



## Faith fills Kuwait's mosques on 20th night of Ramadan

'Sacred nights'

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: A profound sense of faith enveloped the country on the 20th night of Ramadan; as mosques throughout the country are filled with worshippers eager to perform the Qiyam prayer, seeking Allah's mercy and hoping to earn the blessings of these sacred nights.

In an atmosphere steeped in humility and supplication, the voices of worshippers resonated, embodying the deepest expressions of faith and a sincere closeness to the Almighty.

The first night saw only a few mosques open their doors to the faithful, including the Grand Mosque, Bilal bin Rabah Mosque and others. These mosques prepared meticulously for the occasion, with support from the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, working in close coordination with the other concerned authorities.

All necessary services were provided to ensure the comfort of worshippers, with special attention given to the elderly and those with special needs, in addition to carefully managing traffic around the main mosques.

At the Grand Mosque, worshippers began arriving early in the evening, entering an atmosphere filled with tranquility and reverence. The mosque itself had undergone thorough preparations to provide the best possible services. Women's prayer rooms were set up, facilities were organized, and dedicated teams were stationed throughout to ensure the comfort of the worshippers.

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### Ramadan Timings

Iftar	Friday	18:01
Imsak	Saturday	04:30
Iftar	Saturday	18:01
Imsak	Sunday	04:29



Devout worshippers gather at the Grand Mosque for Qiyam prayers on Wednesday night, seeking blessings in Ramadan's sacred nights.

Photos by Mohammad Morsi

### Sporadic rain, dust storms to disrupt Kuwait weekend



Photo by Samer Shiqer

Amid a dusty haze, motorists cautiously make their way towards Kuwait City, as a rare weather system grips the roads on Thursday.

KUWAIT CITY, March 20, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department announced on Thursday that Kuwait will be impacted by a shallow depression, which will deepen in tandem with a high-altitude depression, bringing in rain-laden clouds.

Acting Director Dhirar Al-Ali informed KUNA that rainfall is expected to occur sporadically until Saturday night, with Friday seeing intensified rain and dust waves in the afternoon, continuing through Saturday.

A gradual clearing of the atmosphere is anticipated to begin at midnight on Saturday.

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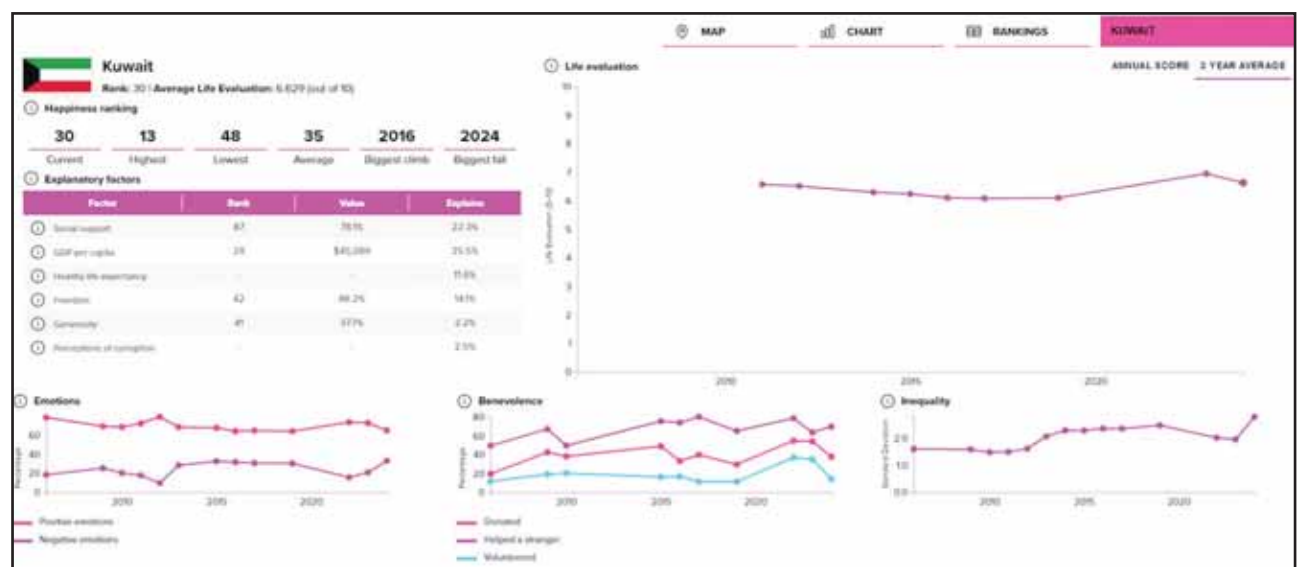
# Kuwait secures 30th spot in world happiness index

Steady ranking reflects resilience, progress

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: Kuwait has been ranked 30th in the World Happiness Report 2025, with an average life evaluation score of 6.629 out of 10. While the country's ranking has fluctuated over the years — rising as high as 13th and dropping to 48th — its overall average position of 35th reflects steady progress in well-being despite economic and social challenges.

The annual report, released Thursday by the Wellbeing Research Centre at the University

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Data shows Kuwait ranking released Thursday by the Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford, in collaboration with Gallup and the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, evaluates happiness levels in 147 countries based on self-reported well-being.

3 or 5 days break, pending moon sighting

## CSC sets Eid holidays for gov't sector

KUWAIT CITY, March 20, (KUNA): The Civil Service Commission (CSC) announced on Thursday suspending work at all ministries, governmental bodies, and public institutions for Eid Al-Fitr holiday, which will be determined based on the first day of Eid.

In a press statement, the CSC said that if the first day of Eid Al-Fitr falls on Sunday (March 30), the official holidays will be three days starting from Sunday (March 30), Monday (March 31), and Tuesday (April 1), with work resuming on Wednesday, April 2.

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Arab League condemns Israeli attacks on Gaza

## Kuwait urges global action to protect Palestinians

CAIRO, March 20, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait has called for the protection of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip from the Israeli occupation's continued crimes.

Speaking to KUNA on sidelines an extraordinary meeting of the Arab League Council on the developments in the Palestinian territories, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the Arab League Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi emphasized that the international community and the international organizations should assume their responsibilities towards the protection of the Palestinian people.

He also stressed that the mediators of the ceasefire deal have a role to play to end hostilities.

Ambassador Talal recalled that the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry has also issued a statement condemning the blatant Israeli violations and the bom-

bardment of civilians and called on the international community to take action against the Israeli occupation.



A man reacts over the bodies of victims of an Israeli army airstrike at Indonesia Hospital ahead of a mass funeral in Beit Lahia, northern Gaza Strip, Thursday, March 20, 2025. (AP)

He pointed out that Kuwait has spared no effort to offer all political and financial support to the Palestinian people and their rights.

The Arab League Council has strongly condemned the Israeli occupation for breaking the ceasefire agreement and resuming its brutal bombardment and horrific massacres against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

At the conclusion of its extraordinary meeting on the developments in the Palestinian territories, the Council adopted a resolution condemning the occupation's continued crimes of aggression, genocide, and ethnic cleansing against the Palestinian people.

The resolution called on the international community to implement all legal requirements related to the implementation of relevant resolutions to protect Palestinian civilians.

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66% children affected

## Survey reveals alarming rise in school violence in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: The Public Prosecution stated that the Juvenile Prosecution conducted a survey targeting 300 children, regardless of their legal status, who were summoned between September and December 2024. The aim of the survey was to determine the prevalence of school violence among children and its repercussions, as part of efforts to enhance legal and social protection for children, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

A video posted by the Public Pros-

ecution on its X platform account indicated that 391 cases of assault were recorded in the Juvenile Prosecution in 2024, an increase of 57 cases compared to 2023. In 2022, 362 cases were recorded, and in 2021, 226 cases.

The video highlighted an upward trend in cases of assault and fights since the 2021/2022 school year, which recorded 184 cases, compared to 227 cases in 2022/2023 and 272 cases in 2023/2024.

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2 'Visa waiver for Kuwaiti fans positive step'



8 Gulf Bank hosts Ramadan Iftar for General Fire Force members



8 Zain's drive-thru Girgeaan celebration ... an exceptional experience

### NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait has welcomed the diplomatic efforts exerted to resolve the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, especially the recent phone call between US President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

The call, according to a foreign ministry statement, is a "major step" towards de-escalation, appreciating at the same time Saudi efforts in this regard, which will host US-Russian talks.

The statement concluded by underlining the State of Kuwait's belief and support for resolving such crises in

peaceful manners. (KUNA)

ADEN: Kuwait's Direct-Aid Society's office in Yemen launched a project to provide Iftar (fastbreaking) meals to 3,800 families in need in three Yemeni governorates, as part of the "Kuwait Is by Your Side" campaign.

In a press statement on Thursday, the office's regional chairman Ali Butait said the project includes distributing 3,800 food baskets containing essential items for 26,600 individuals, until the end of the holy month of Ramadan. (KUNA)

## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 04:34 Asr ..... 15:23  
 Sunrise .. 05:53 Maghrib .. 17:59  
 Zohr ..... 11:56 Isha ..... 19:16

## Local

## Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** Warm and cloudy to partly cloudy with moderate to fresh southerly wind to south-easterly wind, with speeds of 20-55 km/h causing rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.  
**By Night:** Mild and cloudy to

## Weather

partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind changing to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-45 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	31	23

Kuwait Airport	32	18
Abdaly	34	23
Bubyan	25	22
Jahra	35	23
Fallaka Island	30	23
Salmiyah	25	19
Ahmadi	24	16
Jal Aliyah	32	23
Nuwaisib	31	22

# 'Visa waiver for Kuwaiti fans positive step'

Iraqi ambassador hosts Ramadan reception for well-wishers



Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Iraqi ambassador and Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud Al-Malek Al-Sabah.



Iraqi ambassador receives UK, EU and Bahrain ambassadors.



Iraqi ambassador and Bahraini ambassador to Kuwait.



Iraqi ambassador, Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud, Faisal Al-Jazzaf



Iraqi ambassador receives Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr Al-Mohammad Al-Mubarak and other guests.



Iraqi ambassador and visitors from the church.

Photos by Mohammad Morsi

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, March 20: Iraqi Ambassador to Kuwait Al-Munhal Al-Safi said the Iraqi Embassy hosted a reception at its diwaniya for well-wishers celebrating the holy month of Ramadan.**

In a press statement following the reception that took place recently in the presence of several royal family members, officials, ambassadors, members of the diplomatic corps, prominent figures, business leaders and representatives from all segments of the Kuwaiti society Al-Safi expressed his gratitude to all those who attended the event.

Meanwhile, in response to a question about the recent visit of Assistant Undersecretary for Bilateral Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Mohammad Bahr Al-Uloom Al-Safi described the visit as "brotherly" and expressed optimism that such visits will continue in the near future.

On the other hand, Advisor to the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud Al-Malik shared his happiness over attending the reception. He prayed for the enduring brotherhood, friendship and love between the two nations. "Kuwait and Iraq are brothers and neighbors with a long-standing relationship. Inshallah, this bond will remain strong forever," he said. He emphasized that the two countries' relationship is both geographically and brotherly rooted, likening it to that of "uncle and nephew," stressing it is built on mutual respect.

On the upcoming Kuwait-Iraq football match Sheikh Faisal wished success to both teams indicating "there are no losers in such a match. However, I do hope for a victory for Kuwait."

Sheikh Khaled Al-Bader Al-Mohammad also spoke at the event, affirming it is an honor to attend the reception at the invitation of the Iraqi Ambassador. "We are delighted to meet and connect with our diplomatic and Kuwaiti brothers," he said. He then expressed his Ramadan greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah.

He praised Iraq's initiative to waive visa requirements for Kuwaiti football fans, calling it a positive step. "Had we been hosting the tournament, we would have taken the same approach to ensure its success. Kuwait will always welcome them as they would in their second home," he asserted.

Describing the match between the Iraqi and Kuwaiti national teams as a "meeting of brothers," he added "this is a victory regardless of which team wins. Any country that advances to the finals represents the other, as we share the same hopes and aspirations."

## Other Voices

### Titbits ... holidays conundrum

By Ahmad alsarraf

Hakem Al-Mutairi founded the extremist religious Umma Party, which is banned by law. Al-Mutairi was sentenced to prison and is currently outside Kuwait. A controversial and widely circulated interview between Al-Mutairi and the tyrant Muammar Gaddafi gained attention on social media. One of the former leaders of this party, known for delivering fiery speeches against various groups, is now the dean of a prominent college at Kuwait University. Does this align with the government's efforts to ban such affiliations and partisanship?



alsarraf

More than three million expatriates live in Kuwait, most of whom are without their families due to local laws that prevent them from bringing their families for administrative reasons. As a result, many of these individuals seize the first opportunity to travel and reunite with their families. Also, tens of thousands of Kuwaiti citizens take advantage of the opportunity to travel abroad whenever they can, for well-known reasons.

The government often delays the timing of official holidays, particularly those associated with religious holidays, due to their dependence on moon sightings. However, several Gulf countries have long moved away from this practice and now specify the dates of all religious holidays for the entire year, ensuring they remain consistent. This allows both residents and citizens to plan their travel in advance, avoiding last-minute confusion. Unfortunately, this was not the case with the upcoming holiday, as the date was announced late, leaving many to wait until the final day to find out when the holiday would start and end!

We hope the government will urge the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to be more flexible in setting holiday dates for the benefit of travelers. We would like to see the same approach adopted by the UAE, for example, in determining holidays in advance, allowing everyone to plan their travel with ease and avoid last-minute changes to their schedules within the final three or four hours. This would help prevent confusion, inconvenience, and wasted time.

What we seek is simple common sense in determining the next Eid holiday, something we did not witness in the process of setting the date for the upcoming Eid al-Fitr.

■ The world knows Kuwait as a small,

peaceful, and wealthy state, renowned for its pioneering rule of law, its enlightened constitution, its assistance to both near and far countries, its distinguished artists, and its scientific publications and cultural magazines, many of which have unfortunately ceased publication.

The official magazine issued by the Ministry of Information suffers from weakness, repetition, lack of structure, and often superficial content.

We are unsure of the reasons behind this alarming decline in our cultural and artistic publications, and no one has provided us with an explanation, perhaps because no one knows the real cause.

If the issue is financial, it can easily be managed both officially and publicly. If the problem lies with the writers, contributors, employees, professionals, and art departments, then it becomes a different matter, one that requires the rebuilding of specialized cadres. Who will tell us the truth about this issue?

Huge construction projects, costing hundreds of millions of dinars, suffer from the bureaucracy of several government agencies, particularly the Kuwait Municipality and the Kuwait Fire Force. One successful project became the biggest victim of this bureaucracy until intervention occurred, and officials were urged to redouble their efforts and avoid obstructing this iconic project with illegal and illogical excuses.

Today, the "Hessa Al-Mubarak" project, the largest of its kind by any standard, faces the same arbitrary treatment. This situation requires the intervention of the distinguished Minister Abdullatif Al-Mishari to resolve the issue and facilitate the project's progress, within the confines of applicable laws, without any leniency concerning violations, if any.

■ We thank the government for its decisive action and decision to abolish exceptional pensions once and for all, restoring them to their logical and just limits.

We also thank the Minister of Interior for prohibiting traffic vehicles from using their flashers while on the road, and limiting their use to pursuits or stopping to manage accidents.

A group has raised \$10 million to build a children's hospital in Gaza, claiming to have approval from both the Kuwaiti and Palestinian authorities. This claim is inaccurate. We hope the Minister of Social Affairs will verify this information and temporarily withhold the funds until the situation is clearer, especially given that it is currently impossible to discuss the establishment of any major project in Gaza at this time.

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## Raising legal marriage age to 18 wins praise

### Historic reforms ensure women's rights: UN official

KUWAIT CITY, March 20, (KUNA): UN Secretary-General's Representative and Resident Coordinator in Kuwait Ghada Al-Taher said Wednesday Kuwait is witnessing historic legal reforms that reflect commitment to ensuring women's rights.

Speaking to KUNA on the occasion of abolishing Article 153 of the Penal Code, the UN official commended the step as strong proof of opposition to all forms of violence against women.

She lauded the recent decision to raise the legal marriage age to 18 years as a step towards protecting young people from relevant negative impacts, ensuring their rights to characteristic development and helping them take careful decisions that suit their lives.

She regarded such achievements as reflecting Kuwait's commitment to international human rights criteria and gender equality, enshrined in the Kuwaiti Constitution.

Regarding education, Taher said that Kuwait has made remarkable progress in supporting women and girls' learning as women in this

Gulf country make up more than 70 percent of university graduates.

In employment, she remarked that women constitute over 44.59 percent of Kuwait's manpower in educational, healthcare and administrative jobs.

The UN official noted that this year marks 30 years since the Beijing Declaration was adopted as the global framework of promoting women's empowerment.

She added that Kuwait is part of women's empowerment efforts by means of ensuring girls' access to learning, increasing economic opportunities and promoting legal frameworks to back this empowerment.

Taher went on saying that in spite of the significance of achievements made since 2015, it is still necessary to empower women to hold leading posts.

She, further, believed that women and gender equality do not only concern women themselves but they are also a main factor of building fairer and more sustainable communities.



Ghada Al-Taher

KUNA photo

She concluded by affirming that the UN would keep backing relevant national efforts and helping partners achieve Kuwait's new vision "New Kuwait 2025, which is mainly based on investment in human capital as part of Beijing-30 program.

## Third medical clinic inaugurated in Al-Mutla'a

### New infectious diseases hospital opens April end

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi announced that the new Infectious Diseases Hospital will be operational by the end of April, as the hospital is currently 90 percent complete.

Dr. Al-Awadhi also revealed that two new maternity hospitals will soon open in the Al-Sabah and Ahmadi health zones.

In a press statement issued on Wednesday on the sidelines of the inauguration of the Mutlaa Health Center (N8), Al-Awadhi explained that the ministry is implementing an ambitious plan to transform health zones into integrated medical cities, starting with Al-Sabah Medical City and Ahmadi Medical City. These two projects will serve as pioneering models, combining general and specialized hospitals with advanced health centers, aiming to enhance the

efficiency of the health system and meet the growing demand for medical services.

He highlighted the upcoming opening of the Al-Wafra Specialized Health Center in April, stressing that it will be a unique facility serving the residents of the southern region of the country.

The minister affirmed that the ministry is focused on expanding its infrastructure and supporting it with national personnel, including doctors, nurses, technicians, and administrators.

In addition, Dr. Al-Awadhi said the Mutlaa N8 Center is the third to open, following the launch of centers in N10 and N11 suburbs, as part of the Ministry of Health's strategy to establish 15 health centers,



Dr. Al-Awadhi

along with specialized centers, to serve the residents of the Mutlaa area.

He stressed that the center's opening is part of the ministry's commitment to its strategic plan aimed at improving and developing the health services provided to both citizens and residents.

He indicated that a mini-emergency center, serving the residents of Mutlaa, will open after Eid al-Fitr to handle cases before transferring them to Jahra Hospital.

The minister explained that Mutlaa is a newly developed residential area with a rapidly growing population, which makes it a priority in the ministry's plan.

The new center will operate in the morning only during Ramadan from 7:00 am to 2:00 pm, and will switch to two shifts - morning and evening - after Eid. The center will gradually expand to 24-hour operations to better meet the needs of citizens and residents.

## Audit Bureau seeks clarifications on MEW repairs tender

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: The State Audit Bureau (SAB) returned the KD44.402 million tender for annual maintenance of precision equipment and devices at power generation and water distillation plants to the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy on March 10; requesting for clarification on several points like the prices of materials, major

works, spare parts and experience certificates for certain companies.

The ministry submitted the tender documents to SAB on Jan 29 for review to ensure procedural integrity before finalizing contracts with the selected companies. Prior to this, the ministry obtained approval from the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to proceed with awarding the contracts.

This tender includes the provision of highly accurate and efficient engineering services for

multiple plants, and to guarantee their safe operation; particularly during the summer months when electricity demand peaks. The maintenance work will also help reduce operating costs, limit carbon emissions, and support environmental conservation.

As one of the ministry's main tenders; it is vital for maintaining the power and water generation plants, improving their operational efficiency, and extending their lifespan.

# diwaniya

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## Hypocrisy abounds in a world of social media 'tomfoolery'

"THE obsession with using social media channels has overwhelmed many people around the world. They live virtual lives more than their real lives due to their fascination with it, their attempts to achieve fame, and the large number of views they receive from the content they broadcast," **Hamad Salem Al-Marri** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"Unfortunately, this obsession has drawn individuals from all walks of life -- men, women and children -- to compete in broadcasting their photos, videos and details of their private lives; up to the point that their privacy has been lost. Some have even gone as far as broadcasting details of their marital and family lives, including their family members. This has violated the sanctity of their homes and exposed their family secrets due to their fascination with social media channels and their love for fame.



Hamad Al-Marri

"Due to the spread of this obsession, hypocrisy has crept into many people -- whether they are aware of it or simply ignore it, trying to convince themselves that it is not hypocrisy so as not to stop using social media channels.

"One example of hypocrisy is the filming of some mosque imams performing prayers aloud, such as the Fajr, Isha and Maghrib prayers; as well as the Tarawih and Qiyam prayers, and posting them on their social media accounts.

"Some even film their prayers live on their social media accounts, as if they were praying for the people, not for the Lord. Otherwise, why would they film their prayers and post them on their accounts? Would social media users pray behind them through their accounts, or did they simply want to gain fame and have people follow them?"

"Some people film themselves giving charity to needy families or defending Palestine, and urging a boycott of certain western products, claiming to support the Palestinian cause. They post these videos on their social media accounts to gain people's sympathy, making them believe they are pious and charitable, when in reality, they are simply seeking fame.

"We have seen some individuals gain fame and a large following on social media channels due to these actions. They then began posting commercials through their accounts in exchange for money. One traveled to Russia and promoted tourism there and marriage to its girls. Another traveled to France to promote a perfume in exchange for money, forgetting that it is one of the countries that support Israel, and calls for a boycott of the products of the countries that support it.

"Another form of hypocrisy is when some film themselves helping their parents, kissing their heads and hands or giving them gifts, so that people see them as dutiful to their parents. Otherwise, why would they film and share it with people? Was it not for fame? Allah knows the secret and even more hidden things. If their intention was to be dutiful to their parents, they would have done so without other people knowing about it.

"The Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) said: Shall I not tell you of what I fear for you more than the Antichrist? They said: Yes, O Messenger of God. He said: Hidden polytheism, when a man stands to pray and beautifies his prayer because of the gaze of another man. He (peace and blessings be upon him) said: The first person to be judged on the Day of Resurrection will be a man who was martyred.

"He will be brought and told of his blessings, and he will recognize them. He will be asked: What did you do with them? He will say: I fought for you until I was martyred. He will then say: 'You lied, but I fought'; so that it would be said that he was brave, and it was said."

"Then he will be ordered to be dragged on his face until he is thrown into the Fire. A man who learned knowledge and taught it, and recited the Qur'an, will be brought and told of his blessings, and he will recognize them. He will be asked: What did you do with them? He will respond: I learned knowledge and taught it, and recited the Qur'an for You.' He will say: You lied, but you learned knowledge; so that it would be said that he was a scholar, and you recited the Qur'an so that it would be said that he was a reciter and it was said."

"Then he will be ordered to be dragged on his face until he is thrown into the Fire. A man whom Allah has given abundantly and given all kinds of wealth, will be brought and told of his blessings, and he will recognize them. He will be asked: 'What did you do with them?' He will say, 'I did not leave any path in which you would like people to spend except that I spent in it.' It will be said, 'You lied, but you did it so that it would be said that he was generous, and it was said.' Then he will be ordered to be dragged on his face and thrown into the Fire." We ask Allah for wellness."

**Also:**

"When HH the late Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, may Allah have mercy on him, issued the Social Security Law through Amiri Decree No. 61/1976, His High-

ness assigned Prof. Hamad Al-Jouan, may Allah have mercy on him, to draft the decree," Legal Advisor **Dr. Kazem Bou Abbas** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"One of the provisions of the law, Article 80, authorizes the Council of Ministers to grant exceptional pensions or bonuses to insured persons, pensioners, their beneficiaries or other Kuwaitis, even if they are not covered by this law.

"The purpose of including this article in the law is to leave room for the Council of Ministers to assess certain cases that may not be subject to the law, which requires the government's humanitarian intervention. This is both correct and logical.

"This article was handled with caution and was only used in a few cases, particularly in those whose retirement circumstances did not allow them to receive a pension, either due to the short duration of their service or for other reasons.

"Retirement pensions were disbursed according to brackets set by the institution's board of directors. Unfortunately, based on the alarming figures published in the press, Article 80 has been misused, contrary to its noble purpose and for purposes far removed from its intended purpose. In recent years, it has become a means for less noble ends, failing to achieve the justice and equality enshrined in the Constitution and general principles. It has become a means for unjustified gain at the expense of public funds and a burden on the State budget.

"The figures disbursed to date are frightening and unimaginable, amounting to tens of millions of Kuwaiti dinars, benefiting a limited number of people and serving in specific government agencies. What has caused discontent among the majority of citizens in general over the lack of fairness in its implementation?

"It appears that the government, recently embarrassed by the financial cost, which has become a heavy burden on the budget, sought to rectify the mistakes made by previous governments. It was shocked by the fatwa, which prohibits tampering with these exceptional pensions, as they are an acquired right of those to whom they are disbursed!

"Despite the reasons underlying this opinion, we disagree with it. The public interest allows, and indeed calls for, the implementation of the State's new vision for exceptional pensions.

"The public interest expands as long as there is damage to the budget, and surgical intervention becomes necessary and deserved, 'and the damage is removed'.

"The Minister of Finance revealed frightening tables and staggering figures that are weighing on the State budget. It is time to correct this fundamentally flawed situation.

"We support the State's move in this direction, including the abolition of all excess pensions, which retirees were entitled to, with a percentage not exceeding 25 percent, and the reconsideration of retirement pensions in general for citizens, so that they do not compromise justice and equality, as the Constitution, Sharia and general principles are committed to.

"We also propose retaining the concept of the article and rewording it with certain controls.



Dr. Bou Abbas

based on a specific income bracket. It will then submit its recommendation to the Council of Ministers for approval or rejection.

"Second, it is not permissible to combine a retirement pension with any salary if the applicant is reinstated. In this case, the better-off recipient will benefit.

"Third, only the rightful recipient will benefit from the exceptional pension, which will not be transferred to their heirs.

"Fourth, the Council of Ministers may, under certain circumstances and in special cases, grant an exceptional pension at a specific rate. This neither violates the balance of justice and equal opportunity, nor is it exploited for political purposes.

"This is not a simple matter because it affects influential segments of society accustomed to a certain level of income. The minister may face some difficulties, which is not surprising. However, with Allah's grace and the support of the political leadership, the correct and appropriate decision will be made, one that serves the interests of the community and achieves justice among its members, without excess or deficiency.

"Any amendment to the existing exceptional pension system will not affect past disbursements and will only be applicable in the future.

"This is the proper application of the proposed new rules, as they have a direct impact on existing legal positions.

"Our final prayer is to praise Allah, Lord of the Worlds."

— **Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh**



Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah during his tour to the Mohammad Al-Ahmad Naval Base in the Julai'a area.



Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah conducts a tour of the base.



Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah at the iftar time. KUNA photos

## Leadership staunch support for armed forces

KUWAIT CITY, March 20, (KUNA): Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah affirmed on Wednesday the political leadership's commitment to supporting the armed forces, raising their efficiency, and enhancing their readiness in facing various challenges.

The remarks were made in a press statement

issued by the Ministry of Defense, following a tour by Sheikh Abdullah to the Mohammed Al-Ahmad Naval Base in the Julai'a area. Sheikh Abdullah also shared an 'iftar' meal with working in the base.

He was accompanied by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Mishal Mubarak Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief of

Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Major General Pilot Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

The Ministry added that Sheikh Abdullah began the visit by listening to a briefing on the nature of the assigned duties, the workflow mechanism, and the readiness of the naval forces. The minister also was briefed during a field tour of several units and facilities of the naval force.

## Domestic worker death probed

### Construction site guard's savings stolen

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: The body of a domestic worker from Al-Waha has been referred to the Forensic Medicine Department at the Interior Ministry for investigation into the cause of her death, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

This step was taken after an investigator at Al-Waha Police Station ordered the body of the woman, who was in her 50s, to be referred to forensic experts to determine the cause of death.

A citizen, born in 1982, visited the police station and presented a medical report from Jahra Hospital. The report stated that the woman arrived at the hospital's Internal Ac-

cidents Department in an ambulance, already deceased, with the cause of death unknown.

The case file includes a copy of the medical report, and copies of the civil identification cards of the deceased and the reporting individual.

**Expats' savings stolen:** Forensic experts were called to a tent in Mutlaa to collect any potential evidence left behind by thieves who stole KD500 from the tent, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The victim, an expatriate born in 1992, disclosed that the stolen money consisted of KD20 and KD10 bills; but refused to point fingers at anyone.

The victim works as a guard at a construc-

tion site in Mutlaa and resides in a tent near the site. He reported that he had been keeping his savings in a closet inside the tent. Around 11:00 am on the day of the theft, he went to the construction site to take a shower; but upon returning to his tent, he was shocked to find his belongings scattered and the cash missing from the closet.

When asked whether anyone knew about the money being stored there, the victim explained that he had kept his salary in the same spot for six months and that no one else was aware of its location.

Following this, the Mutlaa Police Station investigator ordered the case to be registered as misdemeanor under number 51/2025 and instructed detectives to arrest the culprits.



Fire brigade at the site. KFF photo

## Residents evacuated as Jahra house fire tackled

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: Firefighters contained a house fire in Jahra in record time, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

According to a firefighting source, the Operations Unit at Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) received a report early morning recently about a house fire in Jahra. Firefighters rushed to the scene and discovered that the fire started on the ground floor of a three-storey building. The house was quickly evacuated, and the fire was extinguished before it spread to the upper floors. The fire was brought under control in record time, with no casualties, the source narrated.

The source emphasized that the swift response of the firefighters played a crucial role in preventing the fire from spreading; thereby, limiting material damage.

## Citizen in KD 1.3 mln fraud

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: An investigator at Taima Police Station has summoned a citizen on charges of breach of trust involving KD 1.3 million, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

This summons follows a report filed by an expatriate, who provided accounting documents and evidence suggesting that he received less than the amount owed.

According to the complainant, he and the defendant had a partnership in a car dealership. At the end of the previous year, the partnership was dissolved, and both parties received approximately KD10 million each.

He said "to ensure everything was in order, I hired a company specializing in accounting and financial auditing to conduct an inventory and audit of the partnership from its inception several years ago until its dissolution. I was informed that I was owed an additional sum, beyond what I already received, totaling more than KD1 million." When asked why he did not discover the discrepancy earlier, he responded "I never imagined I would be subjected to such a breach of trust."

A case was registered and the defendant has been scheduled to present his testimony.



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**Crown Prince, PM extend wishes**

**Kuwait HH Amir congratulates Tunisia on Independence Day**

KUWAIT CITY, March 20, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to the President of Tunisia Kais Saied on his country's Independence Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the Tunisian President long lasting health and wellness, and further progress and prosperity to Tunisia and its people.

He also wished that the bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries would grow further.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to the President of Tunisia Kais Saied on his country's Independence Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished the Tunisian President long lasting health and wellness.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to the President of Tunisia Kais Saied on his country's Independence Day.

**PAFN Chair meets Peru's envoy, explores food security solutions**



PAFN Chair and Director General with the Ambassador of Peru to Kuwait.

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: During a meeting with the Ambassador of Peru to Kuwait, Carlos Jiménez, the Chair and Director General of the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) Dr. Reem Al-Fulaj discussed food security issues and the opportunities to enhance it in Kuwait, particularly through the export of fresh fruits, for which Peru is renowned, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ambassador expressed sincere gratitude for the warm hospitality, and hopes for the continued advancement and development of bilateral relations between the two countries.



Deputy Foreign Minister chairs meeting of the Entitlements and Priorities Follow-up Committee.

KUNA photo

**Kuwait charts GCC priorities under its presidency**

KUWAIT CITY, March 20, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired on Wednesday the

meeting of a committee to follow up on liabilities and priorities during Kuwait's presidency of the GCC. The meeting discussed the committee's agenda on

Kuwait's presidency of the 45th session of the GCC Supreme Council, as well as future events of the country's chairmanship of the council.

**Minister Al-Mashaan inspects T2 progress, urges swift completion**



The Minister of Public Works inspects the new airport project 'T2'.

KUNA photo

**'Kuwait Airport expansion must meet highest standards'**

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, March 20: The Minister of Public Works and Acting Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, visited the new airport project to monitor the progress of the new passenger terminal (T2) and oversee the implementation of the project's third phase.**

In a statement, the Ministry of Public Works explained that the minister's tour included a visit to the main building, where

she reviewed the finishing work on the building's facilities and the air conditioning operations, in preparation for the upcoming summer.

Dr. Al-Mashaan inspected the parking building and was briefed on the latest developments in the project's progress. She also reviewed the work on Package 3, which includes groundworks for aircraft stands, excavation and infrastructure works, as well as concrete molding and reinforcement for the package's service buildings.

She received a detailed explanation from project officials about the completion status of the work and the challenges faced during its implementation.

The ministry quoted Dr. Al-Mashaan as

expressing strong commitment to developing the country's air transport infrastructure by adopting the best international standards in the civil aviation industry. She stressed the need for coordinated efforts to deal with the outstanding issues related to the new airport terminal T2 project and called for the speedy completion of all works with the required quality and efficiency.

Dr. Al-Mashaan also highlighted the importance of coordinating with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and reiterated the government's dedication to harnessing all available resources and providing necessary facilities to ensure the completion of the project and the timely operation of all airport services and facilities.

**PAHW focuses on encroachments**

**Al-Mishari orders crackdown on 'housing violations' in Sulaibiya**

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

**KUWAIT CITY, March 20: Minister of State for Municipal and Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari and Head of the Women's Housing Affairs Team Sheikha Bibi Al-Yousef Al-Sabah recently inspected Sulaibiya, in the presence of officials from the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) and representatives of the Interior Ministry.**

In a press statement, PAHW disclosed that the minister issued a directive to intensify the inspection efforts and increase the number of teams assigned in Sulaibiya to monitor violations and submit reports in this regard, so the necessary measures can be taken and the violations are removed.

The PAHW added that during the inspection tour, Al-Mishari and Sheikha Al-Yousef were briefed on the extent of the violations and encroachments. They listened to the comments of some residents benefiting from housing care in the area. Directives were also issued to find solutions.

At the end of its statement, the PAHW called on residents in the area, who benefit from rental housing, to cooperate with field teams and remove all forms of violations and encroachments on State properties.

Sources confirmed to the newspaper that the working teams have been in-



KUNA photo

The Minister of Housing and the Head of the Women's Housing Affairs Team inspect the housing units in the Sulaibiya area.

structed to seriously address encroachments on State properties, affirming the ongoing coordination with relevant authorities to address these violations.

Sources warned that continued violations could lead to increased pressure on vital facilities; such as water, electricity and sewage networks, which could negatively affect the quality of public services.

**Jahra Committee advances Mutlaa City entrance and steel industrial site plans**

By Inaas Awadh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, March 20: The Jahra Governorate Committee at the Municipal Council, chaired by Abdullah Al-Hathal Al-Enezi, recently held its fifth meeting for the third legislative term; during which the following recommendations were presented:**

- Retain two items on the agenda: proposal of member Walid Al-Dagher to establish an entrance to Mutlaa City and request of the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) to allocate a site for the construction of an iron and steel industrial complex.

- Assign the Kuwait Municipality to immediately remove obstacles to the tree belt project around Mutlaa City, ensuring its implementation within the timeframe set by the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW).

q Expedite the allocation of the remaining old car scrapyard site as an expansion of the housing project and provide alternatives for the buildings in the expanded area, in preparation for an obstacle-free handover to PAHW.

The committee also addressed the inquiry of Abdullah Al-Hathal Al-Enezi about the tree belt project location, and that of Abdullah Al-Enezi regarding the old car scrapyard site.

**PIFSS accelerates 'retirement' processing with shift system**

**KUWAIT CITY, March 20: In confirmation of the report published by the daily in November in the article titled "Public Institution for Social Security allocates additional teams to work on a shift system to reduce waiting time", the institution announced the formation of a dedicated team to deal with the issue of delayed retirement transactions and develop effective solutions to expedite their processing and prevent future delays, reports Al-Seyassah daily.**



Al-Fassam

In a press release, the institution explained that the team was established based on the directives of the Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, and Chair of the

Public Institution for Social Security's Board of Directors **Noura Al-Fassam**. Most applications have already been processed, and efforts are ongoing to complete the remaining applications without further delay.

The institution affirmed its commitment to promptly completing all applications, ensuring the rights of beneficiaries, and providing them with the highest quality services.

Previously, sources from the institution had informed that the increase in retirement applications had placed huge pressure on employees, leading to delays in the disbursement of retirees' pensions. It had implemented several measures at the time to ease the pressure on employees and accelerate the processing of retirement applications. This included allocating additional teams working on a shift system to speed up the completion of retirement transactions and reduce the waiting period for retirees to receive their pensions.



The two vehicles involved in the collision on the Sixth Ring Road.

KFF photos

**Dramatic two vehicles on fire after a collision**

**KUWAIT CITY, March 20: Firefighters from Al-Sumoud Fire Station responded to a collision between two vehicles on the Sixth Ring Road Wednesday afternoon, which had caused both vehicles to catch fire.**

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters quickly extinguished the fire. No casualties were reported.

**News in Brief**

**Kuwait, Malaysia strengthen ties**

**KUWAIT CITY, March 20, (KUNA):** Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Wednesday a phone call from his Malaysian counterpart Mohamad Hassan discussing means of promoting the bilateral relations in various sectors.

**Power outage in Al-Rai:** The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy announced that six sub-feeders at the main power transformer plant (C) in Al-Rai went out of service, causing a power outage in limited areas, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Ministry stated that emergency teams are on-site to take the necessary measures and restore power as quickly as possible.

**CSC launches online service:** The Civil Service Commission (CSC) stated that as part of its efforts to transition to a paperless environment, it has launched an automated online service for re-nominating candidates to the same institu-

tion they previously declined or resigned from, without the need to visit the CSC in person, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

CSC explained that nominations are made based on the entity's requirements, and the aforementioned service can be accessed by visiting the CSC's website, logging into the central employment system, and completing the registration process.

**Judiciary backs Amir's directives:** Kuwait Supreme Judicial Council promised Wednesday that its members would abide by all orders, directives and principles contained in the recent speech of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

This came in a press statement by the Ministry of Justice following the council's meeting held to look into His Highness the Amir's address during his meeting with the council's members.

The Council expressed its appreciation for His Highness the Amir's meeting with the Council's members. (KUNA)







## Kuwait oil price drops to \$74.73 pb

KUWAIT CITY, March 20, (KUNA): Kuwait oil price dropped by USD 1.14 to USD 74.73 per barrel in Wednesday's trading compared to Tuesday's rate of USD 75.87 pb, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC)

said on Thursday.

In global markets, Brent crude futures moved up by 22 cents to USD 70.78 per barrel and the West Texas Intermediate oil climbed by 26 cents to reach USD 67.16 pb.

# Business



Hundreds of cars flocked to Zain's headquarters to celebrate.



Waleed Al-Khashti joins Zain's team at the heart of the celebration.



Zain's Girgeaan – an exceptional experience with a unique flavor.

Hundreds of vehicles visited Zain HQ in Shuwaikh to join the fun for third year running

## Zain's drive-thru Girgeaan celebration ... an exceptional experience

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: Following the remarkable success of the past two years, Zain once again organized its innovative drive-thru Girgeaan celebration in collaboration with Wainkom, which saw hundreds of cars flock to the company's headquarters in Shuwaikh to take part in this one-of-a-kind event, held in a joyful and traditional family atmosphere.

This celebration came under the umbrella of Zain's community campaign, Zain Al-Shuhoor, which aims to share the joy and blessings of the Holy Month of Ramadan with the Kuwaiti community in all its diversity, particularly children and youth, who represent the most vibrant segment of society. The Holy Month presents an opportunity to revive beautiful traditions such as Girgeaan,

which the company is keen to celebrate in its own special way.

For the third consecutive year, Zain celebrated Girgeaan through a drive-thru experience at its Shuwaikh headquarters, with great turnout and interaction. Over a two-hour period, hundreds of vehicles lined up at the company's premises, where children and their families enjoyed the special activities Zain had prepared. The event was organized in collaboration with Wainkom, a company specialized in organizing innovative events, making this celebration the first of its kind locally.

The event featured many interactive activities that brought joy to the hearts of children and their families, along with the distribution of Girgeaan

treats, presented by Zain to put smiles on their faces. This initiative comes as part of the company's continuous social contributions throughout the Holy Month of Ramadan, aimed at fostering connections and reinforcing beautiful values.

The Zain Al-Shuhoor campaign continues to evolve every year, expanding its programs and initiatives. Through this campaign, the company builds bridges of cooperation with various entities across the country to embody the spirit of giving that distinguishes the Holy Month and reflect the authentic values of the Kuwaiti people in helping others and spreading love and peace.

## Kuwait investment sector marks Union's 20 years of achievements

Union of Investment Companies honors national talent

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: The Union of Investment Companies organized a special celebration to mark its 20th anniversary with the theme, "Twenty Years of Continuous Giving and Achievement".

The main sponsors of the event are Kuwait Financial Center Company and Kuwait Clearing Company. Other sponsors include Arzan Financial Group for Financing and Investment, Kuwait Investment Company, Kamco Invest, Rasameel Investment Company, Amar Finance and Leasing Company, National Investments Company, Aayan Leasing and Investment Company, and International Invest Company.

In a bid to have more accomplishments and strengthen Kuwait's position as a leading financial and investment center in the region and the world, the celebration highlighted the role of the Union at various levels and unveiled an ambitious strategy based on four key pillars.

Union officials reaffirmed their commitment to support the concerned entities in the country and cooperate with regulatory authorities to enhance the status of the investment sector in the local market and develop its role in the country's economic activity.

The importance of the Union's role in supporting investment companies in the country was also underscored; in addition to training officials and employees and introducing them to the latest developments in the investment sector, which contributes to raising productivity and performance to the highest level.

The officials also stressed the need to conclude agreements with international companies to improve the performance of member companies and benefit from global expertise to seize the best opportunities.

They explained that innovation has been an integral part of the Union's values since its inception. "Over the years, the Union has achieved qualitative leaps in the field of financial services locally and regionally, as evidenced by its history of creating investment tools with unique characteristics and opening new investment gateways," they affirmed.

The officials added that the Union spares no effort in cooperating with government and private institutions to achieve its desired goals, provide a conducive environment for attracting local and international capital to Kuwait, boost the national economy, and contribute to the development of the Kuwaiti capital market.

They stated that the Union aims to promote sustainable

investment practices; encourage adherence to environmental, social and governance standards in investment strategies; and enhance transparency.

They spotlighted the role of the Union in strengthening public-private partnerships, supporting national employment, and supporting environmental, social and governance initiatives and other vital issues.

The celebration also emphasized that investment companies are a fundamental pillar of the economy, and that their presence and support through laws and procedures supporting their work are essential for development and increasing investment opportunities for individuals, rather than allowing them to be eroded by inflation. "These companies should be viewed as among the most important pillars of support and development for the Kuwaiti economy, especially in light of statistics that show the huge volume of assets they manage," the officials asserted.

On this occasion, Founding President of the Union Dhirar Al-Ghanim stated: The Union has contributed to numerous successes and achievements over the past 20 years. We are proud of what it offers today to the Kuwaiti investment sector, its companies and institutions."

Former Chairman of the Union Asaad Al-Banwan disclosed that the Union has been playing a fundamental and important role in the Kuwaiti investment sector over the past two decades.

Bader Al-Subaie, also a former chairman, confirmed the Union's success in overcoming crises and achieving numerous accomplishments.

Saleh Al-Salmi, another former chairman, highlighted the Union's significant contributions to the advancement and development of the sector.

Incumbent Chairman Abdullah Al-Terkait expressed honor in celebrating the 20th anniversary and highlighted the Union's role in shaping the investment and business environment.

He reported numerous achievements, including the development of the legislative and regulatory environments and active collaboration with government and regulatory bodies.

He stressed the importance of national competencies and the Union's commitment to investment education and awareness.

He then renewed the Union's pledge to move toward a more ambitious future, strengthening Kuwait's position as a leading financial and investment center.

Fedwa Darwish, Secretary General of the Union, pointed out the Union's pioneering role in developing the investment sector, and its significant contributions to support this vital sector and develop the business environment in Kuwait.



A group photo of the Gulf Bank delegation and members of the Fire Force, with Bader Al-Ali, Colonel Ahmad Al-Majadi, and Ali Al-Arbash in the middle.

Bank expresses appreciation for firefighters during Ramadan

## Gulf Bank hosts 'Ramadan Iftar' for General Fire Force members

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: As part of its dedication to corporate social responsibility and its ongoing support for organizations that serve the community, Gulf Bank hosted a Ramadan Iftar for members of the General Fire Force at Al-Shaheed Center in Al-Nuzha. The gathering was attended by a Gulf Bank delegation led by Mr. Bader Al-Ali, General Manager of Consumer Banking, alongside a number of General Fire Force members, headed by Colonels Ahmad Al-Majadi and Ali Al-Arbash.

This initiative is part of Gulf Bank's Ramadan campaign, "Our Traditions Always Bring Us Together," which includes a series of charitable, social, and sports activities aimed at promoting humanitarian and social values. The campaign aims to spread joy, foster meaningful connections, and honor individuals and organizations that play a vital

role in safeguarding society.

The visit included a communal Iftar gathering, bringing together Gulf Bank representatives and General Fire Force members. During the event, the Bank's officials expressed their sincere appreciation for the firefighters' heroic efforts in protecting lives and ensuring public safety.

Speaking on the occasion, Gulf Bank representatives stated: "As families come together for Iftar during Ramadan, firefighters make the selfless choice to be on duty, safeguarding their community. In recognition of their sacrifices, we wanted to be with them at their workplace, sharing Iftar and expressing our appreciation, along with that of the entire community, for their unwavering commitment and service."

This initiative reaffirms Gulf Bank's commitment to fostering community engagement and honor-

ing those who dedicate their lives to the safety and well-being of others.

Gulf Bank aims to be Kuwait's leading bank, fostering a diverse and inclusive 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.

'Economy remains healthy despite rising economic uncertainty'

## Fed holds interest rates steady, signals two cuts in this year

WASHINGTON, March 20, (AP): The Federal Reserve kept its benchmark interest rate unchanged Wednesday and signaled that it still expects to cut rates twice this year even as it sees inflation staying stubbornly elevated.

The Fed also now expects the economy to grow more slowly this year and next than it did three months ago, according to a set of quarterly economic projections also released Wednesday. It forecasts growth falling to just 1.7% in 2025, down from 2.8% last year, and 1.8% in 2026. Policymakers also expect inflation will pick up slightly, to 2.7% by the end of this year from its current level of 2.5%. Both are above the central bank's 2% target.

Even though the Fed maintained its forecast for two cuts, economists noted that under the surface there were signs that the central bank could stay on hold for some time. That is likely to keep borrowing costs for mortgages, auto loans, and credit cards unchanged in the coming months.

Eight of the 19 Fed officials said they see only one or zero rate reductions this year, up from just four in December.

"It will be harder for them to cut rates this year with inflation moving sideways," said Michael Gapen, an economist at Morgan Stanley.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell, at a news conference, said that President Donald Trump's tariffs have started to push up inflation and would likely stall the progress the central bank has seen in reducing inflation since its peak in 2022. "I think we were getting closer and closer" to price stability, Powell said. "I wouldn't say we were at that. ... I do think with the arrival of the tariff inflation, further progress may be delayed."

On his Truth Social platform late Wednesday, Trump posted: "The Fed would be MUCH better off CUTTING RATES as U.S. Tariffs start to transition (ease!) their way into the economy. Do the right thing."

Powell added that the Fed still expects inflation to get back to nearly 2% by the end of next year. Tariffs could just create a one-time increase in prices, he said, rather than an ongoing boost to inflation. And in some cases, the Fed can simply "look through" a temporary price rise, rather than respond by raising rates, Powell added.

Those comments appeared to please investors, and the S&P 500 stock index rose 1% Wednesday afternoon.

Luke Tilley, chief economist at Wilmington Trust, said Powell appeared



A news conference by Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell is displayed on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange in New York, Wednesday, March 19, 2025. (AP)

less alarmed about the impact of tariffs compared to the Fed's previous meeting in January.

"They're talking about tariffs in a totally different way," he said.

Powell acknowledged that the Fed initially thought inflation coming out of the pandemic would be temporary, which led it to delay raising rates to combat higher prices. But he added that in this case, it could be a "different situation."

"But...we really can't know that," he added, noting that uncertainty is enveloping the economy. "We're going to have to see how things actually work out."

Fed policymakers also expect the unemployment rate to tick higher, to

4.4%, by the end of this year, from 4.1% now.

The economic projections underscore the tight spot the Fed may find itself in this year: Higher inflation typically would lead the Fed to keep its key rate elevated, or even raise rates. On the other hand, slower growth and higher unemployment would often cause the Fed to cut rates to spur more borrowing and spending and lift the economy.

It is the second meeting in a row that the Fed has kept its interest rate at about 4.3% as the central bank has moved to the sidelines as it evaluates the impact of the Trump administration's policies on the economy. Economists forecast that tariffs will likely push up inflation, at least temporarily. But other policies, such as deregulation, could lower costs and cool inflation.

Powell acknowledged that many surveys of businesses and consumers have shown rising concern about the economic outlook. Yet he noted that the unemployment rate remains low and the economy is still expanding.

"We do understand that sentiment has fallen off pretty sharply but economic activity has not yet," Powell said. "The economy seems to be healthy."

Powell underscored that uncertainty around the economy's outlook is "unusually elevated" and said that the Fed is prepared to be patient and see how the economy evolves before making further moves.

"We're not going to be in any hurry to move," he said. "We're well positioned to wait for further clarity and not in any hurry."

The Fed also said it would slow the rate at which it is reducing its Treasury holdings, which grew massively during and after the pandemic. Previously it had allowed \$25 billion of Treasuries to mature each month without reinvesting the proceeds. Now it will allow only \$5 billion to mature each month.

In effect, the Fed will be reinvesting more of the expiring bonds into new securities, which should keep interest rates on long-term Treasuries lower than they would have been otherwise, Powell characterized the change as a technical one and not related to its interest-rate policies. Yields fell slightly in Treasury markets.

Federal Reserve governor Christopher Waller voted against the decision to slow the Treasury purchases. The Fed is still allowing \$35 billion of mortgage-backed securities to mature each month.





# What's On

## Al Ahli Bank collaborates with Central Bank and Kuwait Banking Association for awareness

### ABK encourages financial awareness through 'Let's Be Aware' padel tournaments

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is proud to announce its ongoing commitment to financial awareness by actively supporting the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign. This initiative, in collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Kuwait Banking Association, is designed to engage various customer segments, introducing them to a wide range of topics that focus on financial inclusion within Kuwaiti society.

A key component of these initiatives is the monthly 'Let's Be Aware' padel tournaments. These events attract a substantial number of community members and strategically utilize advertisements in the playing fields to enrich attendees' understanding of essential banking culture. Participants are introduced to prominent banking services and solutions that facilitate simple and smooth financial transactions.

The tournaments are an excellent platform for educating participants on various banking topics, such as types of bank accounts, loans, digital services, fraud prevention, and personal data protection. Furthermore, they shed light on services for people with special needs and emphasize the importance of caution against engaging with unknown individuals and the dangers of cashing out loans.

During these events, the Bank's team actively interacts



ABK hosts monthly padel tournaments to promote financial inclusion.



Diraya logo

with attendees through competitions to ensure the effective communication of the campaign's content. Bank employees are on hand to provide necessary guidance, enhancing attendees' banking and financial knowledge, thereby contributing to the campaign's objectives.

As a leading and responsible banking institution, ABK emphasizes its significant role in the local market. It remains committed to collaborating with the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Kuwait Banking Association to discuss the various campaign topics, ensuring they reach a broad audience over time.

The Bank is dedicated to utilizing all resources to support the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign, sharing unique content across its digital platforms and branch screens to connect with diverse age groups within the community.

## Alfouz account offers KD 100,000 quarterly draws

### ABK announces Mona Alsheetsan as Alfouz draw winner

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to announce Mona Adnan Alsheetsan as the winner of the Alfouz KD 10,000 weekly draw on Monday, 17 March, 2025. The draw took place in the presence of a Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative, ensuring transparency.

From the highly coveted mega annual draw of a KD 5,000 monthly salary for 10 years to its KD 10,000 weekly prize, the account has attracted significant attention in the Kuwaiti market. Based on the account's great success, ABK decided to go above and beyond to reward customer loyalty.

With a KD 100,000 quarterly draw, in addition to an exciting KD 20,000 monthly draw, the Alfouz account continues to surpass expectations and deliver even more customer satisfaction.

To top it off, ABK has simplified the ability to open the account and win! Customers can enter the draws and get extra entry chances for every KD 10 deposited. The more you save, the higher your chance to be the next Alfouz winner!

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account or increase their balance to participate in the upcoming draw, which is scheduled to take place on Monday, 24 March, 2025.

Open an Alfouz account today and enjoy increased opportunities to win the lifestyle you've been waiting for!



ABK's Alfouz account winner.

To learn more about the Alfouz account and its range of exciting draws and prizes, please follow ABK's Instagram account @abk\_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.

## 'Continuing its support for the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign'

### KIB launches banking awareness booth at Marina Mall to boost financial literacy

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently setup a special awareness booth at Marina Mall aimed at raising banking awareness and enhancing financial literacy among community members. This initiative comes as part of the Bank's ongoing commitment to supporting the directives of the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) campaign, which was introduced by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) in collaboration with local banks.

The effort further underscores KIB's dedication to empowering customers with financial knowledge, enabling them to make informed decisions while ensuring the safety and security of their banking information.

Commenting on the Bank's initiative, Sultan Alhajri, Area Manager of Retail Banking at KIB, said: "As a bank that prioritizes financial literacy and customer empowerment, we are pleased to continue our support of and participation in the Diraya campaign, offering a dedicated awareness booth at Marina Mall to further engage with the community. We believe that raising awareness about financial matters is crucial in today's evolving banking landscape, and this initiative aligns with our efforts to enhance financial knowledge among all segments of society while deepening customer relationships."

Alhajri added: "Our booth at Marina Mall served as an interactive platform where visitors engaged with KIB representatives to learn about essential fi-



Diraya Marina Mall Booth.

ancial concepts, including responsible banking practices, personal financial management, and the importance of safeguarding banking data, including the safe use of banking cards and protecting their accounts. They also discussed with mall visitors steps to avoid falling victim to fraud and phishing schemes, as well as raising awareness about the importance of adopting a culture of investment and savings. In addition, they seized the opportunity to point out the role of banking institutions in financing, particularly Islamic financing. KIB's representatives also introduced visitors to the Bank's diverse and innovative range of products and services that fit their various lifestyles and needs."

It is worth noting that KIB continues to reinforce its role as a trusted financial partner, committed to educating the public on key banking topics, in line with its comprehensive social responsibility strategy. The Bank strives to launch initiatives that promote a secure financial environment and support the goals of the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, embodying its main slogan, "Bank for Life".

#### About KIB

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

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

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

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

## 'Seamless shopping experience with pre-booking benefits'

### Kalyan Jewellers offers exclusive deals

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: Kalyan Jewellers, one of the largest and most trusted jewellery brands, is celebrating the soon approaching auspicious day of Akshaya Tritiya with a wide range of exclusive offers designed to elevate the festive spirit. Known for its customer-centric approach, the brand is offering exciting deals that allow patrons to maximize their value on jewellery purchases, making this the ideal time to invest in timeless pieces.

To ensure a seamless shopping experience during the festive rush, Kalyan Jewellers has introduced an exclusive pre-booking program, enabling customers to secure their jewellery with a minimal 10% advance payment\*. This allows for a hassle-free pick-up experience on or near the festival, minimizing the traditional rush and long wait times. The pre-booking program also protects customers from potential price hikes during this period.

Kalyan Jewellers is also offering a free 2-gram gold coin with the purchase of Diamond or Polki jewellery worth KWD 550. A 1-gram gold coin can be availed for free with the purchase of platinum, precious stones, or uncut jewellery worth KWD 550, or Diamond or Polki jewellery worth between KWD 350 - KWD 549. Additionally, customers can receive a 1/2 gm gold coin free on gold jewellery purchases worth KWD 550, or platinum, precious stones, and uncut jewellery purchases between KWD 350 - KWD 549. For gold jewellery purchases between KWD 350 - KWD 549, customers will receive a 1/4 gm gold coin.

Speaking on this occasion, Mr. Ramesh Kalyanaraman, Executive Director of Kalyan Jewellers, said, "Akshaya Tritiya is a time of gratitude, reflection, and meaningful connections. Jewellery plays a significant role in these celebrations, symbolizing love and cherished memories. With our exclusive festive offers, we aim to ensure our patrons can celebrate the festival



Kalyan Jewellers celebrates Akshaya Tritiya with exclusive offers.

without the concerns of price hikes while continuing to embrace the tradition of gold buying."

Kalyan Jewellers' showrooms across the Kuwait showcase an extensive range of collections, including Muhurat, the brand's signature bridal jewellery line featuring exquisite designs from across India. Customers can also explore Kalyan's diverse house brands, such as Tejasvi (Polki jewellery), Mudhra (Handcrafted Antique Jewellery), Nimah (Temple Jewellery), Glo (Dancing Diamonds), Ziah (Solitaire-like Diamond Jewel-

lery), Anokhi (Uncut Diamonds), Hera (Daily Wear Diamonds), Rang (Precious Stones Jewellery), and the latest addition, Lila (Coloured Stones and Diamond Jewellery).

With its heritage of trust, craftsmanship, and innovation, Kalyan Jewellers invites customers to make this Akshaya Tritiya extra special by selecting from an exquisite collection of jewellery designed to elevate every celebration.

For more information about the brand, its collections, and special offers, visit [www.kalyanjewellers.net](http://www.kalyanjewellers.net).

## In collaboration with V-Thru

### KFH organizes V-Fit virtual walking challenge

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) organized the V-Fit virtual walking challenge, the largest of its kind, in collaboration with its strategic partner, the V-Thru application. The challenge is part of KFH's Ramadan program, "Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan," and aims to promote social responsibility while emphasizing the importance of sports and public health.

KFH Senior Manager PR and Event Management, Fahad AlSaad said that the event was held for the 5th consecutive year at 9 locations across Kuwait, including Avenues Mall, Al Shaheed Park, Kuwait Towers walkway, Mishref Oasis, Abdullah Al Salem walkway, Al Rawda walkway, Al Yarmouk walkway, Jabriya walkway, and Murooj walkway.

He explained that participants in the competition can earn credits and purchase value within the V-Thru app for every 2,000 steps, promoting exercise and supporting Kuwaiti businesses featured in the app.



V-Fit virtual walking challenge.

"KFH, reinforcing its commitment to environmental sustainability through the "Keep It Green" campaign, incentivized participation in a virtual walking challenge with special prizes. Participants increase

Kuwait's greening efforts by collecting virtual flags, bearing the campaign logo, as they virtually walked through designated areas," he added.

AlSaad pointed out that since the V-Fit challenge's launch, participants have contributed to planting thousands of trees, a contribution that will have a significant positive impact on the region's climate. Furthermore, the initiative serves to raise awareness about the importance of environmental conservation and sustainability.

AlSaad explained that to encourage exercise and promote public health awareness across all segments of society, the challenge featured prizes and engagement with participants through KFH's social media accounts (@KFHGroup).

He concluded that KFH continues to organize and support sports campaigns to encourage sports, promote healthy living, and emphasize the importance of exercise and a healthy lifestyle, under the slogan "Better Health ... Better Life".

## Lulu supports students of Al Resala Bilingual School on World Down Syndrome Day

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: As part of its ongoing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, Lulu Hypermarket extended its support to the students of Al Resala Bilingual School's Special Education Department in celebration of World Down Syndrome Day on March 21, 2025.

On March 20, 2025, the senior management team of Lulu Hypermarket visited the school to interact with the students, engaging in meaningful conversations and activities that foster inclusivity and empowerment. Recognizing the importance of providing a nurturing and supportive environment, Lulu Hypermarket ensured that the students felt valued and appreciated.

As a gesture of commitment to community welfare, Lulu Hypermarket provided an assortment of treats and refreshments for over 250 students, creating a joyful and engaging atmosphere for the celebration. The initiative aimed to not only recognize the abilities of these wonderful students but also to spread awareness about Down Syndrome and promote an inclusive society.

"Lulu Hypermarket believes in making a difference in the lives of children with special needs and promoting inclusivity in our communities. Our visit to Al Resala Bilingual School's Special Education Department was a heartfelt experience, and we are proud to support these bright young minds," Lulu Hypermarket management stated.

Lulu Hypermarket's top management also expressed their gratitude to the school's administration for their unwavering dedication and efforts in providing a supportive learning environment for students with special needs.

Lulu Hypermarket remains committed to supporting social causes and fostering meaningful relationships within the community. Through such initiatives, the company continues to reinforce its dedication to social responsibility, inclusivity, and making a positive impact on society.



Lulu Hypermarket promotes inclusivity on World Down Syndrome Day.

## Ashford and Quaid lead unique crime drama

# 'Happy Face' looks at ripple effects of true crime

NEW YORK, March 20, (AP) — The new Paramount+ series "Happy Face" has all the elements of a gripping true-crime yarn: A serial killer, his estranged daughter, a race to get an innocent man off death row. But perhaps the most intriguing part? How it examines the warping nature of true crime itself.

"I was less interested in the specific psychology of a serial killer or glorifying the murders or seeing violence against women on screen," says Jennifer Cacicio, executive producer and showrunner. "I just feel like we've seen that. I was very interested in making a true-crime show told through a different lens."

"Happy Face," which begins airing Thursday, is inspired by the true story of Melissa Moore, whose father was a prolific serial killer infamous for drawing smiley faces on letters to the media and prosecutors. She was just 15 when he was captured. Decades later, as an adult with her own children,

she finds herself drawn back into his orbit as she sets out to save an innocent man for a crime her father committed. She also has to tell her daughter the truth about her grandfather.

Starring Anneleigh Ashford and Dennis Quaid, "Happy Face" is told from a female point of view and looks at how a shameful secret can echo through generations. It's also about the push and pull of infamy, with horrendous crimes somehow remaining an alluring draw.

"There's a lot of crime dramas out there that I think are very male-centric. It's either about the cops are the cool guys or the criminals are the cool guys, and it's all about kicking in doors. I've written on those shows and they're fun and they serve a purpose. And I think that I really wanted to try something different," Cacicio says.

"What is it like for the rest of the family when there's this shameful secret and this series of crimes

and these acts of violence and what are the ripple effects on everybody involved?"

Ashford, who earned a Tony Award nomination playing a serial killer on Broadway in "Sweeney Todd," plays Moore with tenderness and anger, saying she was interested in exploring generational trauma.

"It's one of the worst nightmares," she says. "The worst nightmare of all is having a family member be a victim. And then the second worst nightmare is having a family member be the perpetrator. So what would you do if you're a parent or your sibling or your spouse or your child committed an atrocity?"

Moore previously shared her story in the bestselling memoir, "Shattered Silence" and the 2018 "Happy Face" podcast, reaching out to her father's victims and advocating for other family members of killers. Cacicio was one of a number of writers interested in telling her story for TV.



This image released by Paramount+ shows Anneleigh Ashford in a scene from the series 'Happy Face.' (AP)

## People

### Copyright infringement

## Man charged for selling stolen Eminem's songs

NEW YORK, March 20, (AP) — A former Eminem studio engineer was charged Wednesday with stealing the Detroit rapper's unreleased music and sealing it online, federal prosecutors announced.

Investigators say more than 25 songs have been played or distributed online without the consent of Eminem or Interscope Capital Labels Group, which owns Eminem's music. The music was stored on password-protected hard drives kept in a safe at Eminem's studio in Ferndale, a Detroit suburb, according to an FBI affidavit.

Joseph Strange, 46, of Holly, Michigan, was charged via a criminal complaint with copyright infringement and interstate transportation of stolen goods, Acting US Attorney Julie Beck in Detroit said. Strange, who lost his job at Eminem's studio in 2021, could face up to 15 years in prison if convicted of both counts.

Strange's attorney, Wade Fink, said in a text to The Associated Press that Strange is a married father of two "with decades of dedication to the music industry." He called the charges "untested allegations" that haven't been vetted by a grand jury or a judge.

"We will handle the matter in a courtroom and we have great faith in the judges of our district," he said.

Studio employees reported the theft to the FBI in January, saying unreleased music that was still in development was being played on various websites, including Reddit and YouTube.

A review showed someone transferred files from a hard drive in a safe to an external hard drive in October 2019 and January 2020, when Strange was a sound engineer at the studio.

Investigators found buyers after Eminem business associate Fred Nassar posted an online warning to fans not to distribute the music.

A Canadian resident who used the screen name Doja Rat told investigators he had purchased 25 unreleased songs from Strange for about \$50,000 in Bitcoin. He said he raised the money from a group of fans of Eminem, whose real name is Marshall Mathers III.

Strange also was trying to sell some of Eminem's handwritten lyric sheets, Doja Rat said.

Another group of fans organized by someone in Connecticut using the screen name ATL also purchased a "couple" of songs from Strange for about \$1,000, according to the affidavit.



Eminem

## A 'coward'

## DiCaprio's art adviser jailed for \$6.5m fraud

NEW YORK, March 20, (AP) — A New York art adviser who once counted actor Leonardo DiCaprio among her wealthy patrons was sentenced Wednesday to 30 months in federal prison after admitting to cheating clients out of \$6.5 million in connection with the sale of 55 works of art.

Lisa Schiff sobbed as she turned to her former friends and clients seated behind her in Manhattan federal court and apologized to them by name.

"I stand here as a criminal who hurt clients, colleagues, and friends," the 54-year-old Manhattan resident said, calling herself a "coward" for hiding her deceit and "living lavishly" off money stolen from people who had "loved and trusted" her.

"I am a guilty person and I am prepared to face my punishment," Schiff said tearfully. "I am scared, but I am ready."

Schiff is to report to prison July 1.

One of Schiff's victims, Michael Barasch, told the court that his family had embraced her as one of their own, inviting her to family gatherings and holiday parties. "Your disgraceful conduct goes well beyond stolen money," he said. "You broke my wife's heart. You were her best friend, or so she thought."

Barasch estimated that Schiff's victims stand to lose as much as \$10 million when considering the costs of lawyers and other experts they've hired to recoup some of their losses through litigation.

"We'll be lucky to get five cents on the dollar. No victim will ever be made whole," he said. "Shame on you."

Judge J. Paul Oetken, in handing down the sentence, called Schiff's crimes "quite brazen," noting her fraud persisted for roughly five years and involved more than a dozen clients.

At the same time, he noted that Schiff comes from a "loving family," appeared to be smart and thoughtful and was raising a 12-year-old son as a single mother.



Lisa Schiff, (right), an art adviser who once counted actor Leonardo DiCaprio among her wealthy clients, walks out of Manhattan federal court after pleading guilty to wire fraud, Wednesday, March 19, in New York. (AP)

## Film



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Robert De Niro as Vito Genovese, (left), and Robert De Niro as Frank Costello in a scene from 'The Alto Knights.' (AP)

## Two De Niros deliver fun but not enough drama

# 'Alto Knights' lacks 'Goodfellas' mob magic

LOS ANGELES, March 20, (AP) — "You're the actor!" shouts Anna Genovese at her estranged spouse, gangster Vito Genovese, in a courtroom where he's implausibly claiming he lacks funds to support her. "The best actor in the world! Better than Clark Gable!"

And we all chuckle. They probably all chuckled on set, too. Because the man playing Vito in "The Alto Knights" is none other than Robert De Niro, indeed one of the best actors in the world, revered in our time as Gable was in his.

It's a cute moment and an apt one, too, because Barry Levinson's film, which aims but fails to channel the magic of decades-old mob movies like "Goodfellas" - though penned by the same writer, Nicholas Pileggi - is all about De Niro. Actually, it's all about De Niro AND De Niro. The man plays both lead roles, feuding mobsters Genovese and Frank Costello, in a story based on real events.

Is it a gimmick? Surely. Does it work? Well, there's the entertainment value - this is De Niro, after all - and if you feel that more De Niro minutes are always better, then it follows that two roles are better than one. Others may feel it has a mob-themed "Parent Trap" vibe, less weighty than it should be given the obviously vio-

lent subject matter.

Also, "Goodfellas" fans may wonder if the Vito role was once intended for Joe Pesci (the movie's been in development forever), so similar is the character to that actor's impulsive, manically suspicious persona. On the other hand, in two brief scenes where the De Niros appear together for momentous meetings, one might be forgiven for wondering if Al Pacino was in line at some point, for a "Heat"-like moment.

Happily, De Niro relies here on make-up, and not de-aging as in "The Irishman," though it must be said that, at times, his two characters just don't look different enough. More importantly, "The Alto Knights," despite its pedigree, doesn't rise anywhere near the heights of its glorious predecessors. It is, rather, an enjoyable if choppy paced look at a relationship between two men, where unfortunately we're arriving pretty late in the game.

There are, though, a few crackling surprises: that domestic courtroom scene; a tense, televised Senate committee grilling; and finally a climactic gathering of mob bosses in the countryside, with fabulous period vehicles parked on the lawn and sausages on the grill, that's disrupted

in comically sudden fashion.

We begin in 1957 in Manhattan. Costello, after a night partying respectfully with high society, stops at his swank apartment building. "This one's for you," declares the nervous man who shoots him in the head in his lobby.

The shooter (Cosmo Jarvis), sent by Genovese, makes a bad mistake, as his boss will remind him later: "You gotta go SEE if they're dead!" Amazingly, Costello survives. "I shoulda been paying more attention," says the genteel mobster who favors diplomacy over bloodletting, narrating from the future.

We then go back in time to figure out how things got this bad.

With the help of vintage photos and footage artfully edited to include actors playing the younger Frank and Vito, we learn the two were good friends as young Italian immigrants on the streets. But when Vito got mixed up in a murder case, he had to flee to Italy - leaving cooler-headed Frank in charge of the business.

Years later, Vito returns, and wants his role at the top of the mob family. And so things go south, quickly.

The women in their lives mirror the differences between the two men. Costello's wife of more than 50 years, Bobbie

(Debra Messing, making a nice foray into drama), is a loyal partner who urges her husband to retire and leave New York - along with their adorable dogs (De Niro's own pooches, dressed in mink coats and hats - a costume design Oscar for this canine fashion, please!). Genovese's wife Anna (Kathrine Narducci, excellent) is a businesswoman - she owns a gay bar - whose fiery union with Vito turns disastrous.

A mere glance at Wikipedia will tell you that both Genovese and Costello ultimately died in nonviolent ways. There's plenty in "The Alto Knights" that you won't see there - for example, the movie's version of just who engineered that farm-land mob summit, and why.

But watching dozens of mobsters run like heck when police happen upon their gathering is a hoot, and it's hard to beat the moment when two of them insist to suspicious cops: "We're hunters!"

If only such witty moments were more frequent in a two-hour movie that somehow, alas, feels much longer.

"The Alto Knights," a Warner Bros. Pictures release, has been rated R by the Motion Picture Association "for violence and pervasive language." Running time: 120 minutes. Two stars out of four.

## Variety

**NEW YORK:** Amazon is ending a little-used privacy feature that let some users of its Echo smart speaker prevent their voice commands from going to the company's cloud.

Beginning on March 28, Amazon is ending the "Do Not Send Voice Recordings" option that kept audio from being sent to Amazon's cloud and had it process locally on the device instead.

In an email sent to customers who'd been using the option, Amazon said it made the decision to "no longer support this feature" as it expands Alexa's capabilities with generative artificial intelligence features that rely on being processed in the cloud.

While the change may sound alarming to some privacy-minded users, it was not widely used or available. It only worked on three devices: the 4th generation Echo Dot, the Echo Show 10 and the Echo Show 15 - and only for customers in the US with devices set to English. Amazon said less than 0.03% of customers use it. (AP)

**LOS ANGELES:** The Latin Grammys are getting closer to cinema and television with the new best music for visual media category.

The new category announced Wednesday will recognize original music for movies, TV shows, video games and other visual media. For a project to participate in this category, it must feature Latin rhythms or be composed by someone of Ibero American descent.

"It is a category that we had been analyzing for almost three years," Luis Dousebebs, the Latin Recording Academy's chief awards, membership & preservation officer, told The Associated Press. "We were told 'there is a lot of production here that is being orphaned a little in the process.'"

After analyzing statistical information, meeting the Latin creators of music for visual media and finding the necessary

experts for the committee that will vote in the category, the academy decided to create the category.

"We know that in the near future it will mutate into other categories and, logically, it will be differentiated between soundtracks, music for video games, best song, all sort of things," Dousebebs said.

The Latin Grammys will also add a best roots song category. This award will go to the songwriters of new, unpublished recordings that reflect the traditions and roots of various communities, cultures, or social groups, especially those of Hispanic American origin, whether in Spanish, Portuguese or Indigenous languages or dialects. (AP)

**LOS ANGELES:** Sia filed for divorce Wednesday from second husband Daniel Bernard after two years of marriage.

The Grammy-nominated Australian singer-songwriter whose legal name is Sia Furler filed the petition in Los Angeles Superior Court.

It listed Tuesday as their separation date. As happens in the vast majority of California divorces, she cited irreconcilable differences as the reason. She asked the court to award no spousal support payments to Bernard.

She's also seeking legal and physical custody of their 11-month-old child, Somersault Wonder Bernard.

It's not clear when the secretive singer began dating Bernard, or how they met. They were legally married in December of 2022 and had a small marriage ceremony in Portofino, Italy, the following May.

From 2014 to 2017, Sia was married to filmmaker Erik Anders Lang. (AP)



Sia

## New visionary leader

# Disney searches for its next big sequel: Iger's successor

NEW YORK, March 20, (AP) — Behind the red carpet movie premieres and new thrill-inducing rides for fans of its amusement parks, there is a quiet search underway to find the successor to Bob Iger, the face of Disney for most of the past two decades.

Disney went through the CEO search recently, and it was nearly a disaster.

Only two years after stepping down as CEO, Iger returned to Disney in 2022 after a period of clashes, missteps and a weakening financial performance under his hand-picked successor, Bob Chapek.

But how do you replace a chief executive who is considered by many to be the gold standard?

Iger strengthened the Disney brand through his acquisitions of Pixar, Marvel and Lucasfilm, oversaw the expansion of the company in China and India and had a laser-like focus on technology that both made the Disney product better, and more accessible. Iger, at the same time, is approachable, media savvy and has deftly managed a company that is like no other.

Under Disney's umbrella are theme parks, movies studios and streaming technology, all with priorities seemingly at odds with each other, or at least vying for the attention of the company's chief executive.

The question of who can follow Iger will clearly be on the minds of investors as Disney kicks off its annual shareholders meeting on Thursday.

Disney created a succession planning committee in 2023, but the search began in earnest last year when the company enlisted Morgan Stanley Executive Chairman

James Gorman to lead the effort.

Gorman said in a January letter to shareholders that the committee had made "strong progress" over the past year.

"The full board is engaged in and committed to finding the right leader for the company and we are planning for a smooth leadership transition that will enable Disney's continued success," he wrote.

Disney does have the benefit of time. After signing a two-year contract mostly to right Disney's trajectory after a rocky two years under his hand-picked successor, Iger agreed to a contract extension that keeps him at Disney through the end of 2026.

Disney declined to comment on its succession planning efforts.

It is a broad search. Disney is looking inside and outside of the company. Internal candidates are being mentored by Iger, interacting with the company's 15 board members (including Iger) and receiving external coaching.

The internal candidates are widely believed to include the chairman of Disney-owned ESPN, Jimmy Pitaro, Chairperson of Walt Disney Parks and Resorts Josh D'Amaro, Disney Entertainment Co-Chairman Alan Bergman and Disney Entertainment Co-Chairman Dana Walden.



Bob Iger



## Can social media be both safe and supportive for teens?

## Social media design is key to protecting kids online

By Abdulmalik Alluhidan  
Vanderbilt University

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

Social media is a complex environment that presents both opportunities and threats for adolescents, with self-expression and emotional support on the one hand and body-shaming, cyberbullying and addictive behaviors on the other. This complexity underscores the challenge to regulating teen social media use, but it also points to another avenue for protecting young people online: how social media platforms are designed.

The growing debate around teen social media use has intensified, with recent bipartisan policy efforts in the US, such as the Kids Online Safety Act, seeking to protect young people from digital harms. These efforts reflect legitimate concerns. However, broad restrictions on social media could also limit benefits for teens, throwing the baby out with the bath water.

I am a researcher who studies online safety and digital well-being. My recent work with colleagues in computer scientist Pamela Wisniewski's Socio-Technical Interaction Research Lab underscores a critical point: social media is neither inherently harmful nor entirely beneficial. It is a tool shaped by its design, how teens use it, and the context of their experiences.

In other words, social media's impact is shaped by its affordances - how platforms are designed and what they enable users to do or constrain them from doing. Some features foster connection while others amplify harms.

As society moves toward practical solutions for online safety, it is important to use evidence-based research on how these features shape teens' social media experiences and how they could be redesigned to be age appropriate for young people. It's also important to incorporate teens' perspectives to pinpoint what policies and

design choices should be made to protect young people using social media.

My colleagues and I analyzed over 2,000 posts from teens ages 15-17 on an online peer-support platform. Teens openly discussed their experiences with popular social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat and TikTok. Their voices highlight a potential path forward: focusing on safety by design - an approach that improves platform features to amplify benefits and mitigate harms. This approach respects young people's agency while prioritizing their digital well-being.

While social media's worst outcomes such as cyberbullying or mental health crises are often in the spotlight, our research shows that teens' experiences are far more nuanced. Instead, platforms enable diverse outcomes depending on their features and design.

## Experiences

Teens commonly described negative experiences involving social drama, cyberbullying and privacy violations. For example, Instagram was a focal point for body-shaming and self-esteem issues, driven by its emphasis on curated visual content. Facebook triggered complaints about privacy violations, such as parents sharing private information without teens' consent. Snapchat, meanwhile, exposed teens to risky interactions due to its ephemeral messaging, which fosters intimate but potentially unsafe connections.

At the same time, teens expressed that social media provides a space for support, inspiration and self-expression, particularly when offline spaces feel isolating. Teens used social media to cope with stress or seek out uplifting content.

Platforms such as Snapchat and WhatsApp were key spaces for seeking connection, enabling teens to build relationships and find emotional support. Snapchat, in particular, was the go-to platform for fostering close personal connections, while YouTube empowered teens to promote their creativity and identity by sharing videos.

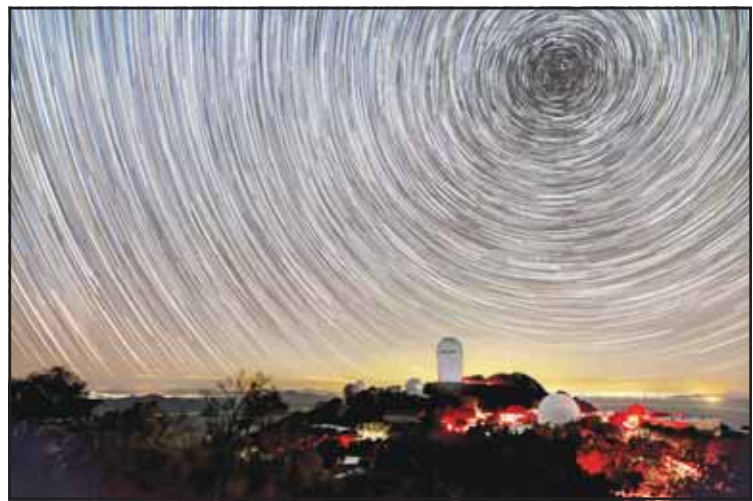
Many praised Instagram and Snapchat for providing inspiration, distraction or emotional relief during stressful times. Teens also used social media to seek information, turning to YouTube and Twitter to learn new things, verify information or troubleshoot technical problems.

These findings underscore a critical insight: Platform design matters. Features such as algorithms, privacy controls and content-sharing mechanisms directly shape how teens experience social media. These findings further question the perception of social media as a purely negative force. Instead, teens' experiences highlight its dual nature: a space for both risk and opportunity.

The concept of affordances - design and features - helps explain why teens' experiences differ across platforms and provides a path toward safer design. For example, Instagram's affordances such as image sharing and algorithmic content promotion amplify social comparison, leading to body-shaming and self-esteem issues. Snapchat's affordances, such as ephemeral messaging and visibility of "best friends," encourage personal connections but can foster risky interactions. Meanwhile, YouTube's affordances, such as easy content creation and discovery, promote self-expression but can contribute to time-management struggles due to its endless scroll design.

By understanding these platform-specific designs and features, it is possible to mitigate risks without losing the benefits. For example, Facebook could allow for appropriate levels of parental oversight of teen accounts while preserving privacy. Instagram could reduce algorithmic promotion of harmful content. And Snapchat could improve safety features.

This safety by design approach moves beyond restricting access to focus on improving the platforms themselves. By thoughtfully redesigning social media features, tech companies can empower teens to use these tools safely and meaningfully. Policymakers can focus on holding social media companies responsible for their platforms' impact, while simultaneously promoting the digital rights of teens to benefit from social media use. (AP)



This image provided by NSF's NOIRLab shows the trails of stars above Kitt Peak National Observatory, where a telescope is mapping the universe to study a mysterious force called dark energy. (AP)

## Will the universe end?

## New research suggests dark energy could be weakening

NEW YORK, March 20, (AP): Scientists are homing in on the nature of a mysterious force called dark energy, and nothing short of the fate of the universe hangs in the balance.

The force is enormous - it makes up nearly 70% of the universe. And it is powerful - it is pushing all the stars and galaxies away from each other at an ever faster rate.

And now scientists are getting a little closer to understanding how it behaves. The big question is whether this dark energy is a constant force, which scientists have long thought, or whether the force is weakening, a surprising wrinkle tentatively proposed last year.

Results presented at a meeting of the American Physical Society Wednesday bolster the case that the force is weakening, though scientists are not yet certain and they still haven't worked out what this means for the rest of their understanding of the universe.

The updated findings come from an international research collaboration that is creating a three-dimensional map to see how galaxies have spread and clustered over 11 billion years of the universe's history. Carefully tracking how galaxies move helps scientists learn about the forces that are moving them around.

Called the Dark Energy Spectroscopic Instrument, the collaboration released its first analysis of 6 million

galaxies and quasars last year and has now added more data, bringing the count to nearly 15 million. Their updated results, taken with other measurements - exploding stars, leftover light from the young universe and distortions in galaxy shape - support the idea presented last year that dark energy may be waning.

"It's moving from a really surprising finding to almost a moment where we have to throw out how we've thought about cosmology and start over," said Bhuvnesh Jain, a cosmologist with the University of Pennsylvania who was not involved with the research.

It's not time to completely rule out the idea that dark energy is constant because the new results are still shy of the gold standard level of statistical proof physics requires. The collaboration aims to map around 50 million galaxies and quasars by the end of its survey in 2026. And other efforts around the globe have an eye on dark energy and aim to release their own data in the coming years, including the European Space Agency's Euclid mission and the Vera C. Rubin Observatory in Chile.

"We want to see several different collaborations having similar measurements" at that gold standard to be sure that dark energy is weakening, said cosmologist Kris Pardo with the University of Southern California who was not involved with the new research.

## Drug trial caught up in funding delays

## Researchers find a hint at how to delay Alzheimer's symptoms

NEW YORK, March 20, (AP): An experimental treatment appears to delay Alzheimer's symptoms in some people genetically destined to get the disease in their 40s or 50s, according to new findings from ongoing research now caught up in Trump administration funding delays.

The early results - a scientific first - were published Wednesday even as study participants worried that politics could cut their access to a possible lifeline.

"It's still a study but it has given me an extension to my life that I never banked on having," said Jake Heinrichs of New York City.

Now 50, Heinrichs has been treated in that study for more than a decade and remains symptom-free despite inheriting an Alzheimer's-causing gene that killed his father and brother around the same age.

## Blocked

If blocked funding stops Heinrichs' doses, "how much time do we have?" asked his wife, Rachel Chavkin. "This trial is life."

Two drugs sold in the US can modestly slow worsening of early-stage Alzheimer's by clearing the brain of one of its hallmarks, a sticky gunk called amyloid. But until now, there haven't been hints that removing amyloid far earlier - many years before the first symptoms appear - just might postpone the disease.

The research led by Washington University in St. Louis involves families that pass down rare gene mutations almost guaranteeing they'll develop symptoms at the same age their affected relatives did - information that helps scientists tell if treatments are having any effect.

The new findings center on a subset of 22 participants who received amyloid-removing drugs the longest, on average eight years. Long-term amyloid removal cut in half their risk of symptom onset, researchers reported Wednesday in the journal *Lancet Neurology*.

Despite the study's small size, "it's incredibly important," said Northwestern University neuroscientist David Gate, who wasn't involved with the



Jake Heinrichs prepares for his infusion treatment with an experimental anti-amyloid Alzheimer's drug while at home in New York, on Wednesday, March 12. (AP)

research.

Now participants have been switched from an earlier experimental drug to Leqembi, an IV treatment approved in the U.S., to try to answer the obvious next question.

"What we want to determine over the next five years is how strong is the protection," said Washington University's Dr. Randall Bateman, who directs the Dominantly Inherited Alzheimer's Network of studies involving families with these rare genes. "Will they ever get the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease if we keep treating them?"

## Confirmatory

Here's the worry: Bateman raised money to start that confirmatory study while seeking National Institutes of Health funding for the full project but his grant has been delayed as required reviews were canceled. It's one example of how millions of dollars in research have been stalled as NIH grapples with funding restrictions and mass firings.

At the same time researchers wonder if NIH will shift focus away from amyloid research after comments by Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, nominated as the agency's new director.

"One of the reasons I think that we have not made progress in Alzhei-

mer's, as much as we ought to have, is because the NIH has not supported a sufficiently wide range of hypotheses," Bhattacharya told senators, responding to one who brought up an example of earlier science misconduct unrelated to current research.

Scientists don't know exactly what causes Alzheimer's, a mind-destroying disease that affects nearly 7 million Americans, mostly late in life. What's clear is that silent changes occur in the brain at least two decades before the first symptoms -- and that sticky amyloid is a major contributor. At some point amyloid buildup appears to trigger a protein named tau to begin killing neurons, which drives cognitive decline.

Tau-fighting drugs now are being tested. Researchers also are studying other factors including inflammation, the brain's immune cells and certain viruses.

NIH's focus expanded as researchers found more potential culprits. In 2013, NIH's National Institute on Aging funded 14 trials of possible Alzheimer's drugs, over a third targeting amyloid. By last fall, there were 68 drug trials and about 18% targeted amyloid.

Northwestern's Gate counts himself among scientists who "think amyloid isn't everything," but said nothing has invalidated the amyloid hypothesis.

## Mobility restored

## New hope for the paralyzed

SHANGHAI, March 20, (Xinhua): For many, walking is a simple and everyday act, yet for those living with spinal cord injuries, it remains a distant and often unattainable dream.

However, four patients in China have taken life-changing steps toward reclaiming this ability after they received surgery featuring an innovative "brain-spinal interface" technology in Shanghai. The breakthrough hinges on a "triple-integrated" brain-spinal interface system created by Jia Fumin's team at Fudan University's Institute of Science and Technology for Brain-Inspired Intelligence.

Their brain-spinal interface system works by capturing motor signals from the brain's movement center, decoding them via advanced algorithms, and delivering tailored electrical pulses to spinal nerves below the injury site, thus effectively rerouting movement commands around injured areas.

Unlike external assistive devices, this system creates an internal "neural bypass," allowing patients to control their limbs naturally.

For patients like Lin, a man in his 30s who found himself reliant on a wheelchair following a life-altering fall two years ago, the results have been nothing short of transformative.

Lin's journey began in October 2024 when he volunteered for a clinical trial after spotting a recruitment notice on Fudan's official social media page. His surgery, performed on Jan. 8 at Fudan-affiliated Zhongshan Hospital, involved minimally invasive implants: two 1-mm-diameter electrodes placed in his brain's motor cortex and a stimulator chip in spine.

The progress was startlingly swift. By day three, he could move both legs using brain signals. Within two weeks, he could lift his right leg high enough to step over moving obstacles. By day 15, he managed to walk more than five meters using a standing frame with suspension support.

"I used to cry every day," Lin shared. "Now, I can walk again. I am grateful for the efforts of every member of the research team."

Similar breakthroughs took place for two other patients who regained leg movement within hours of their surgeries in February. Notably, both exhibited voluntary leg lifts just one day after their operations.

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Denver Nuggets guard Jalen Pickett, right, tries to shoot as Los Angeles Lakers forward Jarred Vanderbilt reaches in during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles. Lakers won 120-108. (AP) - See Page 15

# Sports

## Sabah Al-Ahmad Ramadan tourney heats up



One of the championship teams.

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: The fourth edition of the Sabah Al-Ahmad Football Association Ramadan Tournament for adults and juniors is in full swing, with the first two days of competition concluding at Sabah Al-Ahmad Stadium. A total of 35 teams are participating in this year's tournament, delivering exciting performances.

Eng. Hamad Ali Al-Marri, Chairman of the Sabah Al-Ahmad City Cooperative Society, hailed the tournament's early success, commending the impressive displays by the teams.

He congratulated Sabah Al-Ahmad Youth and Eagles on reaching the final match and promised an exciting final day filled with surprises and major

prizes for the audience.

In the Junior Championship, Sabah Al-Ahmad Juniors and Eagles secured their spots in the final after showcasing outstanding performances.

Meanwhile, the Senior Championship saw several teams advance: Vamos defeated F 25, Beşiktaş overcame 50 A, Stark triumphed over Qadisiyah 2 Meringue outperformed Al-Hilal. Shamali secured a win against Misk Al-Khatam while Santos City claimed a 3-0 victory over Falcons of the Earth.

With the tournament nearing its climax, fans can expect an electrifying final filled with top-tier football action.

## Farwaniya wins Governorates Ramadan Super Cup



Farwaniya Governorate team crowned with the Super Cup.

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: The Public Authority for Youth Stadium in Mishref recently hosted the final of the Governorates Ramadan Super Cup football tournament, organized by the Sports for All Sector of the Public Authority for Sports.

In an exciting showdown, the Farwaniya Governorate team triumphed over the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate team with a commanding 4-1 victory.

After the match, both teams were honored in a special ceremony.

The final was attended by several distinguished officials, including Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser, Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor Sheikh Sabah Al-Badr, Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Al-Jaber, and Adel Al-Aslawi, representing the Governor of Hawalli. Also present was Bashar Abdullah, the Acting Director of the Public Authority for Youth.

During the ceremony, Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser reaffirmed his commitment to supporting youth and sports activities, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan, emphasizing their importance in fostering health awareness, promoting sports culture, and enhancing community engagement across Kuwait's governorates. He also expressed gratitude to the organizers and congratulated the winners, wishing them continued success.

## Japan becomes first team to qualify for 2026 World Cup after host nations



Japan players pose together as they celebrate after defeating Bahrain in the World Cup qualifying soccer match at Saitama Stadium in Saitama, Japan. (AP)

### Australia takes big step towards seventh appearance

SAITAMA, Japan, March 20, (AP): Japan became the first team to qualify for the 2026 World Cup after beating Bahrain 2-0 at Saitama Stadium on Thursday.

Second-half goals from Daichi Kamada and Takefusa Kubo ensured the Samurai Blue secured a spot in Asia Group C's top two automatic qualification places.

At its eighth successive World Cup, Japan joins co-hosts the United States, Canada and Mexico in the expanded 48-team tournament.

Earlier, second-placed Australia took a big step towards a



Australia's Aziz Behich, right, shoots past Indonesia's Marselino Ferdinan during their soccer World Cup qualifying match at the Sydney Football Stadium, Sydney, Australia. (AP)

seventh appearance by defeating Indonesia 5-1 in Sydney in the visitor's first game under new coach Patrick Kluijvert.

Indonesia's Kevin Diks missed a penalty in the eighth minute, and 10 minutes later Martin Boyle made no mistake with his spot kick to put the Socceroos ahead.

Nishan Velupillay and Jackson Irvine scored before the break and Lewis Miller made it 4-0 on the hour. Ole Romeny pulled one back for Indonesia before Irvine grabbed his second and the hosts' fifth.

The top two from each of the three six-team groups in the third round of Asian qualifying advance to the World Cup while the third- and fourth-placed teams advance to another stage to compete for two more places.



The coordination meeting in progress at the Kuwait Football Association headquarters.

### Coordination meeting held for Kuwait vs Oman WCup qualifier

KUWAIT CITY, March 20: A coordination meeting took place at the Kuwait Football Association headquarters, bringing together ministries and relevant entities involved in organizing the Kuwait national team's upcoming clash against Oman in the 2026 World Cup qualifiers next Tuesday.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Saleh Al-Majroub, Secretary-General of the Association, Dr. Hamed Al-

Shaibani, Director of the Competitions Department, and representatives from various government ministries and entities.

Discussions focused on fan entry procedures, logistical preparations, and the overall readiness of working committees to ensure the smooth execution of the match. Officials emphasized the importance of seamless coordination to deliver a well-organized and successful event.

### Kuwait Oly team set to face Lebanon in the West Asian U-23 Championship

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MUSCAT, March 20: The Kuwait Olympic team will take on Lebanon at 7:30 pm at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex Stadium in its second match of the West Asian Under-23 Championship.

Kuwait fell to Jordan 2-0 in the tournament opener, with Bakr Kalbouneh netting both goals in the 45th and 53rd minutes, securing Jordan's place in the semi-finals.

Kuwait started strong, creating multiple attacking opportunities. However, Jordan gradually gained control, utilizing its pace and tactical discipline to break through Kuwait's defense. Kalbouneh nearly opened

the scoring early with a powerful strike, but goalkeeper Abdulrahman Ajaj made a brilliant save. Later, Kalbouneh and Jaafar Samara had close chances before Kalbouneh finally broke the deadlock in stoppage time of the first half.

Despite Kuwait's continued offensive efforts in the second half, Kalbouneh struck again in the 53rd minute, finishing off a well-placed pass from Al-Azaizeh. Kuwait pushed forward in search of a comeback but struggled against Jordan's solid defensive setup and missed key chances.

Now, Kuwait shifts focus to Lebanon, aiming for a crucial victory to keep its hopes alive in the tournament.



Players vying for the ball during Kuwait, Jordan game.