaini emphasized the significance of Islamic financing tools and their role in strengthening global financial markets, a trend evidenced by growing international investor interest in subscribing to Sukuks recently issued by companies and banks in our region.

Ukraine thanks Saudi for support

Saudi Arabia and Ukraine strengthen economic ties

JEDDAH, March 11, (KUNA): Saudi Arabia and Ukraine praised their close economic ties and underscored the importance of joint efforts to expand trade and investment, according to a joint statement issued at the conclusion of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's official visit to Jeddah.

The Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported that both sides welcomed the re-establishment of the Saudi-Ukrainian Business Council as part of their commitment to enhancing trade and investment relations.

The statement emphasized the two countries' determination to foster promising investment and economic partnerships in key sectors, including energy, food industries, and infrastructure.

Both sides agreed on the need to overcome challenges hindering trade relations, intensify official and business delegation visits, and encourage joint projects, particularly those aligned with Saudi Vision 2030 and Ukraine's reconstruction programs.

They also agreed to facilitate direct engagement between the public and private sectors through workshops, investment forums, and business events aimed at fostering a conducive investment environment and addressing obstacles faced by investors.

In the energy sector, both countries expressed interest in exploring cooperation in oil, gas, petrochemicals, and their derivatives, and they also emphasized the importance of expanding private-sector partnerships in agriculture.

Beyond economic matters, the statement noted that Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman received President Zelensky on Monday at Al-Salam Palace in Jeddah.

During their official talks, both leaders exchanged views on regional and global issues and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral relations across various fields.

The statement also highlighted Saudi Arabia's efforts to achieve a lasting, just, and comprehensive peace in Ukraine, expressing hope that these efforts will contribute to resolving the crisis in accordance with international law and the United Nations Charter, including respect for sovereignty and internationally recognized borders.

Saudi Arabia further reiterated its humanitarian support for Ukraine, while President Zelensky expressed gratitude for the Kingdom's aid and development assistance.

The Ukrainian president congratulated Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Riyadh's successful bid to host Expo 2030 and Saudi Arabia's selection as the host country for the 2034 FIFA World Cup.

Economy, business models support GCC corporate credit quality despite geopolitics

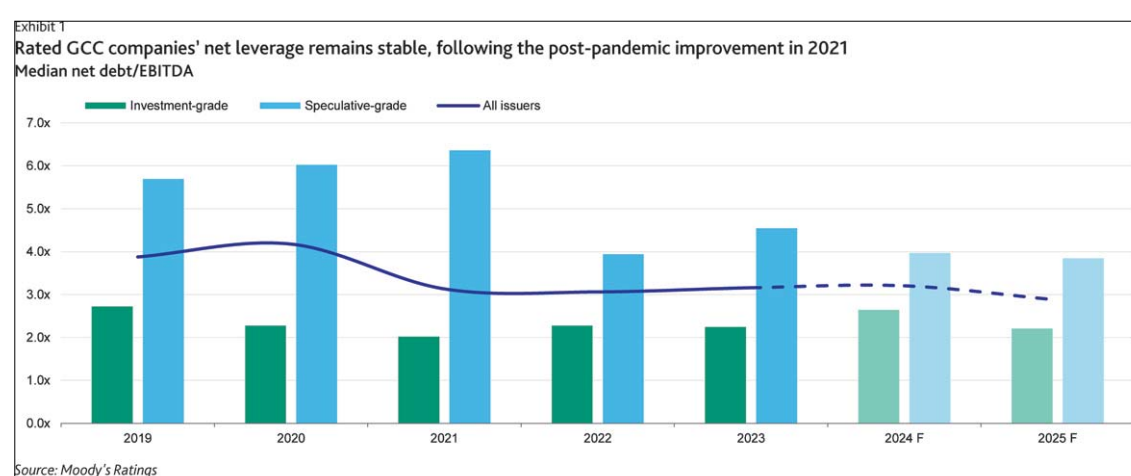
By Moody's Ratings

Many rated Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) companies have strong credit quality thanks to sound economic and operating conditions, robust business models, sound operating execution and prudent financial discipline. This translates into good financial performance, strong credit metrics and solid liquidity which are likely to be sustained over the next 12 months. Many companies have features that mitigate geopolitical risks, which have had a limited effect so far on credit quality.

Many rated GCC issuers have strong balance sheets, low leverage and sizeable cash buffers, which translates into robust credit quality. Financial performance remains sound and financial management is prudent, which will help these companies sustain solid credit metrics in 2025, with median net leverage at around 3.0x EBITDA. Higher debt issuance in 2024 supports liquidity.

Many rated issuers have features that mitigate geopolitical risks. Still heightened geopolitical tensions despite ceasefire agreements remain the main source of near-term credit risk in the region. However, GCC companies have some operational mitigants that could alleviate external shocks, including geographic diversification of operating assets, alternative supply routes or a focus on domestic markets. Qatari issuers are more exposed than others. Geopolitical tensions leading to hostilities in the region have had a limited economic impact on companies so far.

Macroeconomic conditions are favourable for domestic-oriented sectors such as homebuilders, telecoms and utilities. Supportive oil prices and economic diversifica-



tion will drive steady growth for non-hydrocarbon sectors. The United Arab Emirates' (Aa2 stable) economy is likely to grow by 3.8% in 2024 and 4.8% in 2025, driven by non-hydrocarbon sectors. The UAE real estate market remains strong thanks to expatriate inflow and positive market sentiment. Saudi Arabia's (Aa3 stable) economic diversification is robust, and we expect growth of 3.3% in 2025 and 4.8% in 2026. Recent rating actions on Qatar (Aa2 stable), Saudi Arabia and Oman (Ba1 positive) signal solid operating conditions in the region and strength-

ening capacity to support issuers.

Very strong operating profiles help exporters such as national oil and gas companies and petrochemical producers sustain strong performance through industry cycles. Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Aramco, Aa3 stable) stands out with its immense operational scale, low production costs and downstream integration. QatarEnergy (Aa2 stable) benefits from vast low-cost gas reserves; a focus on liquefied natural gas (LNG), which alleviates the carbon transition risk; and ongoing expansion of production assets. GCC petrochemi-

cal companies leverage low-cost feedstock and efficient and relatively modern facilities to compete globally.

Many rated GCC issuers have strong balance sheets, low leverage and sizeable cash buffers, which translates into robust credit quality.

Many rated GCC companies have very strong credit quality thanks to sound macroeconomic and operating conditions, robust business models, sound operating execution and prudent financial discipline. This translates into good financial performance, strong credit metrics and solid liquidity which are likely to be sustained over the next 12 months. The Appendix gives a breakdown of the GCC companies we rate.

Rated GCC companies' net leverage remains stable. Median net leverage has declined since the pandemic, and we expect it to remain at around 3.0x EBITDA in 2024-25 (Exhibit 1). Investment-grade issuers' net debt/EBITDA has been low at around 2.0x-2.5x in most years, a level that will be sustained in 2025. Median net leverage for speculative-grade companies is higher at 4.0x-4.5x and will remain at the current level in 2024-25, which is adequate for this rating category.

Although most of our industry rating methodologies use gross leverage rather than net leverage, net debt/EBITDA provides additional insight into the strength of the rated GCC companies because many companies tend to hold large cash balances over long periods.

Interest coverage, measured as Moody's-adjusted EBITDA/interest expense, is solid despite the high interest-rate environment.

'Trump defends Musk'

Tesla stock plummets 45% in 2025 amid sales slump

SAN FRANCISCO, March 11, (AP): After one of the worst single day sell-offs in Tesla's history, President Donald Trump threw his support behind his advisor, billionaire Elon Musk, vowing to buy one of his cars on Tuesday.

Tesla has been pummeled this year under competition from rival electric vehicles, particularly out of China, as well as his close association with Trump and with far right causes globally.

Shares have plummeted 45% in 2025 and on Monday tumbled more than 15% to \$222.15, the lowest since late October, reflecting newfound pessimism as sales crater around the globe.

In an overnight post on his Truth Social platform, Trump said Musk is "putting it on the line" to help the country. Trump claimed in the post that "Radical Left Lunatics" were attempting to "illegally and collusively boycott Tesla, one of the World's great automakers, and Elon's 'baby.'"

The stock climbed more than 3% before the market open on Tuesday.

Numerous auto industry analysts have attributed Tesla's recent sagging stock - and auto sales - to Musk's support of Trump and other far right candidates around the world. In recent days, Tesla showrooms in the U.S. have been besieged by protesters, its vehicles vandalized on the street. Tesla owners, perhaps in a bid to avoid being targeted, have placed bumper stickers on their cars with messages like, "I bought it before Elon went nuts."

Federal prosecutors charged a woman in connection with a string of vandalism against a Colorado Tesla dealership, which included Molotov cocktails being thrown at vehicles and the words "Nazi cars" spray painted on the building.

Musk pumped \$270 million into Trump's campaign heading into the 2024 election, appeared on stage with him and cheered Trump's victory over Democratic candidate Kamala Harris in November. Tesla stock soared to \$479 per share by mid-December, but have since lost 45% of their value.

Musk has become the face of the Trump administration's slash-and-burn government downsizing efforts, known as the Department of Gov-

ernment Efficiency, or DOGE. The department has promised massive federal worker layoffs and aims to drastically reduce government spending.

Analysts have said Musk's shift to right-wing politics doesn't appear to sit well with potential Tesla buyers, generally perceived to be wealthy and progressive consumers.

Tesla sales are falling precipitously in California, the company's biggest U.S. market, and the company recorded its first annual global sales decline last year. Similarly, Tesla sales plunged 45% in Europe in January, according to research firm Jato Dynamics, even as overall electric vehicle sales rose. The sales numbers were particularly bad in Germany and France.

The latest auto sales figure from China show that Tesla sales there have been nearly halved from February a year ago, although the decline is largely due increased competition from domestic EV companies.

But sales in the U.S. have fallen due to competition, and a country sharply divided about Trump.

U.S. Analysts at UBS Global Research expect deliveries to fall 5% in the first quarter and full year compared to the same periods for 2024.

"Our UBS Evidence Lab data shows low delivery times for the Model 3 and Model Y (generally within two weeks) in key markets which we believe is indicative of softer demand," they wrote.

In addition to backing Trump, Musk has also shown support for the far-right, pro-Russian, anti-Muslim party in Germany, called the British prime minister an "evil tyrant" and called Canada - a major Tesla market - "not a real country."

Tesla is not the only Musk-led company to run into trouble recently. His X social media platform crashed several times on Monday, which Musk claimed was a "massive" cyberattack. But like the clear-cutting he's done with federal jobs, Musk slashed the number of employees at X and technology experts warned of increased vulnerability.

Last week, a rocket launched by Musk's SpaceX exploded and broke apart over Florida, about two months after another of the company's rockets failed.

Ivan Espinosa appointed as new CEO

Nissan CEO Makoto Uchida steps down after poor financial results

TOKYO, March 11, (AP): Japanese automaker Nissan's chief executive, Makoto Uchida, is stepping down after the company reported dismal financial results.

Nissan Motor Corp. said in a statement Tuesday that Ivan Espinosa, who is now the company's chief planning officer, will take Uchida's place, effective April 1.

Espinosa, who joined Nissan in 2003, has spent much of his Nissan career in Mexico and Southeast Asia, overseeing product planning including the drive toward electric vehicles.

"I sincerely believe that Nissan has so much more potential than what we're seeing today," Espinosa told reporters, while stressing that he needs time to come up with details for a turnaround.

He stressed his love for Nissan, noting he has developed a deep understanding of what makes the company unique and valuable.

Nissan said the company leadership needed to be "renewed" to achieve long-term growth. Uchida, who remains as a director, expressed confidence in Espinosa as "a real car guy," and stressed he was handing over the baton of leadership to better unify company ranks.

"I am confident that Nissan will definitely make a comeback," he said, appearing at the hastily called news conference with Espinosa.

Speculation about Uchida's future was rife after he called off talks last month with Japanese rival Honda Motor Co., announced late last year, to set up a joint holding company to integrate its businesses. At the time, he told reporters the focus of the talks had changed to making Nissan into a Honda subsidiary, which he denounced as unacceptable.

He also said their strategic partnership to realize synergies on specific projects like electric vehicles and other research will continue.

Nissan is projecting a loss of 80 billion yen (\$540 million) for the full fiscal year through the end of this month.

When asked about talks with Honda and other possible partnerships,

Espinosa declined comment, saying he needed more time.

During Uchida's more than five years at Nissan's helm, sales faltered, including in key markets like the U.S. and China. Uchida also earlier announced the company was slashing 9,000 jobs.

It's a sad turn for the maker of the Z sports car, loved by auto buffs around the world, and the Leaf electric car, a pioneer in that sector that launched in 2010.

Uchida joined Nissan in 2003, job-hopping from major Japanese trading company Nissho Iwai, and worked with Nissan's alliance partner Renault SA of France before overseeing Nissan's China operations.

Nissan was rescued from near bankruptcy by Renault in 1999. In 2018, Carlos Ghosn, the former superstar executive sent in by Renault, was arrested by Japanese authorities on various financial misconduct charges, including under-reporting his compensation. He later fled Japan for Lebanon.

Nissan's tarnished corporate image after the Ghosn fiasco was a major challenge, Nishida said. So were the COVID-19 pandemic and broader shifts in the auto industry.

Apart from Uchida's departure as chief executive, Nissan announced other sweeping managerial changes, including giving an expanded role to Guillaume Cartier, its chief performance officer, in global marketing and customer experience.

Eiichi Akashi, corporate vice president of the Vehicle Planning and Vehicle Component Engineering Division, was named chief technology officer, succeeding Kunio Nakaguro.

Teiji Hirata, a corporate vice president, will become chief "monozukuri" officer and executive officer, responsible for manufacturing and supply chain management, replacing Hideyuki Sakamoto.

Jeremy Papin, the chief financial officer, was also appointed to be an executive officer. There was no change for Stephen Ma, who serves as chairperson of Nissan's management committee in China.

Cyber experts disagree

Musk claims 'massive cyberattack' behind X outages

SAN FRANCISCO, March 11, (AP): Hours after a series of outages Monday that left X unavailable to thousands of users, Elon Musk claimed that the social media platform was being targeted in a "massive cyberattack."

"We get attacked every day, but this was done with a lot of resources," Musk claimed in a post. "Either a large, coordinated group and/or a country is involved. Tracing..."

Later on Monday, Musk said on Fox Business Network's Kudlow that the attackers had "IP addresses originating in the Ukraine area" without going into detail on what this might mean.

Cybersecurity experts quickly pointed out, however, that this doesn't necessarily mean that an attack originated in Ukraine. Security researcher Kevin Beaumont said on Bluesky that Musk's claim is "missing a key fact - it was actually IPs from worldwide, not just Ukraine."

Specifically, he said it was a Mirai variant botnet, which is made of compromised cameras. He said while he is not sure who is behind the attack, it "Smells of APTs - advanced persistent teenagers."

Allan Liska of the cybersecurity firm Recorded Future, meanwhile, pointed out that even if "every IP address that hit Twitter today originated from Ukraine (doubtful), they were most likely compromised machines controlled by a botnet run by a third party that could be located anywhere in the world."

Complaints about outages spiked Monday at 6 a.m. Eastern and again at 10 a.m. with more than 40,000 users reporting no access to the platform, according to the tracking website Downdetector.com. By afternoon, the reports had dropped to the low thousands.

A sustained outage that lasted at least an hour began at noon, with the heaviest disruptions occurring along the U.S. coasts.

Downdetector.com said that 56% of problems were reported for the X app,

while 33% were reported for the website.

It's not possible to definitively verify Musk's claims without seeing technical data from X, and the likelihood of them releasing that is "pretty low," said Nicholas Reese, an adjunct instructor at the Center for Global Affairs in New York University's School of Professional Studies and expert in cyber operations.

Reese said the likelihood that a state actor is behind the outages "doesn't make a lot of sense" given their short duration - unless it was a warning for something larger to come.

"There are kind of two types of cyber attacks - there are ones that are designed to be very loud and there are ones that are designed to be very quiet," he said. "And the ones that are usually the most valuable are the ones that are very quiet. Something like this was designed to be discovered. So to me that almost certainly eliminates state actors. And the value that they would have gained from it is pretty low."

Reese added that it's possible that a group was trying to make a statement with causing X outages, but added that such a temporary outage "is not much of a statement to me."

"It's only really a statement if there is some kind of follow on action, which I would not rule out at this point," he said.

In March 2023 the social media platform then known as Twitter experienced a bevy of glitches for over an hour as links stopped working, some users were unable to log in and images were not loading for others.

"X outage" was trending on rival social media platform BlueSky, with some posts welcoming users to the site and urging them to stick around.

Musk bought the former Twitter in 2022 and also serves as the CEO of Tesla. He's running X while simultaneously having access to U.S. government data systems - often wearing a shirt that says "tech support."

Ontario increases electricity charges by 25% for US homes amid trade war

Ford's electricity tariff hits 1.5 million US homes

TORONTO, March 11, (AP): Ontario's premier, the leader of Canada's most populous province, announced that effective Monday it is charging 25% more for electricity to 1.5 million American homes and businesses in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's trade war.

Ontario provides electricity to Minnesota, New York and Michigan.

"I will not hesitate to increase this charge. If the United States escalates, I will not hesitate to shut the electricity off completely," Ontario Premier Doug Ford said at a news conference in Toronto.

"Believe me when I say I do not want to do this. I feel terrible for the American people who didn't start this trade war. It's one person who is responsible, it's President Trump."

Ford said Ontario's tariff would remain in place despite the one-month reprieve from Trump, noting a one-month pause means nothing but more uncertainty. Quebec is also considering taking similar measures with electricity exports to the U.S.

Minnesota receives only a small share of its electricity from Ontario, but Democratic Gov. Tim Walz was sharply critical of Trump's actions that led to Monday's announcement from Ford.

"The first victims of Trump's Trade war? Minnesotans struggling to pay their skyrocketing electric bill," Walz said on X with a link to a story about Ontario's move. "Minnesotans cannot afford Trump's billionaire-run economy. We have to put a stop to this madness."

In a brief press availability later Monday, Walz acknowledged that Minnesota doesn't get a lot of electricity from Ontario, but he's worried about Manitoba following suit.

"So look, even if it were one megawatt, this is totally unnecessary. And the fact of the matter is, it doesn't impact Donald Trump one bit. It impacts ratepayers in Minnesota. For what? These are our friends," he said.

Walz said he's even more worried about the impact on Minnesota if Canadian potash fertilizer gets caught up in the trade war. "If it starts with this, the one that I'm really worried about is potash, when it comes behind it. If they do potash, that's a big one on agriculture," he said.

Walz said he discussed these concerns last week when he spoke with the premiers of Ontario and Manitoba. He said they told him the dispute is broader than just their trading relations with Minnesota.

"They were very clear that it's not Minnesota -- we're huge trading partners."



Ontario Premier Doug Ford prepares to speak to an American news outlet in his office at the Queens Park Legislature in Toronto on Monday, March 10, 2025. (AP)

Minnesota Power, the main electrical utility serving the part of Minnesota that borders Ontario, gets only a "very small" proportion of its power from the province, company spokesperson Amy Rutledge said.

Minnesota Power bought only about \$300,000 worth of electricity from Ontario last year, and only for four months out of the year. The utility serves over 150,000 customers, mostly with power it generates itself in Minnesota, she said. While it gets about 11% of its power supply from Manitoba Hydro, she said, that's not affected by Ontario's announcement.

"We really expect any impact on our customers to be negligible," Rutledge said.

Midcontinent Independent System Operator, the organization that manages a regional power grid that stretches from Manitoba to Minnesota to Louisiana, also expects little effect, spokesman Brandon Morris said. MISO gets under half its power from Canada, and less than half of that comes from Ontario, he said.

Matt Helms, public information officer for the Michigan Public Service Commission, said the impact on Michigan customers is likely to be "small" and most of Michigan's electricity is produced by utility companies in the state or through long-term contracts.

Of greater concern to the commission is the reliability of the electric grid, as electricity flows between the U.S. and Canada as part of an inter-

connected grid.

"Any action to limit or disrupt these flows would remove a layer of protection and make all of us - Canadians and Americans alike - more vulnerable to grid-scale outages," Helms said.

In New York, Gov. Kathy Hochul said she has ordered state energy officials to conduct a review on how much the tariffs could drive up electricity and other energy costs in the state.

"These federal tariffs have been poorly conceived from the start: crafted in secret with no transparency and no clear economic rationale, they've only served to destabilize our capital markets and create uncertainty among New York families and businesses," said Hochul, a Democrat.

The new surcharge is in addition to the federal government's initial \$30 billion Canadian dollars (\$21 billion) worth of retaliatory tariffs applied on items like American orange juice, peanut butter, coffee, appliances, footwear, cosmetics, motorcycles and certain pulp and paper products.

Trump launched a new trade war last week by imposing tariffs against Washington's three biggest trading partners, drawing immediate retaliation from Mexico, Canada and China and sending financial markets into a tailspin.

"It needs to end. Until these tariffs are off the table, until the threat of tariffs is gone for good, Ontario will not relent," Ford said.

US rejects Japan's request for exemption from 25% tariffs

Japan fails to secure tariff exemption in talks with US officials

TOKYO, March 11, (AP): Japan's trade minister said this week that he has failed to win assurances from U.S. officials that the key U.S. ally will be exempt from tariffs, some of which take effect on Wednesday.

Yoji Muto was in Washington for last ditch negotiations over the tariffs on a range of Japanese exports including cars, steel and aluminum.

Muto said Monday in Washington that Japan, which contributes to the U.S. economy by heavily investing and creating jobs in the United States, "should not be subject to" 25% tariffs on steel, aluminum and auto exports to America.

His meetings with U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, U.S. Trade Representative Jamieens Greer and White House economic advisor Kevin Hassett came just two days before the steel and aluminum tariffs are due to take effect. President Donald Trump has also said a possible 25% tariff on imported foreign autos could take effect in early April.

Muto said the U.S. officials acknowledged Japanese contributions and agreed to continue talks, but did not approve his request for Japan's exemption from the steep import duties.

"We did not receive a response that Japan will be exempt," Muto told reporters. "We must continue to assert our position."

As Trump's tariff threats have triggered tensions and vows of retaliation from Canada, Mexico and China, Japan has been working to firm up ties with

other countries.

Last week, the foreign and trade ministers from Japan and Britain gathered in Tokyo for their first "two-plus-two" economic dialogue. They agreed to stand up for "fair, rules-based international trade," though nobody directly mentioned Trump.

Japan depends heavily on exports and the auto tariffs would hurt, because vehicles are its biggest export and the United States is their top destination.

"Clearly companies in Japan are very concerned," said Rintaro Nishimura, political analyst and associate at Japan Practice of The Asia Group. "Obviously the auto is the crown jewel for Japan, especially in the context of these tariffs." He says they are concerned also because the Trump administration is carrying it out in just two months after taking office.

Trump also has criticized Japan's contributions to the two countries' mutual defense arrangements, adding to tensions with Tokyo.

Muto said the two sides agreed to keep discussing to find ways to establish a "win-win" relationship that would serve national interests of both countries.

The two sides also discussed energy cooperation, including joint development of liquefied natural gas reserves in Alaska, which Trump and Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba agreed on during Ishiba's visit to the White House in February.

Trump's freeze on anti-bribery law may benefit Adani in US case

BENGALURU, March 11, (AP): President Donald Trump's decision to freeze a law banning business bribes overseas could offer Indian tycoon Gautam Adani, one of Asia's richest people, a reprieve from American corruption allegations linked to a major solar project in India.

U.S. prosecutors allege that one of Adani's companies duped investors by hiding that its project was backed by a \$265 million bribery scheme. The case now may be reviewed, and enforcement of any potential decision against it is uncertain. Whatever its fate, the case has highlighted vulnerabilities in India's solar sector that are hindering its capacity to switch to clean energy, help limit climate change and cut heavy pollution in many of its cities.

The Adani Group, whose business interests span much of the economy from ports and airports to energy and media, has denied the U.S. allegations. It declined requests from The Associated Press for comment.

Earlier this month, Trump suspended the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, raising expectations among some in India that the allegations against Adani might be put on ice. Shares in Adani's companies surged but then fell just days later when the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission sought help from Indian authorities in serving its complaint against Adani.

The allegations have had wider repercussions outside India. Adani Green Energy has withdrawn its wind energy projects from Sri Lanka after the island

nation sought to renegotiate prices. Kenya canceled energy and airport expansion deals with the company, while investor TotalEnergies, a French oil giant, has paused new investments.

Adani Green Energy, or AGEL, is India's largest renewable energy company. It is building one of the world's largest clean power projects in salt deserts bordering Pakistan in the Western Indian state of Gujarat. Once completed, they would produce 30 gigawatts of clean power, enough to power nearly 18 million Indian homes.

AGEL has projects in 12 Indian states, with 11.6 gigawatts of clean power capacity. It aims to generate 50 gigawatts of renewable power by 2030, a tenth of India's clean energy goal for the same time period.

US-Kuwaiti educational ties strengthened at networking event

AmCham Kuwait hosts successful US university networking event

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: The U.S. Commercial Service, in collaboration with the American Chamber of Commerce in Kuwait (AmCham Kuwait), recently hosted a successful networking reception featuring eight distinguished U.S. universities and key stakeholders from the education sector.

The event took place at Crowne Plaza Al Thuraya City Hotel and provided a unique opportunity for local educators, students, and educational institutions to engage directly with representatives from leading U.S. universities. The reception aimed to foster connections, promote educational exchanges, and strengthen ties between U.S. institutions and the Kuwaiti education community.

The following universities participated in the event:

- Dayton University
- Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
- George Washington University
- Temple University
- University of Arizona
- University of California Riverside
- Washington State University
- Western Carolina University

We were thrilled to host such a valuable event for students and educational professionals in Kuwait to explore the academic offerings and opportuni-



US universities network with Kuwaiti educators at AmCham event.

ties available at these esteemed U.S. universities, said Dr. Arezou Harraf, Vice Chair of AmCham Kuwait. This

evening provided an excellent platform for individuals to connect with U.S. institutions and explore the transforma-

tive opportunities that studying in the U.S. can offer. Our collaboration with the U.S. Embassy and our partners has

strengthened educational ties, ensuring that the future of education in both the U.S. and Kuwait continues to flourish.

The event offered a platform for direct interaction between attendees and university representatives, allowing for in-depth discussions on academic programs, admissions, scholarships, and other educational opportunities.

Attendees expressed their enthusiasm for the opportunity to connect with prestigious U.S. universities and explore the wide range of academic possibilities available. Many noted the significance of such events in enhancing the global education experience and opening doors for Kuwaiti students to pursue their higher education goals in the United States. The reception underscored the shared commitment to academic excellence and the continued growth of educational exchanges between the U.S. and Kuwait.

About AmCham Kuwait:
Founded in 1985, AmCham Kuwait is a non-profit organization composed of Fortune 500 corporations, SMEs, and prominent business leaders from both the U.S. and Kuwait. As a key advocate for American interests in Kuwait, AmCham Kuwait works tirelessly to strengthen the business ties between the two nations.

For more information, please visit www.amchamkuwait.org or follow us on social media @abck1985.

'A night of inspiration and networking'

TEF Kuwait celebrates International Women's Day with inspiring sessions

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: The Tamilnadu Engineers Forum (TEF), Kuwait celebrated International Women's Day on Friday, 7th March, 2025, at the Saq International Hotel in Fintas. The event commenced at 6:15 PM with the solemn rendition of 'Amil Thai Vazhthu.'

The event opened with a safety moment by Mrs. Deepa Kapil, who emphasized the importance of safety in both professional and personal lives. This was followed by Mrs. Malathi Kalaiarasan's beautiful recitation of a Thirukkural, highlighting the vital role of women in society and setting a reflective mood for the evening.

The welcome address was delivered by Mrs. Mahalakshmi Raja, who warmly greeted the attendees and set the stage for the evening's events. Her address celebrated women's achievements and laid the groundwork for the inspiring sessions to follow. The event featured several distinguished speakers and key sessions.

Mrs. Nithya Vadivelan introduced the first speaker of the evening, Dr. Anindita Medhi, MD (Dermatology) from Shifa Al Jazeera Medical Centre, who delivered a session titled 'Radiance Unveiled: Skin and Hair Care Secrets.' Dr. Anindita Medhi shared valuable insights into skin and hair health, offering practical advice for maintaining a radiant appearance. The session was well-received by the attendees, who found the tips to be both informative and applicable to everyday self-care.

Following Dr. Medhi's session, Mrs. Amutha Subramanian introduced Ms. Ghalyah Al Ansari, a Data Scientist at the National Bank of Kuwait and the Founder of Adapture. In her session, 'Women in STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics,' Ms. Ghalyah shared her experiences and challenges as a woman in the tech industry. Her inspiring journey encouraged attendees to pursue careers in STEM fields, breaking barriers in traditionally male-dominated industries.

The next speaker, Dr. Shyamala Ramesh Babu, was intro-

duced by Mrs. Vinodhini Kishore. Dr. Shyamala, a well-known motivational speaker, leading educator and founder of Chisel & Evolve, delivered a session titled 'The Woman: The Strength of Society' highlighting the role women play in shaping the foundation of society. Through her session, Dr. Shyamala emphasized the nurturing power of women and their significant impact on family structures, offering a thoughtful perspective on women's roles in both the family and broader society.

A lively and interactive Q&A session handled by Dr. Vijayalakshmi Anantharaj and Dr. Rumia Justin, offered attendees with an opportunity to engage directly with the speakers, seek advice, and clarify their doubts.

Presenters were honored with shawls, garlands, and mementos as a token of appreciation for their insightful address in inspiring and empowering the attendees.

The event was brilliantly anchored by Mrs. Eswari Balasubramanian and Mrs. Judy Arun Golden, who ensured the smooth flow of proceedings and maintained an engaging atmosphere throughout the event.

The evening concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks by Mrs. Pradhama Maniyarasu, who expressed gratitude to all the speakers, sponsors, participants, and attendees for making the event a grand success.

Following the sessions, attendees were invited to a dinner, offering an excellent opportunity for networking and continued discussions. It was a perfect way to wrap up an inspiring evening, with guests exchanging ideas, experiences, and forging meaningful connections.

The TEF 2025 committee meticulously organized the event, making TEF's International Women's Day celebration a truly memorable occasion. The event brought together a diverse group of individuals to honor and recognize the invaluable contributions of women across various fields. This event's success highlights TEF's ongoing commitment to advancing women's roles in engineering, science, and society.



Photos during the event.



Photo during the event.

PLC Kuwait celebrates National & Liberation Days

Pravasi Legal Cell Kuwait Chapter - Kuwait celebrated National Day and Liberation Day at the Calicut Chef Hotel. Babu Francis, representative of NORKA-Loka Kerala Sabha inaugurated the event. In his inaugural address, he thanked the Kuwaiti authorities and lawyers for their support of the PLC's activities and expressed its solidarity with the Kuwaiti people's celebrations.

Pravasi Legal Cell General Secretary Shyjiith welcomed the gathering and

PLC Kuwait Patron Jayakumar delivered the keynote address. PLC Kuwait Vice President Charles P George and Secretaries Sreekumar P and Babu C led the event. Members of PLC Kuwait and other organization members including Prince Kollapillil and Shamsheer Babu also participated in the event. Pravasi Legal Cell Kuwait Chapter Treasurer Rajesh Gopi explained PLC Kuwait's interventions in various expatriate issues during the last 5 years and thanked the participants.

Waheed Jaber appointed as Incharge Coordinator

PakDonors announces leadership transition

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: PakDonors, a leading blood donation and humanitarian organization, proudly announces a leadership transition as Abdul Waheed Jaber Khan takes over as the Incharge Coordinator of the PakDonors Kuwait Chapter.

The transition marks a new chapter in PakDonors' ongoing mission to promote voluntary blood donation, raise awareness, and support those in need of life-saving blood transfusions. Abdul Waheed Jaber, a dedicated member of PakDonors, has played a pivotal role in the organization's initiatives and is now entrusted with leading its efforts to expand outreach, strengthen donor engagement, and enhance collaborations.

PakDonors extends its deepest gratitude to Nouman Aslam Ghuman for his exceptional leadership, dedication, and countless contributions to the cause. His unwavering commitment has significantly shaped the organization, inspiring many to join hands in saving lives. His legacy will continue to be a guiding force as PakDonors moves forward under new leadership.

On this occasion, Abdul Waheed Jaber Khan expressed his gratitude and



Abdul Waheed Jaber

commitment to advancing PakDonors' mission. 'It is an honor to take on this responsibility. I look forward to building upon the strong foundation laid by my predecessor and working closely with our incredible team, volunteers, and donors to ensure that every patient in need finds a helping hand.'

PakDonors remains committed to its vision of fostering a culture of regular and voluntary blood donation. The organization looks forward to continued support from the community and partners in fulfilling this noble cause.

The Good Shepherd Group expands charitable efforts across borders

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: Founded in March 2014 in Kuwait, The Good Shepherd Group began with a modest yet impactful initiative. A group of 22 friends united with a shared mission to support the sick and needy within their community. Each member made a monthly contribution to support their charitable efforts.

Recently we undertook a meaningful initiative to support underprivileged communities in India. The group collected used clothes from generous donors and distributed them to those in need across two states: Meghalaya and Chhattisgarh. This effort aimed to provide essential clothing to families and individuals facing economic hardships, ensuring they received both comfort and dignity. By reaching out to these regions, The Good Shepherd Group continues to demonstrate its commitment to making a tangible difference in the lives of the less fortunate.

Even during the challenging times



Meghalaya



Chhattisgarh state

of the COVID pandemic, The Good Shepherd Group remained steadfast in its mission. We provided essential groceries to families in need, ensuring that our support continued uninterrupted.

Today, The Good Shepherd Group has grown to include over 100 members from diverse backgrounds, primarily from India and the UK. This expansion reflects our commitment to fostering a global community dedicated to making a difference.

To further our cause and extend our reach, we have organized various fundraising events, including Christmas and Valentine's gathering and community celebrations. Additionally, we have set up snack stalls at cultural events and sports matches to generate funds for our initiatives.

We invite you to join us in our mission to make a positive impact on the lives of those in need. visit: www.goodshepherdsfamily.org

Mystery surrounding Polynesian Princess's origins solved

Disney didn't steal 'Moana' from surfer boy's story: jury

LOS ANGELES, March 11, (AP) — A jury on Monday quickly and completely rejected a man's claim that Disney's "Moana" was stolen from his story of a young surfer in Hawaii.

The Los Angeles federal jury deliberated for only about 2 1/2 hours before deciding that the creators of "Moana" never had access to writer and animator Buck Woodall's outlines and script for "Bucky the Surfer Boy."

With that question settled, the jury of six women and two men didn't even have to consider the similarities between "Bucky" and Disney's 2016 hit animated film about a questing Polynesian princess.

Woodall had shared his work with a distant relative, who worked for a different company on the Disney lot, but the woman testified during the two-week trial that she never showed it to anyone at Disney.

"Obviously we're disappointed," Woodall's attorney Gustavo Lage said outside court. "We're going to review our options and think about the best path forward."

In closing arguments earlier Monday, Woodall's attorney said that a long chain of circumstantial evidence showed the two works were inseparable.

"There was no 'Moana' without 'Bucky,'" Lage said.

Defense lawyer Moez Kaba said that the evidence showed overwhelmingly that "Moana" was clearly the creation and "crowning achievement" of the 40-year career of John Musker and Ron Clements, the writers and directors behind 1989's "The Little Mermaid," 1992's

"Aladdin," 1997's "Hercules" and 2009's "The Princess and the Frog."

"They had no idea about Bucky," Kaba said in his closing. "They had never seen it, never heard of it."

"Moana" earned nearly \$700 million at the global box office.

A judge previously ruled that Woodall's 2020 lawsuit came too late for him to claim a piece of those receipts, and that a lawsuit he filed earlier this year over "Moana 2" - which earned more than \$1 billion - must be decided separately. That suit remains active, though the jury's decision does not bode well for it. Judge Consuelo B. Marshall, who is also overseeing the sequel lawsuit, said after the verdict that she agreed with the jurors' decision about access.

"We are incredibly proud of the collective work that went into the making of Moana and are pleased that the jury found it had nothing to do with Plaintiff's works," Disney said in a statement.

Musker and Disney's attorneys declined to comment outside the courtroom.

The relatively young jury of six women and two men watched "Moana" in its entirety in the courtroom. They considered a story outline that Woodall created for "Bucky" in 2003, along with a 2008 update and a 2011 script.

In the latter versions of the story, the title character, vacationing in Hawaii with his parents, befriends a group of



This image released by Disney shows the character Moana, voiced by Auli'i Cravalho, in a scene from 'Moana 2.' (AP)

Native Hawaiian youth and goes on a quest that includes time travel to the ancient islands and interactions with demigods to save a sacred site from a developer.

Around 2004, Woodall gave the "Bucky" outline to the stepsister of his brother's wife. That woman, Jenny Marchick, worked for Mandeville Films, a company that had a contract with Disney and was located on the Disney lot. He sent her follow-up materials through the years. He

testified that he was stunned when he saw "Moana" in 2016 and saw so many of his ideas.

Along with her testimony saying she didn't show "Bucky" to anyone, messages shared by the defense showed she eventually ignored Woodall's queries to her and had told him there was nothing she could do for him.

Disney attorney Kaba argued there was no evidence Marchick ever worked on "Moana" or received any credit or compensation for it.

Kaba pointed out that Marchick, now head of features development at DreamWorks Animation, worked for key Disney competitors Sony and Fox during much of the time she was allegedly making use of Woodall's work for Disney.

Woodall also submitted the script directly to Disney and had a meeting with an assistant at the Disney Channel, which Marchick arranged for him, to talk about working as an animator. But jurors agreed that this didn't give them reason to believe that "Bucky" made its way to Musker, Clements or their collaborators.

Lage, Woodall's attorney, outlined some of the similarities of the two works in his closing.

Both include teens on oceanic quests.

Both have Polynesian demigods as central figures and shape-shifting characters who turn into, among other things, insects and sharks.

In both, the main characters interact with animals who act as spirit helpers.

Television

Show comeback

Amazon Prime brings Trump's 'Apprentice'

NEW YORK, March 11, (AP) — "The Apprentice," the long-running reality TV show that boosted Donald Trump's profile, will begin streaming on Amazon's Prime Video, the company announced Monday.

The show's first seven seasons will be available on Amazon's streaming platform, with the first season premiering Monday and subsequent seasons arriving every week until late April.

Debuted in 2004, "The Apprentice" and a spinoff, "Celebrity Apprentice," propelled Trump to national stardom following a string of bankruptcies and bad business deals in the 1990s that had splintered his New York-based real estate empire.

The series, meant to showcase Trump's business acumen, was a major hit, and Trump's name became a global brand that helped launch his political career. The show featured contestants taking part in various challenges for a \$250,000 salary and a job with The Trump Organization.

Trump expressed enthusiasm for the news on Truth Social and in a statement included in Amazon's statement.

"I look forward to watching this show myself - such great memories, and so much fun, but most importantly, it was a learning experience for all of us!" Trump said in Amazon's release.

Amazon's decision to stream "The Apprentice" is the latest indication the company is attempting to strengthen its relationship with Trump, which was testy during his first term.

In January, Amazon said it would release a new documentary about first lady Melania Trump, promising an "unprecedented behind-the-scenes look" at her life.

Weeks before the November election, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos announced that The Washington Post, which he owns, would not endorse a presidential candidate, sparking a wave of resignations and thousands of subscription cancellations.

On Monday, a columnist who has worked at the Post for four decades resigned after she said the newspaper's management decided not to run her commentary critical of Bezos' new editorial policy.

Star-studded guests

Obama, her brother launch new podcast

NEW YORK, March 11, (AP) — Michelle Obama and her brother, Craig Robinson, will host a new weekly podcast series starting this month featuring a special guest pulled from the world of entertainment, sports, health and business.

"IMO with Michelle Obama & Craig Robinson" will address "everyday questions shaping our lives, relationships and the world around us," according to a press release. IMO is slang for "in my opinion."

Some of the guests slated to speak to the former first lady and Robinson, the executive director of the National Association of Basketball Coaches, include the actors Issa Rae and Keke Palmer and psychologist Dr. Ornella Guralnik.

Other guests include filmmakers Seth and Lauren Rogan; soccer star Abby Wambach; authors Jay Shetty, Glennon Doyle and Logan Ury; editor Elaine Welteroth; radio personality Angie Martinez; media mogul Tyler Perry; actor Tracee Ellis Ross; husband-and-wife athlete and actor Dwyane Wade and Gabrielle Union; and Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky.

The first two episodes - the first is an introductory one and the second features Rae - will premiere on March 12. New episodes will be released weekly and will be available on all audio platforms and YouTube.

Obama has had two other podcasts - "The Michelle Obama Podcast" in 2020 and another in 2023, "The Light We Carry." Her husband, Barack Obama, offered a series of conversations about American life between him and Bruce Springsteen.



Former first lady Michelle Obama speaks at a campaign rally for democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris in Kalamazoo, Mich., on Oct. 26, 2024. (AP)

Film



This image released by Briarcliff Entertainment shows Natalie Morales, (right), and Sonequa Martin-Green in a scene from 'My Dead Friend Zoe.' (AP)

Film inspired by a true story

A dark comedy about PTSD in 'Friend Zoe'

LOS ANGELES, March 11, (AP) — Even for a film titled "My Dead Friend Zoe," the opening scenes of Kyle Hausmann-Stoke's movie have a startling rhythm.

First, two female American soldiers are riding in a Humvee in Afghanistan 2016 blasting Rihanna's "Umbrella." They are clearly friends, and more concerned with the music coming through loudly than enemy fire. Zoe (Natalie Morales) tells Merit (Sonequa Martin-Green) that if they ever set foot in "some dopy group therapy," to please kill her.

Cut to years later, they're sitting in a counseling meeting for veterans and Morales' character has a sour look at her face. She turns to her friend: "Did we survive the dumbest war of all time just to sit here all broken and kumbaya and ouchie-my-feelings?"

But after this rush of cavalier soldiering and bitter sarcasm comes a sobering moment. Merit blinks her eyes and is instead staring at an empty chair. Zoe isn't there at all.

"My Dead Friend Zoe," co-starring Morgan Freeman and Ed Harris, confronts a dark reality of post-combat struggle with as much humor and playfulness as it does trauma and sorrow. It comes from a real place, and you can tell. Hausmann-Stoke is himself a veteran and "My Dead Friend Zoe" is dedicated to a pair of his platoon mates who killed themselves. The opening titles note the film was "inspired by a true story."

Audience disinterest has characterized many, though not all, of the films about the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and the output has pretty much dried up over the years. "My Dead Friend Zoe" feels like it was made with an awareness of that trend and as a rebuke to it.

This is an often breezy and funny movie for what, on paper, is a difficult and dark story. But the comic tone of "My Dead Friend Zoe" is, itself, a spirited rejection to not just the heaviness of many films about veterans but of the grief that can consume those who have dealt with loss and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Throughout the film, Zoe appears only to Merit, ala Brad Pitt in "Fight Club," singing alongside her as she drives or impatiently waiting for Merit to come home from a run. Whether this, following some unspecified end to Zoe, is a healthy thing or not for Merit is increasingly in doubt. Merit needs to cling to her friend, or her memory of her. But Zoe also rolls her eyes at any suggestion of talking through her feelings. Zoe, as an apparition, is both the cause and relief to her pain.

There are a few other points of view, courtesy of two of our finest actors. Freeman plays the counselor of Merit's mandatory group sessions. He refuses to let Zoe coast. To pressure her to share and participate, he threatens withholding Zoe's certification.

Meanwhile, Merit's grandfather, Dale (Harris), a Vietnam vet, has just been diagnosed with early Alzheimer's.

LOS ANGELES: The rising rapper Doechii has earned the title of Billboard's 2025 Woman of the Year, landing her in the same company as Taylor Swift, SZA, Lady Gaga and as last year's honoree, Karol G.

The news arrives just one month after Doechii won the Grammy for best rap album, only the third woman to win in that category.

When it came time to give her award speech, the tears were immediate. "This category was introduced in 1989. Two women have won, Lauryn Hill -" she said, correcting herself. "Three women have won. Lauryn Hill, Cardi B and Doechii."

Now she will be honored as Woman of the Year at the Billboard Women in Music Awards on March 29. Previous honorees include Madonna, Cardi B, Billie Eilish, Selena Gomez and Ariana Grande.

In 2024, The Associated Press named Doechii's breakout mixtape, "Alligator Bites Never Heal," one of the best albums of the year - a versatile album that teeters from the romance of her smooth R&B and the acuity of her flows.

"Doechii is taking pop culture by storm, this year becoming

the third woman in history to win a Grammy best rap album, and dazzling fans of every musical genre with her breathtaking performances, ultra-candid lyrics and utterly unique sound, style and spirit," said Hannah Karp, Editor-in-Chief of Billboard in a statement. "We are thrilled to celebrate Doechii and cheer on her continued success."

Other award recipients at the Billboard Women in Music Awards include aespa, Angela Aguilar, Erykah Badu, GloRilla, Gracie Abrams, Blackpink's Jennie, Megan Moroney, Meghan Trainor, Muni Long and Tyla. (AP)

BELGRADE, Serbia: Several hundred student protesters have blocked Serbia's public television station building in Belgrade as tensions are soaring in the Balkan country days ahead of a planned large rally over the weekend billed as an endgame in months of anti-government demonstrations.

The students first blocked the TV building in central Belgrade, Serbia's capital, late on Monday and several hundred gathered again early on Tuesday, after announcing that their blockade will last for at least 22 hours.

University students in Serbia are behind almost daily rallies that started after a concrete canopy crashed down in November at a railway station in the northern city of Novi Sad, killing 15 people. The protests have rocked populist rule of President Aleksandar Vucic and his firm grip on power. During the late Monday blockade, riot police briefly inter-

vened with batons against the crowd, which tried to block one of the entrances to the TV building with metal security fences. At least one plain clothes policeman was injured in skirmishes.

The students blame the public TV for bias reporting and siding with Vucic and the government during the demonstrations. The Serbian president was the guest of the main TV news bulletin on Monday evening, but its yet unclear what exactly triggered the evening protest.

During the interview, Vucic insulted the student-led protests, warning that security forces will use force against participants of the big rally planned for Saturday. He pledged never to step down because of the massive nationwide demonstrations.

"You will have to kill me if you want to replace me," he said.

The TV reporter who interviewed Vucic called the protesting students "a mob," which the president appeared to approve of. The station, RTS, issued a statement, denouncing the blockade.

"Forbidding preventing RTS employees from coming to their workplaces represents a dangerous step into open conflicts with unpredictable consequences," it said.

Some of the TV station's employees apparently managed to enter the building through a side entrance that's not publicly known, allowing the program to continue uninterrupted. (AP)

A star-studded farewell to legendary musician

Hill and Wonder celebrate Roberta Flack's life

NEW YORK, March 11, (AP) — A public memorial service bursting with music, including planned performances by Stevie Wonder and a surprise one by Lauryn Hill and Wyclef Jean of the Fugees, celebrated the life and legacy of the Grammy-winning singer and pianist Roberta Flack.

Flack, whose intimate vocal and musical style made her one of the top recording artists of the 1970s and an influential performer long after, died last month at age 88.

She's best-known for her transformative covers of "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" and "Killing Me Softly With His Song." Both were expertly handled by Hill at the ceremony held Monday afternoon at New York's Abyssinian Baptist Church.

Wonder followed the set and the Rev. Al Sharpton gave the eulogy.

Flack "put a soundtrack to Black dignity," Sharpton said. As many said in their tributes, Flack's musical genius stemmed from her ability to seamlessly move between soul, jazz, gospel and beyond. Flack's memorial was open to the public at the Abyssinian Baptist Church, a historic Harlem institution. Founded in 1808, it is one of the oldest Black Baptist churches in the U.S.

The church was decorated for the ceremony with stunning white and yellow bouquets. Seats filled quickly. At center, a



Lauryn Hill performs during a ceremony in celebration of Roberta Flack's life at The Abyssinian Baptist Church on Monday, March 10, in New York. (AP)

screen showed a young Flack at the piano and played highlights of her career. Later, it would broadcast music industry legends paying tribute to Flack, including Clive Davis, Dionne Warwick, India.Arie and Alicia Keys.

It was a fitting location for such a celebration: Flack grew

up with church gospel and her mother played organ at the Lomax African Methodist Episcopal Church in Arlington, Virginia. As a teen, she began accompanying the church choir on piano.

The ceremony detoured from a program handed out to attendees. It featured a powerful quote from Flack on the back that Arie would include in her message.

"Remember: Always walk in the light," Flack once said. "If you feel like you're not walking in it, go find it. Love the Light."

"Her existence was a form of resistance," Hill said in her speech, holding back tears.

Hill's appearance was unexpected but fitting. In the 1990s, her hip-hop trio the Fugees did a masterful take on Flack's cover "Killing Me Softly With His Song." It won the group a Grammy, two decades after Flack took home the record of the year trophy for the song.

A legend who needed no introduction but certainly received one with roaring applause, Wonder followed up.

"The great thing about not having the ability to see with your eyes is the great opportunity of being able to even better see with your heart. And so I knew how beautiful Roberta was, not seeing her visually but being able to see and feel her heart," Wonder said.

Television



Pakistani TV actor Usman Javed, (right), and Sehar Khan perform during the shooting of a scene of TV drama serial "Tan Man Neel-o-Neel" or "Deeply Engrossed in Love", in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, Nov. 2, 2024. (AP)

Cultural connection

Pak TV dramas bridge India-Pakistan divide

KARACHI, Pakistan, March 11, (AP) — Two Pakistani women sit together on a couch, rehearsing their lines while a director scrutinizes them. Waiting off camera for his scene is the male lead, an actor blessed with "Bachelor" hair and fine bone structure.

Also out of sight: the Islamabad homeowners, who are holed up in a separate room and whose furniture and knick-knacks will be seen by millions of viewers - many from the society that has been their country's neighbor and uneasy sparring partner for much of the past century.

This is the set of the Pakistani drama "Adhi Bewafai," or "Half Infidelity" - one of what some in other nations would call "soap operas." But these dramas, it turns out, are not just for Pakistanis.

Realistic settings, natural dialogue and almost workaday plots about families and marriages make Pakistani dramas a hit with viewers at home and abroad - especially in the neighboring country that split with Pakistan in 1947 and is its nuclear archrival today: India.

Television, it seems, is succeeding where diplomacy sometimes can't. Several thousand people work in Pakistan's drama industry; the country produces between 80 to 120 shows a year, each one a source of escapism and intrigue. They offer Indians a tantalizing glimpse into life across the border - and manage to break through decades of enmity between the two governments.

Disputed

Maheen Shafeeq, a research associate at the Institute of Strategic Studies in Islamabad, says there is effectively no relationship between the two governments. Each government is fixed on a single issue it cannot move past - for India, it's terrorism; for Pakistan, the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. "The governments are very much opposed to each other," she says. "They don't agree what they should talk about."

Although it's difficult for Indians to visit Pakistan, where these shows are filmed, they faithfully follow the plot twists and turns through platforms like YouTube, ZEE5, and MX Player.

For those of a certain generation, however, it wasn't always so easy to keep up.

Kaveri Sharma, a writer in the Indian city of Patna, recalls her mother-in-law and aunt jiggling antennas in the 1980s and 1990s in hopes of catching a signal from Pakistan's state broadcaster, PTV. It's how Sharma first realized that the country next door was a drama powerhouse. It inspired her to discover the shows for herself years later, even going on to watch them with her own daughter.

"They feel familiar, but they are also a break from our own lives," Sharma says. "I don't see any differences between the two countries. Everything is relatable. I see Karachi and think that it could be Lucknow or Patna. What happens on the shows could happen to me or my friends."

She had heard only negative things about Pakistan since childhood - that it was the enemy that would take everything from India. The TV dramas have added subtlety and detail to this image for her. She would love to visit, but is unlikely to get the opportunity. So she explores Pakistan through the locations, malls, offices, streets and restaurants depicted on the small screen. The names of popular Karachi neighborhoods roll off her tongue.

Characterization

Sharma, like Bibi Hafeez in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad and Punita Kumar in the central Indian city of Raipur, raves about the dramas' universality of themes, the strong characterization and the emotional range.

"Pakistani characters are not only heroes or villains. They have shades to them, and that is very human," says Kumar, who chanced upon a Pakistani drama through a chunky videocassette when she was a teenager living in the northern Indian city of Aligarh. It was love at first watch.

"They captivated me. We got a cable connection that offered PTV. Then YouTube came and I realized I could search for whatever drama I wanted. I haven't taken a step," she said. "We get exposure to Pakistani life in the scenes, but the struggles the characters have with their relatives are ones I would have with my own." Pakistani TV veteran Khaled Anam is delighted by Indians' enthusiasm for the country's serials and the barriers they help erode.

"What Bollywood is to India, dramas are to Pakistan," says Anam, who is based in Karachi and has worked as an actor since the 1980s. He has appeared in many dramas, including the ratings smash "Humsafar" ("Life Partner").

India dominates the movie market in South Asia and beyond, with big stars and bigger budgets. Pakistanis have been exposed to Bollywood films for decades, although the prevailing hostile political climate means they can't watch them in movie theaters. The bans are mutual, though. India, like Pakistan, restricts content from across the border in movie theaters and TV channels.

And while India is no slouch when it comes to TV production, it doesn't offer viewers what Pakistan does, according to Anam: simplicity, depth of writing and a limited number of episodes.

"There are 15-minute flashbacks in Indian serials. (The characters) are decked out and dolled up. It's a fantasy world. The shows go on forever. Everything is 'DUN dun dun!'" says Anam, mimicking a dramatic musical riff and shaking his hands.

The actors on the couch in Islamabad are rehearsing lines about a woman who is disrespectful and so, according to one of them, is an unsuitable marriage prospect. The delivery and grammar could be heard in virtually any South Asian household.

Fashion



A model presents a creation as part of the Chanel Fall/Winter 2025-2026 Womenswear collection. (AP)



A model wears a creation as part of the Sacai Fall/Winter 2025-2026 Womenswear collection. (AP)



A model wears a creation as part of the Louis Vuitton Fall/Winter 2025-2026 Womenswear collection presented in Paris, Monday, March 10. (AP)



A model presents a creation as part of the Chanel Fall/Winter 2025-2026 Womenswear collection. (AP)



A model wears a creation as part of the Louis Vuitton Fall/Winter 2025-2026 Womenswear collection. (AP)

Sacai presents a masterclass in wrapping, reinvention

Vuitton channels travel, nostalgia in Paris

PARIS, March 11, (AP) — Just days after an unexploded World War II bomb near Paris' Gare du Nord briefly stole headlines, a different kind of spectacle unfolded across the street: Louis Vuitton's fashion show extravaganza Monday evening. The only explosions here at Paris Fashion Week were in fabric, form and a frenetic imagination. When designer Nicolas Ghesquière emerged for his bow, the audience's adulation reached a fever pitch, so much so that French first lady Brigitte Macron, in a rarely seen display of exuberance, leapt to her feet to plant a kiss on him.

The setting was "L'Étoile du Nord," described by Louis Vuitton as "a hidden station where past and future travelers converge, evoking the golden age of railway adventure." The show took place in this historic 1845 building, originally constructed for the Compagnie du Nord railway company to house its offices. Its atrium was meticulously transformed into a grand train station waiting room for the ready-to-wear display, reinforcing the theme of travel, anticipation, and adventure - Vuitton's very DNA.

From their front-row perch, Emma Stone, Jennifer Connelly, Ana de Armas, Chloë Grace Moretz, Lisa, Jaden Smith, Ava DuVernay, and Sophie Turner watched intently as projected shadowy figures drifted across the upper windows, as if ghostly travelers from another era. It was a fitting nod to

Vuitton's own origins at the dawn of the Orient Express and haute couture, when posh women needed to travel with innumerable cases to house their extensive mobile wardrobes.

On the runway below, Ghesquière spun a narrative of train stations both real and imagined, styling passengers for journeys unknown. There were detectives in trench coats, campers in bulky New Wave sweaters, and party girls rushing for the last train in ruched velvet. The designer has long been a master of cinematic dressing, pulling from a rolodex of filmic inspirations-classic whodunits, fantasies and comedies.

Elsewhere, a voluminous, cascading layered tulle skirt in deep fuchsia channeled Ghesquière's penchant for fusing styles of different centuries, juxtaposed with a contemporary architectural knit top and futuristic slicked-back hair.

Sacai

Chitose Abe's latest collection for Sacai is a masterful evolution of her signature hybridization, where garments aren't just worn - they move, morph, and envelop. The fall show on Monday embraced the art of wrapping, cocooning its protagonist in layers that exuded both protection and sensuality.

This season, Abe softened the brand's signature deconstruction with an almost liquid elegance. Gone were the

heavy-duty mashups of past seasons, replaced with sleek, elongated silhouettes that whispered rather than shouted. The designer took cues from her menswear collection, borrowing fur elements but reimagining them with a lighter touch - fur trims on jackets and tops, plush bags, even a fur T-shirt dress with a woven graphic that delivered effortless drama.

Long mermaid skirts, some repurposed and reconstructed with graphic panels, skimmed the body, paired with slouched riding boots. Sequins and feathered textures punctuated the collection, lending a new softness to Sacai's usual edge. Ponchos, rendered in puffer, wool, and fur, wrapped around models like shields against the cold-functional yet utterly chic.

Abe's expert play with textiles extended into her signature hybrids. Military-style jackets featured unexpected knitted panels, lending a tactile contrast to the structured tailoring. "Photo stitch" embroideries, inspired by Man Ray, adorned select pieces, drawing focus to the lips and eyes - subtle nods to beauty and intimacy in a season defined by the motion of embracing.

The Sacai woman has always been a study in contrasts, but this season, the balance tilted toward a deeper, more sensual form of protection. At 25 years in, Chitose Abe isn't done pushing boundaries - she's simply refining them.



From left: Dakota Fanning, Jessica Alba, Camila Cabello and Shye arrive for the the Chanel Fall/Winter 2025-2026 Womenswear collection presented Tuesday, March 11, in Paris. (AP)

Air pollution causes 7 million deaths annually

Majority of world's population breathes dirty air: report

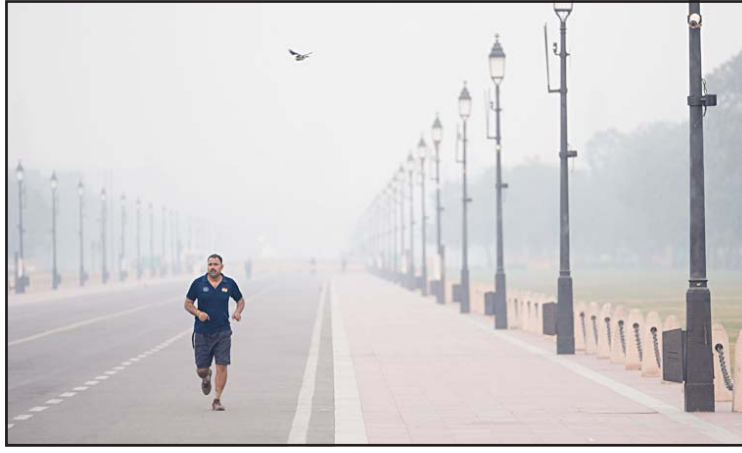
BENGALURU, India, March 11, (AP): Most of the world has dirty air, with just 17% of cities globally meeting air pollution guidelines, a report Tuesday found.

Switzerland-based air quality monitoring database IQAir analyzed data from 40,000 air quality monitoring stations in 138 countries and found that Chad, Congo, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India had the dirtiest air. India had six of the nine most polluted cities with the industrial town of Bymihat in northeastern India the worst.

Experts said the real amount of air pollution might be far greater as many parts of the world lack the monitoring needed for more accurate data. In Africa, for example, there is only one monitoring station for every 3.7 million people.

More air quality monitors are being set up to counter the issue, the report said. This year, report authors were able to incorporate data from 8,954 new locations and around a thousand new monitors as a result of efforts to better monitor air pollution.

But last week, data monitoring for air pollution was dealt a blow when



A man jogs in the early morning smog in New Delhi, Nov. 1, 2024. (AP)

the US State Department announced it would no longer make public its data from its embassies and consulates around the world.

Breathing in polluted air over a long period of time can cause respiratory illness, Alzheimer's disease and cancer, said Fatimah Ahmad, chief scientist and air pollution expert at Malaysia-

based Sunway Centre for Planetary Health. The World Health Organization estimates that air pollution kills around 7 million people each year.

Ahamad said much more needs to be done to cut air pollution levels. The WHO had earlier found that 99% of the world's population lives in places that do not meet recommended air

quality levels.

"If you have bad water, no water, you can tell people to wait for half an hour a day, the water will come. But if you have bad air, you cannot tell people to pause breathing," she said.

Several cities like Beijing, Seoul, South Korea, and Rybnik in Poland have successfully improved their air quality through stricter regulations on pollution from vehicles, power plants and industry. They've also promoted cleaner energy and invested in public transportation.

Another notable effort to curb severe air pollution was the Association of Southeast Asian Nations agreement on transboundary haze pollution. Even though its had limited success so far, ten countries in the region pledged to work together to monitor and curb pollution from large forest fires, a common occurrence in the region during dry seasons.

Shweta Narayan, a campaign lead at the Global Climate and Health Alliance, said many of the regions witnessing the worst air pollution are also places where planet-heating gases are released extensively through the burn-

ing of coal, oil and gas. Slashing planet-warming emissions to slow the heating up of the planet can also improve air quality, she said.

Meanwhile, Chinese researchers have revealed that increases in methane emissions could have an unexpected positive impact on future ozone recovery, shedding new light on climate governance.

The study, led by researchers from Beijing Normal University, was recently published in the journal *Advances in Atmospheric Sciences*.

The ozone layer acts as Earth's protective shield, blocking harmful ultraviolet radiation. While international efforts have helped curb ozone-depleting substances, the future recovery of the ozone layer faces new uncertainties due to global warming and human activities.

The research highlights the dual role of methane in ozone recovery. On one hand, methane is a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming, while on the other hand, it has complex chemical interactions in the atmosphere that can help the recovery of the stratospheric ozone layer, explained

Xie Fei, a professor at Beijing Normal University.

"Just as ozone can be harmful at ground level but beneficial in the stratosphere, methane and other ozone precursors exhibit similar dual characteristics," Xie said.

"Understanding these dual effects is critical for predicting future ozone recovery and its implications for climate," he added.

The research team conducted experiments to analyze the impacts of methane, carbon dioxide, and sea surface temperature on stratospheric ozone under the Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) 8.5 scenario in 2050. The RCP 8.5 scenario is a future climate pathway that assumes high greenhouse gas emissions and limited climate mitigation efforts, leading to significant global warming by the end of the century.

The results revealed that rising methane emissions could have a particularly strong positive impact on ozone recovery in both the Arctic and Antarctic regions.

Tobacco laws fail to protect kids

US's Utah first state to ban fluoride in drinking water

SALT LAKE CITY, March 11, (Agencies): Utah will become the first state to ban fluoride in public drinking water, despite widespread opposition from dentists and national health organizations.

Republican Gov. Spencer Cox said he would sign legislation that bars cities and communities from deciding whether to add the mineral to their water systems.

Fluoride strengthens teeth and reduces cavities by replacing minerals lost during normal wear and tear, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The addition of low levels of fluoride to drinking water has long been considered one of the greatest public health achievements of the last century.

Government researchers have found that community water fluoridation prevents about 25% of tooth decay.

"We've got tried and true evidence of the safety and efficacy of this public health initiative," said American Dental Association President Brad Kessler, of Denver. Cavities could start emerging in children within months or years of Utah stopping fluoridation, Kessler said.

The ban comes weeks after federal health secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who has expressed skepticism about water fluoridation, was sworn into office.

"It's not a bill I care that much about," Cox added, "but it's a bill I will sign."

Utah lawmakers who pushed for a ban said putting fluoride in water was too expensive. Its Republican sponsor, Rep. Stephanie Griecus, acknowledged fluoride has benefits, but said it was an issue of "individual choice" to not have it in the water.

Cox said that like many people in Utah, he grew up and raised his own children in a community that doesn't have fluoridated water - or what he called a "natural experiment."

"You would think you would see drastically different outcomes with half the state not getting it. We haven't seen that," Cox said in

a weekend interview with ABC4 in Salt Lake City. "So it's got to be a really high bar for me if we're going to require people to be medicated by their government."

Already, some cities across the country have gotten rid of fluoride from their water, and other municipalities are considering doing the same. A few months ago, a federal judge ordered the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to regulate fluoride in drinking water because high levels could pose a risk to kids' intellectual development.

A Utah teenager who urged lawmakers to pass the bill described suffering a medical emergency when the fluoride pump in Sandy, Utah, malfunctioned in 2019, releasing an excessive amount of the mineral into the drinking water. The fluoride sickened hundreds of residents and led many in Utah to push for its removal.

Tobacco: An Australian study has revealed significant weaknesses in the country's tobacco control laws have left children exposed to tobacco retailing.

Despite national laws that restrict tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, researchers from the University of Queensland found inconsistencies across states in how tobacco sales are regulated, with some allowing minors to sell tobacco, according to the study published on the website of the Drug and Alcohol Review on Sunday.

It also highlighted the lack of restrictions on marketing tactics, such as tobaccoists using toy displays to attract customers or toy stores selling tobacco products.

Additionally, there are no regulations controlling where tobacco retailers can operate, the authors said, stressing the need for stronger laws to better protect children from exposure to tobacco sales and marketing. The study investigated how comprehensively the current Australian regulatory framework protects children from potential exposure to tobacco marketing in retail settings.

NCDs linked to nearly 75% global deaths

Pharma calls for collective action on rising global chronic disease burden

GENEVA/NEW YORK, March 11, (AP): Ahead of a major UN milestone, the global pharmaceutical industry has issued a "Call to Action" urging collective action across the globe to tackle the rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, lung disease, mental health, and neurological disorders.

NCDs account for nearly 75% of global deaths. More than 18 million of the 43 million deaths that relate to NCDs are premature, with over 80% of premature deaths taking place in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). About 33% of the global population is living with an NCD, up to one in two of us will get cancer in our lifetimes, and about one billion people are affected by a mental health condition.

In 2021, it was estimated that investment in NCD prevention and control would yield an annual seven-fold return in LMICs within a decade. This approach, which includes lifestyle interventions such as healthy diet and exercise as well as primary healthcare, could lead to an expected USD 230 billion economic gain by 2030.

New research carried out by Airfinity, which has been released as part of the Call to Action, and demonstrates that investing an additional 1% of GDP in public healthcare spending, where at least 40% is aimed at preventing and treating NCDs through primary health care, could save approximately 5 million lives each year in LMICs. This can be achieved through implementing ex-



A student runs a test at Duke University pharmacology and cancer biology professor Donald McDonnell's lab Tuesday, March 4, in Durham, N.C. (AP)

isting cost-effective interventions such as cardiovascular disease management, diabetes screening, and respiratory care. The data supports growing consensus that more funding is needed to bend the curve on NCDs.

The new research has been released by IFPMA, the trade association representing the pharmaceutical industry to the United Nations, ahead of the High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the prevention and control of NCDs and mental health this September. The meeting is expected to result in a political declaration to drive action to reduce the global burden of these conditions worldwide.

Over 1,400 medicines have been approved for NCDs in the past 10 years, which have transformed how we fight disease, and are improving the lives of hundreds of millions of people living with chronic conditions. Today, there are a further 9,600 NCD medicines at various stages of research and development.

Despite this progress, there are still significant barriers and delays in ensuring these medicines and vaccines can reach the people who need them, and there are still NCDs for which there is not adequate treatment. To improve end-to-end access for people living with NCDs, IFPMA calls for collective action to:

Online course targets smoking-related diseases

LONDON, March 11, (AP): UK-based public health agency, Knowledge•Action•Change (K•A•C), is launching a free online course called Understanding Tobacco Harm Reduction in a bid to reduce the disease and mortality caused by combustible tobacco and toxic smokeless products.

Smoking-related diseases continue to cause eight million global deaths each year, but nicotine is not the cause of tobacco-related illnesses. For people who cannot, or will not, give up smoking, there is now a range of alternative nicotine-delivery options available that pose fewer risks to health. Encouraging as many of those who smoke to switch to these safer nicotine products (SNP), which include nicotine vapes (e-cigarettes), heated tobacco products, nicotine pouches and snus, provides a massive opportunity for global tobacco harm reduction (THR)

efforts to reduce smoking-related disease. This course promotes the evidence base for this potentially life-saving public health intervention to a wide audience.

Building on the success of K•A•C's groundbreaking Tobacco Harm Reduction Scholarship Programme, which has nurtured more than 100 tobacco harm reduction researchers and advocates from 55 countries, the same team is now providing the opportunity for all those seeking to reduce the toll of smoking to access a high-quality open access course, Understanding Tobacco Harm Reduction.

The course was developed with contributions from a range of experts in public health and tobacco harm reduction, including researchers, medical professionals, and educators. It's funded by a grant from Global Action to End Smoking.

Cautious recovery

Pope's health improves: docs

ROME, March 11, (AP): Pope Francis woke up Tuesday to good news from his doctors: They upgraded his prognosis and say he is no longer in imminent danger of death as a result of the double pneumonia that has kept him hospitalized for nearly a month in the longest and gravest threat to his 12-year papacy.

The 88-year-old pope isn't out of the woods yet, however. Doctors are still cautious and have decided to keep him hospitalized for several more days to receive treatment, not to mention a period of rehabilitation he will likely need.

But the doctors said he remains stable and has consolidated improvements in recent days, according to blood tests and his good response to treatment. Francis, who has chronic lung disease, is still using supplemental oxygen during the day and a ventilation mask at night to help him breathe.

In an early update Tuesday, the Vatican said Francis woke up around 8 a.m. after a quiet night. The Argentine Jesuit has regularly been sleeping in while at Gemelli hospital; his usual wakeup time at the Vatican is around 4:30 a.m.

Late Monday, doctors lifted their "guarded" prognosis for the pope, meaning they determined he was no longer in imminent danger as a result of the original respiratory infection he arrived with on Feb. 14. But their caution remained, given Francis' fragility and risks of other complications.

"In view of the complexity of the clinical picture and the important infectious picture presented on admission, it will be necessary to continue medical drug therapy in a hospital setting for additional days," the Vatican statement said.

In a sign of his improved health, Francis followed the Vatican's week-long spiritual retreat via videoconference on Monday in both the morning and afternoon sessions, something he was likely to continue to do through the week.



Pope Francis

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'Neymar's behavior of the last five, six years has come back'

Injured Neymar under fire for missing semifinal after celebrating Carnival

SAO PAULO, March 11, (AP): Neymar's excuse for missing a semifinal with Santos was criticized because he was seen at Carnival last week.

Santos lost to archrival Corinthians 2-1 on Sunday in the semifinals of the Sao Paulo state championship, and Neymar sat on the bench for all 90 minutes. On Monday, he said he had a minor injury without elaborating.

Days earlier, the striker was photographed at Rio de Janeiro's Sambadrome, the venue for the glitzy Carnival parade.

Neymar, who rejoined his boyhood club Santos in January, attended the Carnival parade only hours after being substituted in the second half of another Sao Paulo state championship match on March 2 because of an apparent left thigh injury.

He recently recovered from an ACL tear that sidelined him for more than one year.

Santos did not reveal Neymar had any injuries before Sunday's semifinal. "All I wanted was to be on the pitch and help my teammates in some way," Neymar said on Instagram. "But last Thursday I felt a discomfort that pre-

vented me from being on the pitch. We took a test this morning and I ended up feeling it again."

Santos coach Pedro Caixinha said he asked Neymar to stay on the bench despite the injury.

"It was just a discomfort, but it meant he couldn't participate. It was my request and he agreed to be with the squad," Caixinha said in a news conference after his team's elimination. "He's a different player, he is enlightened and has fantastic energy. Neymar suffered a lot for not being able to participate in the game."

Still, many pundits accused Neymar of not focusing on his career, which he is trying to revive at the Brazilian club following spells at Barcelona, Paris Saint-Germain and Al-Hilal.

"He chose Carnival over the semifinal," popular pundit Walter Casagrande Jr. said on his social media channels. "Neymar's behavior of the last five, six years has come back. He switches the professional side for pleasure and fun."

Santos president Marcelo Teixeira told local media that Neymar was exam-

ined several times from Friday to Sunday and all of them showed he was unfit to play against Corinthians.

"It is a precaution, we understood we shouldn't (play him)," Teixeira said. "It is not about the national team, it is because he had not conditions (to play). He is in a process of recovery. We need to understand that."

Spanish newspaper Marca described the Brazilian player's week as "Neymar's saddest Carnival after being tossed by Barcelona; on the bench and knocked out."

The 33-year-old striker has three goals and three assists in seven matches for Santos since his return. Those stats convinced Brazil coach Dorival Jr. to recall him for World Cup qualifiers this month against Colombia and Argentina.

Neymar's next match for Santos is likely on March 29, after the international window, in the opening round of the Brazilian league against Vasco da Gama. Santos was promoted to the country's top league after its 2023 relegation.

Newcastle edges West Ham before League Cup final against Liverpool



Newcastle United's Joelinton and West Ham United's Tomas Soucek, left, battle for the ball during the English Premier League match between West Ham and Newcastle United at the London Stadium, London. (AP)

Guimaraes on target

LONDON, March 11, (AP): Newcastle warmed up for the English League Cup final by laboring past West Ham 1-0 in the Premier League.

Saudi-owned Newcastle will return to London to face Liverpool at Wembley on Sunday, seeking its first domestic trophy since the 1955 FA Cup.

However, Eddie Howe's men will doubtless need more penetration if they are to beat an in-form Liverpool.

Newcastle rose three places into sixth in the Premier League but it was a lackluster performance in a stuffy encounter that provided few moments of excitement.

The only goal came from Bruno Guimaraes in the 63rd minute. Harvey Barnes lofted a ball into the six-yard box and the Newcastle captain got the slightest of touches to take it past the goalkeeper.

Guimaraes said all focus will turn to Wembley as Newcastle prepares for a potentially historic occasion.

"It is massive for the club's history and we want to be part of it," the Brazilian said. "We know we're going to play against one of the best teams.

"I believe that we can win. In a final anything can happen. I believe our fans can make the difference for us. We want to make history for this club. It is a long time for the fans without a trophy."

West Ham, meanwhile, lamented a loss that robbed it of its first hat trick of wins since December 2023. It sits 16th in the 20-team Premier League.

"We started both halves very well, it was a tight game, and we're disappointed with the goal," Hammers boss Graham Potter said. "I felt for the players because they gave everything - not enough to win the game but enough to get something from it."

MCG to host a night match between Australia and England to mark 150 years of test cricket

MELBOURNE, March 11, (AP): The 150th anniversary test between Australia and England will be held under lights at the Melbourne Cricket Ground from March 11-15, 2027.

Cricket Australia announced Tuesday that the historic match will be the first day-night men's test at the MCG.

The famous stadium on the edge of downtown Melbourne hosted the first cricket test in 1877 and the centenary test between Australia and England in 1977. Australia won by a 45-run margin in both of those matches.

"The 150th-anniversary test at the MCG will be one of the great cricket events, and playing under lights will be a fantastic way to celebrate both our game's rich heritage and test cricket's modern evolution," Cricket Australia chief executive



In this file photo, Australia's Steve Smith plays a shot during the ICC Champions Trophy cricket match between Australia and Afghanistan. (AP)

Todd Greenberg said. "It will also help ensure more people can attend and watch what will be a fantastic

occasion. "The Centenary Test created many iconic performances, includ-

ing David Hookes' five consecutive boundaries off Tony Greig, Rick McCosker batting with a broken jaw, and Derek Randall's defiant century, and I'm sure the 150th test will create its own lifelong memories."

Australia is hosting the 2025-26 Ashes series against England starting in November.

The Australian men's team, coming off a semifinal run at the Champions Trophy, is set to defend its World Test Championship title in a final against South Africa in England in June.

Australia has won 12 of the 13 day-night test matches - which are played with a pink ball and have day and night sessions daily - it has contested at home since introducing the concept in 2015. Eight of those tests have been in Adelaide, and none has started later than Jan. 25.

1st female IOC presidential candidate

Coventry champions neutrality, innovation and gender equality

PARIS, March 11, (Xinhua): As the International Olympic Committee (IOC) prepares to elect its next president next week, Kirsty Coventry, a two-time Olympic champion and the only female candidate in the race has emphasized the importance of maintaining the Olympic Movement's neutrality in global politics.

In an exclusive online interview with Xinhua, Coventry stressed, "It is essential that the IOC upholds its neutrality and ensures that politics does not interfere with athletes' opportunities to compete. We must also focus on protecting and supporting athletes from conflict-affected regions, ensuring their continued participation in the Games." The 41-year-old Zimbabwean, who won two gold, four silver, and one bronze Olympic medals during her illustrious swimming career, has held key roles in sports administration since retiring. She currently serves as a member of the IOC Executive Board and as her country's Minister of Sport, Art & Recreation.

"I have been fortunate to experience the Olympic Movement from multiple perspectives - first as an athlete, then as a sports administrator, and later as a government official overseeing national sports policy," she said.

"This experience has helped me understand the challenges that athletes, National Olympic Committees (NOCs), and International Federations (IFs) face." Now seeking the highest position in the IOC, Coventry emphasized that improving the governance of the organization remains one of her top priorities should she be elected as its first female president.

"We would really need to look at all of our policies, ensure that they're relevant, that they're transparent, and that they're based on our guiding principles and values," she noted.

She also emphasized that the role of IOC members should be more clearly defined, ensuring accountability within the organization.

Coventry, who has been involved in the planning for the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games and Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games, believes that ensuring the sustainability of the Olympic Games is another key issue.

"We are already putting things in place to allow, let's take Milano Cortina next year, to be a little bit more spread out, to use existing police facilities within a region," she said. "We are no longer saying,



Kirsty Coventry, famous swimmer of Zimbabwe prepares to award medals before the awarding ceremony of Nanjing 2014 Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing, capital of east China's Jiangsu Province. (Xinhua)

'you have to build X, Y, and Z' if that doesn't fit into your long-term strategy as a city or as a country." She also highlighted the need for early engagement with host cities to ensure better long-term planning.

Reflecting on the progress made in gender equality, Coventry praised the historic gender parity achieved at Paris 2024 but acknowledged that more work remains.

"I think we've done a really good job on the field of play, but we need it to filter down. We need gender equality to really filter down into the National Olympic Committees, into the international federations," she said.

With the first Olympic Esports Games set to take place in Saudi Arabia in 2027, Coventry stressed the need to modernize the Olympic Games to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world.

"The way young people consume sports content has changed, and we must adapt by reaching them on digital platforms and embracing new forms of engagement," she said, highlighting esports as a major opportunity for connecting with new audiences.

"We want to understand the community. Hundreds of millions of youngsters play esports. The gaming world is so big, and we have recognized that as the IOC - that this could be a really great opportunity for us as a movement to share our values with this community."

Best of the Rest

Own goal earns point for Gimnasia: Colombian defender Yeison Murillo scored a late own goal as Gimnasia salvaged a 1-1 home draw with Deportivo Riestra in Argentina's Primera Division Apertura tournament on Monday.

Antony Alonso gave his side an early lead with a low finish after Nicolas Sansotre's cross and Carlo Herrera missed a chance to double the advantage when his tame 89th-minute penalty was saved by Nelson Insfran.

The hosts were gifted an equalizer in the 95th minute as Murillo bundled the ball into his own net while trying to keep out a cross.

Gimnasia is now sixth in the 15-team Group B standings with 11 points from nine games, a point behind fifth-placed Riestra.

Elsewhere in Argentina's top flight on Monday, Independiente Rivadavia eased to a 2-0 home victory over Union Santa Fe and Talleres Cordoba was held to a goalless home draw by Rosario Central. (Xinhua)

Dupont backs France to win Six Nations: France will try to win the Six Nations without its talisman after captain Antoine Dupont ruptured cruciate ligaments in his right knee at the weekend.

Dupont was confident his teammates can take their first title since 2022 next Saturday - "You will do it," he wrote on Instagram - after demolishing defending champion Ireland 42-27 in Dublin. The scoreline flattered Ireland, whose hopes of an historic third successive title in the Six Nations era were crushed.

By the time France faces Scotland in Paris in the tournament finale it will know what it has to do as second-placed England and third-placed Ireland will have finished their campaigns against Wales in Cardiff and Italy in Rome respectively.

England used a licence to thrill to wallop Italy 47-24 on Sunday, a day after Scotland held off a Wales fightback 35-29 at Murrayfield. (AP)

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Four Chinese boxers advance to round of 16 at Worlds

NIS, Serbia, March 11, (Xinhua): Four Chinese boxers, including last year's double national gold medalist Cai Yan, triumphed in the first round of the IBA Women's World Boxing Championships in Nis, Serbia.

Cai, the reigning champion of China in the 57 kg category, defeated Maryina Muliarchyk of

Belarus in the featherweight category (54-57kg) by referee stoppage contest (RSC) at the Cair Sports Hall.

Wei Sitong, a silver medalist at the 2024 Chinese National Championships, also secured victory by RSC as she overcame Maia Odaiju of Moldova in the flyweight division (50-52kg).

In the minimum (45-48kg) category, Zhong Xueyun advanced to the round of 16 after beating Marta Lopez Del Arbol of Spain in a 5-2 decision.

Also on Monday, Zhao Shuoyu edged out Slovakia's Jessica Tribelova in the light welterweight (60-63kg) category with a narrow 4-3 victory, setting up a clash with

Aida Abikeyeva of Kazakhstan in the round of 16 on Tuesday. Meanwhile, Zhao Xuan was eliminated by Vo Thi Kim Anh of Vietnam in the bantamweight (52-54kg) division.

The IBA Women's World Boxing Championships are scheduled to run from March 8 to 16 across 12 weight categories.

Change Name

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Participants of the fitness challenge at Lose Gain.

Fitness is a key element of a healthy lifestyle, especially during Ramadan

Gulf Bank hosts two-day fitness challenge with valuable prizes at Lose Gain gym as part of its Ramadan program

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: For the third consecutive year, Gulf Bank successfully organized an exhilarating fitness challenge at Lose Gain, a specialized group training gym. The event combined high-energy workouts with friendly competition, creating a vibrant and motivating environment under the expertise of professional trainers.

The challenge consisted of a 25-minute team competition, with participants divided into groups of three. Through a series of running and floor exercises, they put their endurance, strength, and determination to the test, demonstrating teamwork and strategic planning to achieve success.

The first-place team received KD 1,500 and travel tickets, while the second-place winners earned KD 750. The third-place team was awarded KD 450, along with additional valuable prizes.

Participants thanked Gulf Bank for organizing the challenge and for its active role in promoting a culture of fitness and well-being. Gulf Bank takes pride in encouraging a healthy lifestyle during the holy month of Ramadan, aligning with the spiritual essence of the season and encouraging positive lifestyle habits throughout the year.

This initiative reflects Gulf Bank's ongoing commitment to corporate social responsibility, with a variety of community-focused programs held throughout the year, especially during Ramadan. Through these initiatives, Gulf Bank continues to strengthen its bond with the community, solidifying its reputation as the Bank closest to the people.

Fitness is a key element of a healthy lifestyle, especially during Ramadan. Even while fasting, exercise can greatly improve overall health, increase energy levels, and enhance both physical and mental well-being.

Gulf Bank aims to be Kuwait's leading bank, fostering a diverse and in-



Left-right: The exhilarating fitness challenge in progress.

clusive workplace to deliver exceptional customer service while contributing sustainably to the community. Through its extensive branch network and innovative digital services, the Bank empowers customers to conduct banking transactions conveniently and efficiently, ensuring a seamless experience.

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

Lazio misses chance to go 4th after drawing with Udinese

Late Stuani penalty rescues point for Girona

ROME, March 11, (AP): Lazio missed a chance to go fourth in Serie A when it struggled at home against Udinese to 1-1.

The Rome club began the night two points behind Juventus in fifth and went a goal down midway through the first half, Florian Thauvin rampaging through the Lazio defense before volleying in from close range after a penalty box scramble.

Alessio Romagnoli levelled 10 minutes later. Matias Vecino nodded on a corner kick from the right and the veteran defender appeared at the back post to poke home his first goal of the season.

The result means both sides extended their unbeaten league runs to six games but Lazio was left in fifth, a point behind Juventus, which lost at home to Atalanta 4-0 at the weekend. Udinese remained 10th.

Inter Milan midfielder Piotr Zielinski could be out for a few weeks after a calf strain.



Lazio's Alessio Romagnoli celebrates after scoring his side's first goal during the Serie A soccer match between Lazio and Udinese at the Rome's Olympic stadium, Italy. (AP)

Zielinski missed Tuesday's return game against Feyenoord in the Champions League round of 16 after he was

injured on Saturday in a 3-2 win over Monza in Serie A.

Zielinski came on as a substitute in the 70th minute but had to be helped off the field just three minutes later.

The Polish midfielder strained the medial gastrocnemius muscle, part of his right calf, the club said on Monday.

Zielinski has played 33 times for Inter in all competitions this season, scoring twice.

However, Inter will be boosted by the return of first-choice goalkeeper Yann Sommer after he missed the past three matches with a broken thumb. Nerazzurri coach Simone Inzaghi confirmed on Monday that Sommer will start in goal against Feyenoord.

Meanwhile, Christian Stuani's late penalty gave Girona a 1-1 draw at Espanyol in La Liga.

The 38-year-old Uruguayan scored within three minutes remaining to rob Espanyol of a vital three points in its fight to avoid the drop.

The Barcelona-based side was 15th in the 20-team table, only two points clear of the relegation zone. Girona was 13th, five points above it.



Lazio's goalkeeper Ivan Provedel, left, makes a save of a shot by Udinese's Lorenzo Lucca during the Serie A soccer match between Lazio and Udinese at the Rome's Olympic stadium, Italy. (AP)

'Start of an incredibly exciting journey'

Manchester Utd announces plans for state-of-the-art 100,000-seat stadium

LONDON, March 11, (AP): Manchester United unveiled plans on Tuesday to build the "world's greatest" soccer stadium.

A proposed 100,000-seater arena would surpass Wembley as the biggest in the United Kingdom.

Under the plans, the 20-time English champion said it would build next to its iconic Old Trafford ground, likely meaning it would not need to relocate during the construction process.

"Our current stadium has served us brilliantly for the past 115 years, but it has fallen behind the best arenas in world sport," part-owner Jim Ratcliffe said. "By building next to the existing site, we will be able to preserve the essence of Old Trafford, while creating a truly state-of-the-art stadium that transforms the fan experience only footsteps from our historic home."

United did not say how much the stadium would cost or reveal a timeline for its completion, but architect Norman Foster said building work would take five years.

British billionaire Ratcliffe paid \$1.3 billion for an initial 25% stake in United last year and made a new stadium one of his priorities.

The possibility of redeveloping Old Trafford, one of the most iconic

stadiums in soccer, was considered but an entirely new construction was the preferred option.

"Today marks the start of an incredibly exciting journey to the delivery of what will be the world's greatest football stadium," Ratcliffe said.

United wants the venue to be part of a wider project to regenerate the surrounding Old Trafford area,

which it said would be worth 7.3 billion pounds (\$9.4 billion) to the U.K. economy. The U.K. government has already voiced its support for the project, although the specifics of how it would be funded are not known.

Wembley is currently the biggest stadium in the U.K., with a capacity of 90,000, and is home to England's national soccer team.

Twickenham, which is home to the national rugby team, holds 82,500.

Old Trafford is the country's biggest dedicated soccer stadium with a capacity of just over 74,000, but is dated in comparison to the likes of the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London, which regularly hosts NFL games.

"Our long-term objective as a club is to have the world's best football team playing in the world's best stadium," United chief executive Omar Berrada said.

Managerial great Alex Ferguson said the club "must be brave and seize this opportunity to build a new home, fit for the future, where new history can be made."

The announcement came days after thousands of United fans marched in protest against the club's ownership in the face of cost cuts, ticket price rises, and ongoing failure on the field.

United is majority-owned by the American Glazer family, which also owns the NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Upon investing, Ratcliffe vowed to return the once-dominant club back to the summit of European soccer after more than a decade since it last won the Premier League.



Manchester United co-owner Jim Ratcliffe, center, waits for the start of the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Arsenal at Old Trafford stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

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The Chairman of Indonesian National Soccer Association (PSSI) Erick Thohir, center, poses for photographers with newly appointed technical advisor of Indonesia's national soccer team Jordi Cruyff, son of Netherlands' legendary soccer Johan Cruyff, left, and head coach Patrick Kluijvert, right, during a press conference in Jakarta, Indonesia. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait continues preparations for 2026 World Cup qualifiers



Players intensify training for the qualifiers.

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

DUBAI, March 11: Kuwait is continuing its daily training sessions in Dubai, UAE, as part of its preparation for the upcoming 2026 World Cup qualifiers against Iraq and Oman, scheduled for March 20 and 25, respectively.

The training, which began on Monday under the leadership of Argentine coach Juan Pizzi, will continue until the friendly match against China on Friday. The Kuwaiti delegation will then travel to Basra, Iraq, next Tuesday for the qualifiers.

Players from Al-Qadisiya are expected to join the camp today as they prepare for their Gulf Champions League semi-final match against Al-Nasr of the Emirates.

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti Olympic team has started its preparations for the West Asian Championship, which will take place in Muscat, Oman, beginning March 19. The Olympic Blue team will face Jordan in their first match, with the winner advancing to the semi-finals.

Dr. Ahmed Ajab, a board member of the Kuwait Football Federation, attended the training session to offer support to the players.

In another development, the Kuwaiti youth team announced its, which includes 28 players in preparation for upcoming events. Training for the youth team will begin today. The delegation will depart for Qatar on March 15 for an external camp, where it will play three friendly matches—two against Aspire Academy and one against the Thai national team.

Al Arabi and Al Seeb set for high-stakes 2nd leg



In this file photo, Al Arabi players celebrate after winning the first leg.

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: Al Arabi will face Al Seeb of Oman at 9:30 pm at the Seeb National Stadium for the second leg of the Asian Challenge Cup quarter-finals (West Zone). In the same round, Turkmenistan's Arkadag will host India's East Bengal.

Al Arabi, who won 1-0 in the first leg, is eager to secure a spot in the West Zone final and compete for the coveted Asian title, which has eluded the club. The team enters the match with confidence, bolstered by a strong season and their advantage from the first leg. To progress, Al Arabi only needs to win or draw.

The team, which is also in the running for the Zain Premier League title, shares the top spot with Kuwait Club, with six rounds left in the tournament. Coach Nasser Al Shatti has

a squad full of talented players across all positions, including key figures like Hassan Hamdan, Ali Khalaf, Jumaa Aboud, Hussein Ashkanani, Bandar Al Salamah, and Suleiman Abdul Ghafoor, along with foreign players Anabo Iwala and Christopher John from Nigeria, Hamza Khaba from Morocco, and Kamil Al Aswad from Bahrain.

Al Arabi is also determined to redeem itself after being eliminated by Al Seeb in the 2022 AFC Cup.

On the other hand, Al Seeb will look to capitalize on its home advantage and crowd support to take revenge on Al Arabi and knock it out of the tournament. To rally the fans, Al Seeb's president, Shihab bin Tariq, has offered to cover the cost of tickets.

The winner of this two-legged tie will face the victor of the matchup between East Bengal and Arkadag, the latter making its AFC debut.

Kuwait ice hockey team gears up for Division Four World Cup in Armenia



The President of the Kuwaiti Winter Games Club, Fahid Al-Ajmi.

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: The President of the Kuwaiti Winter Games Club, Fahid Al-Ajmi, announced that Kuwait's national ice hockey team will compete in the 2025 World Cup (Division IV), set to take place in Armenia from April 13 to 19. The tournament, featuring six teams, will be held under the full supervision of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF).

Al-Ajmi emphasized the significance of the event, noting that the champion will earn promotion to Division III in the next edition of the World Championship, which is held biennially. He also highlighted that this will be the first time the tournament features six teams, adding to its competitiveness and intensity.

According to the official draw, Kuwait will open its campaign against Uzbekistan, followed by matches against Indonesia, host nation Armenia, and Malaysia before concluding the group stage against Iran. Al-Ajmi expressed confidence in the Kuwaiti players, expecting them to deliver strong performances throughout the tournament.

In preparation for the competition, the team has been undergoing intensive training at the club's facility under the guidance of German coach Andreas Bartkevicz. Additionally, they will hold a training camp in Bulgaria from March 31 to April 11 before heading directly to Armenia for the tournament.

Al-Ajmi highlighted the team's positive momentum, following their impressive showing at the 9th Asian Winter Games in Harbin, China, last February. Kuwait secured three victories, with their only loss coming against Kyrgyzstan, a team competing at a higher World Championship level. This strong performance, he believes, is a promising sign for Kuwait's aspirations in the upcoming tournament.

Nuggets and Thunder split season series

Surging Hawks beat short-handed 76ers

OKLAHOMA CITY, March 11, (AP): Nikola Jokic had 35 points, 18 rebounds, and eight assists, and the Denver Nuggets beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 140-127 on Monday night.

Jamal Murray scored 34 points for the Nuggets, who lost 127-103 in Oklahoma City on Sunday.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, the NBA's leading scorer and a top contender for league MVP with Jokic, finished with 25 points for the Thunder. He scored 40 the day before.

Lu Dort had a season-high 26 points and made eight 3-pointers and Isaiah Hartenstein scored 20 points for Oklahoma City. The loss snapped a seven-game win streak for the Thunder, who have the best record in the Western Conference and are vying with Cleveland for the top record in the league.

The season series ends tied at 2-all, with the teams splitting the games at each venue.

Hawks 132, 76ers 123
In Atlanta, Dyson Daniels scored 25 points, and the surging Atlanta Hawks beat the short-handed Philadelphia 76ers.

Atlanta shot 54.1% from the field and had six players score in double figures. Zacharie Risacher had 22 points, including 20 in the first half, and Terance Mann added a season-high 19.

The Hawks (31-34) have won three

straight and four of five overall.

Warriors 130, Trail Blazers 120
In San Francisco, Stephen Curry scored 24 points and moved within two 3-pointers of becoming the first player in NBA history with 4,000. Jimmy Butler had a triple-double, and surging Golden State won their fifth straight game by beating Portland.

Curry, who became the 26th player in NBA history to score 25,000 points during Saturday's win against Detroit, needed seven 3s to reach the milestone. He made his first two early then another three in the third.

Butler contributed 15 points, 10 assists and 10 rebounds for the Warriors' first triple-double this season. Golden State improved to 12-2 since Butler made his debut Feb. 8 and 12-1 in games he played.

Gary Payton II scored a career-high 26 points in the Warriors' 10th win in their last 11 games.

Celtics 114, Jazz 108
In Boston, Sam Hauser made nine 3-pointers - seven in the third quarter - and finished with a career-high 33 points to lead short-handed Boston past Utah.

Hauser became the fourth Celtics player to make nine 3s in a game in 2024-25, joining Jayson Tatum, Payton Pritchard and Derrick White - the first time in NBA history that four teammates have done that in a season.

Nets 111, Lakers 108
In New York, Noah Clowney scored 19 points and Brooklyn beat Los Angeles in the Lakers' first game since losing LeBron James to a strained left groin.



Los Angeles Lakers' Jarred Vanderbilt, front left, and Luka Doncic, right, and Brooklyn Nets' Ziaire Williams, center, chase the ball during the second half of an NBA basketball game in New York. (AP)

Luka Doncic had 22 points, 12 rebounds and 12 assists for LA, but he shot only 8 for 26. Austin Reaves was 3 for 14 as the guards struggled with James and other key frontcourt players sidelined.

Cam Johnson and Keon Johnson each added 18 points for the Nets, who snapped a seven-game losing streak. Tyrese Martin finished with 14 points.

Hornets 105, Heat 102
In Miami, Miles Bridges scored 35 points, Mark Williams added 24 points

and 10 rebounds and Charlotte got their first divisional win of the season by beating reeling Miami.

It was the third time in March alone that Miami lost a game after leading by at least 17 points - all those collapses coming at home. The Heat led New York by 19 on March 2, led Chicago by 17 on Saturday and led the Hornets by 17 in the first half.

Raptors 119, Wizards 104
In Toronto, Toronto native A.J. Lawson made seven 3-pointers while scoring a career-high 32 points, and he

also had 12 of the Raptors' franchise-record 73 rebounds in a victory over Washington.

The Raptors (22-43) had four players with at least 10 rebounds in the same game for the first time in franchise history, and all had double-doubles. Their 73 rebounds are the most in the NBA this season.

Bulls 121, Pacers 103
In Chicago, Josh Giddey had a season-high 29 points along with 10 rebounds before leaving midway through the fourth quarter with a right

ankle injury, and Chicago won their third straight game, over Indiana.

Coby White also scored 29 points for the Bulls, who hold the final play-in spot in the Eastern Conference.

Rockets 97, Magic 84
In Houston, Jabari Smith Jr. had 20 points and tied a career high with five 3-pointers, helping Houston beat Orlando for their third consecutive victory.

Alperen Sengun had 14 points and 14 rebounds for Houston, and Steven Adams finished with 11 points and 17 boards.

Grizzlies 120, Suns 118
In Memphis, Ja Morant had 29 points and 12 assists, and Memphis rallied from an early 16-point deficit to beat Phoenix.

Cam Spencer, a rookie on a two-way contract, added a career-high 16 points for Memphis, including a pair of free throws with 14.4 seconds left that sealed the Grizzlies' third straight win.

Nuggets 140, Thunder 127
In Oklahoma City, Nikola Jokic had 35 points, 18 rebounds and eight assists, and Denver beat Oklahoma City.

Jamal Murray scored 34 points for the Nuggets, who lost 127-103 in Oklahoma City on Sunday. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, the NBA's leading scorer and a top contender for league MVP with Jokic, finished with 25 points for the Thunder. He scored 40 the day before. In San Antonio, Spencer Dinwiddie scored 28 points, and depleted Dallas stopped a five-game slide by edging San Antonio.

Klay Thompson had 26 points for Dallas in its first win since Feb. 27. Naji Marshall scored 24 points, and Kessler Edwards finished with 22 points and 11 rebounds.

Kuwaiti futsal team outclasses UAE in friendly



Kuwait and UAE players fighting for the ball during the friendly encounter.

DUBAI, March 11: The Kuwaiti futsal team secured a well-deserved 4-1 victory over UAE in a friendly match in Dubai, as both teams continue their preparations for upcoming competitions.

Saleh Al-Fadel opened the scoring for Kuwait, followed by Hamad Al-Awadhi, who netted two goals. Mohammed Al-Hazem rounded off the Kuwaiti goal tally. The UAE's sole goal came from an individual effort. Both teams delivered strong performances throughout the match, with the UAE attempting to close the gap. However, the Kuwaiti team's solid defense and attacking brilliance ensured a comfortable win.

This friendly is part of the teams' preparations for upcoming continental competitions, with each side aiming to sharpen its technical and physical readiness.

Al-Tadamon appoints Al-Qabandi as head coach

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 11: Al-Tadamon Club has announced the dismissal of first-team coach, Portuguese Felipe Moreira, and appointed assistant coach Jamal Al-Qabandi as his replacement.

Moreira, 60, had joined Al-Tadamon after his compatriot João Mota left to take over as head coach of Al-Hussein Irbid in Jordan. Despite securing a spot in the Zain Premier League's top six by finishing sixth with 20 points, avoiding relegation, Al-Tadamon's heavy 5-0 defeat to Kuwait in the preliminary round of the Crown Prince Cup was a turning point for the club.

Al-Qabandi will now take charge for the rest of the season, focusing on improving the team's league position and delivering a strong performance



File photo of Felipe Moreira gesturing.

in the Amir Cup. Al-Tadamon had shown promising form at the start of the season, with many tipping it as

potential dark horse for the title, but its recent results have seen a sharp decline.