



Kuwait Amir, Crown Prince and Prime Minister receive UAE Deputy PM  
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# Jleeb security sweep nets multiple arrests

Wanted individuals, street vendors caught

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The Farwaniya Governorate Investigation Unit in the Criminal Investigation General Department at the Interior Ministry, carried out an extensive security operation in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This initiative is part of the ongoing efforts to intensify law enforcement and maintain public order. During the campaign, several individuals were arrested, including five who were involved in various criminal offenses.

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## Storms persist into Thursday morning

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28, (KUNA): Acting Director of the Meteorological Department Dhirar Al-Ali forecasted a chance of rainfall during the night-time hours on Wednesday, at times accompanied by thunderstorms, continuing into the early hours of Thursday morning.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Al-Ali disclosed that weather maps and numerical models show Kuwait being affected by an extension of a surface low-pressure system that is gradually intensifying, coinciding with another low-pressure system in the upper atmosphere. He pointed out an increase in low and mid-level cloud cover, interspersed with some cumulonimbus clouds.

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## Kuwait, Qatar discuss expanding cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28, (KUNA): First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah received on Wednesday Qatar's Ambassador to Kuwait Ali Al-Mahmoud and discuss strengthening cooperation across multiple fields.

A Ministry of Interior statement said Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef underscored the depth of the two countries' longstanding ties and commended the current level of cooperation, calling for further development to support coordination and exchange of expertise in pursuit of shared interests.

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MoI photo  
First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior receives Qatar's Ambassador.

Kuwait, Saudi DMs meet

## Minister of Defense leads Kuwait delegation to UAE

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28, (KUNA): Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation departed for the UAE on Wednesday to attend the launch of UAE-Kuwait Relations Week set to begin Thursday.

A press release by the Ministry of Defense said that the Kuwaiti delegation includes Minister of Public Works Dr. Nora Al-Mashaan, Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, and Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Homoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

UAE-Kuwait Relations Week comes in implementation of the directives of the wise leadership of the United Arab Emirates to celebrate the deep-rooted bilateral ties.

The Week will be held in all the emirates of the UAE and includes a wide array of more than 40 cultural and entertainment events.

Meanwhile on Tuesday, Kuwaiti Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah discussed with Saudi counterpart Prince Khalid bin Salman buttressing defense cooperation.

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KUNA photo  
An official Kuwaiti delegation headed by the Minister of Defense heads to the UAE to attend the launch of the activities of the UAE-Kuwait Relations Week.



PM Diwan photo  
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

## Cabinet congratulates HH Amir, Crown Prince on National and Liberation days

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Cabinet on Tuesday congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people on the country's National Day and Liberation Day.

This came during the Cabinet's customary meeting held at Bayan Palace under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

On this occasion, the Cabinet wished the nation everlasting security, stability, welfare and prosperity.

The Cabinet also congratulated His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and the Kuwait Handball Association on the national team's qualification for the World Handball Cup in Germany in 2027.

It underlined this qualification as the fruit of great support and care given by the political leadership to the country's sports sector.

Meanwhile, Minister of Education Sayed Al-Tabtabaei made a

visual presentation on the results of the 2025-2026 school year, including an analytical reading of the educational performance indicators, comparison with previous years and the stable education system amid essential reforms and changes.

The Cabinet, then, welcomed the official visit to be paid by President of the Swiss Confederation Guy Parmelin to Kuwait on Sunday (February 1), hoping that it would contribute to promoting relations between Kuwait and the Swiss body and opening wider horizons of cooperation.

The ministers also voiced deep thanks and appreciation to Kuwaiti citizens and companies for their bountiful contributions to the building, rebuilding and maintenance of several mosques in the country.

Finally, the Cabinet mourned the death of the Ministry of Interior's General Department of Correctional Institutions' Sergeant Mohammad Saad Al-Hajri due to wounds he sustained while he was on duty, expressing sincere condolence and solace to his family.

Integrated care at core of Health Ministry vision

## Kuwait opens new surgical wing at Amiri Hospital

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi inaugurated the new surgical ward at Amiri Hospital on Wednesday.

This is in line with the strategy of the ministry to renovate wards, particularly the surgical departments, in a bid to provide the best medical and therapeutic services to patients.

In a press statement, Al-Awadhi revealed that this is the second surgical wing opened at Amiri Hospital within two weeks following the completion of its renovation.

According to Al-Awadhi, the two wards have a combined capacity of 60 beds, 20 private rooms and 40 general rooms, in addition to rooms for medications, doctors,



Ministry of Health photo  
Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi inspects an equipment at the newly renovated surgical wing at Amiri Hospital.

nurses and administrative staff.

He added that the plan of his ministry for 2026 includes developing healthcare services in the northern, southern and central areas of the capital, as well as attracting visiting doctors from around the world.

He also affirmed the commitment of the ministry to fully support national medical professionals who have reached international standards and led medical work in many countries, whether in robotic surgery, complex procedures, organ and kidney transplants or open-heart surgery.

He asserted that these renovations mark the commitment of the ministry to modernize the infrastructure of government hospitals and provide comprehensive and state-of-the-art medical services that meet the needs of all patients.



HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

## This is why a European king abandoned the throne in favor of Moulay Idris

The sole survivor of the Abbasid massacre in Makkah fled to Morocco.

A sultan once went out for a stroll, and a madman sat on the throne.

The guards beat him harshly and left him crying in a corner of the palace.

He said to the ruler, "I am not weeping from the beating, but I am crying over you."

"I endured immense pain for sitting on the throne for just a few moments."

"How will your condition be tomorrow when you are questioned about governance and justice?"

Sultan Murad IV ascended the throne at the age of 12.

The governor of Tripoli exploited weakness and chaos and declared independence.

Murad IV died in 1640 after restoring lost glory.

3

Proposal eyes safer Gulf Road crossings

By Inaas Awadh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Municipal Council member Sharifa Al-Shalafan proposed the creation of surface-level pedestrian bridges along the Gulf Road.

Al-Shalafan explained these bridges, which will be equipped with traffic lights and barriers to regulate movement, are intended to safely connect cultural and recreational landmarks -- Scientific Center, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center, Kuwait Towers and Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center -- with the waterfront.

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Scientists cite war, climate, AI risks

## 'Doomsday Clock' ticks closer to midnight

WASHINGTON, Jan 28, (AP): Earth is closer than it's ever been to destruction as Russia, China, the U.S. and other countries become "increasingly aggressive, adversarial, and nationalistic," a science-oriented advocacy group said Tuesday as it advanced its "Doomsday Clock" to 85 seconds till midnight.

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist members had an initial demonstration Friday and then announced their results on Tuesday.

The scientists cited risks of nuclear war, climate change, potential misuse of biotechnology and the increasing use of artificial intelligence without adequate controls as it made the annual announcement, which rates how close humanity is from ending.

Last year the clock advanced to 89 seconds to midnight.

Since then, "hard-won global understandings are collapsing, accelerating a winner-takes-all great power competition and undermining the international cooperation" needed to reduce existential risks, the group said.

They worry about the threat of escalating conflicts involving nuclear-armed countries, citing the Russia-Ukraine war, May's conflict between India and Pakistan and whether Iran is capable of developing nuclear weapons after strikes last summer by the U.S. and Israel.

International trust and cooperation is essential because, "if the world splinters into an us-versus-them, zero-sum approach, it increases the likelihood that we all lose," said Daniel Holz, chair of the group's science and security board.

The group also highlighted droughts, heat waves and floods linked to global warming, as well as the failure of nations to adopt meaningful agreements to fight global warming - singling out U.S. President Donald Trump's efforts to boost fossil fuels and hobble renewable energy production.

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NBK launches for its employees the 'Wellness Week' initiative with more than 10 companies



KD 342.5 mn stc's revenues for financial year ended 31 Dec 2025 with KD 34.1 mn net profit



Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	05:18	Asr .....	15:02
Sunrise ..	06:40	Maghrib ..	17:23
Zohr .....	12:01	Isha .....	18:42

# Local

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Mild and chance of rain will decrease gradually with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h.  
**By Night:** Rather cold to cold

Weather			
with light variable wind, with speeds of 06-22 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait Airport	23	12	
Abdaly	23	10	
Bubyan	16	10	
Jahra	23	12	
Failaka Island	17	10	
Salmiyah	18	15	
Ahmadi	25	10	
Jal Aliyah	22	11	
Nuwaisib	21	13	
Salmiyah	21	09	

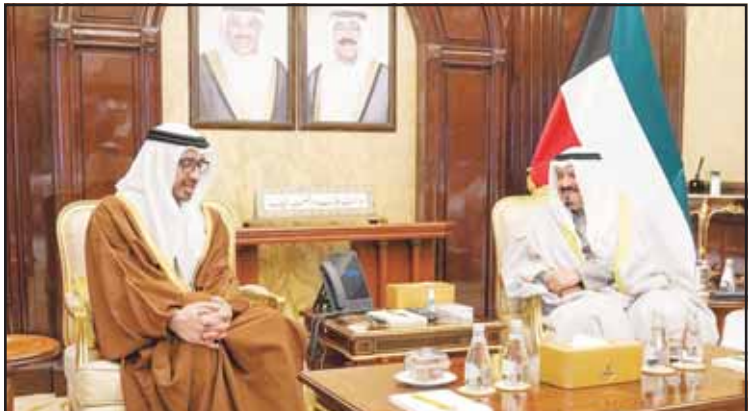
## Kuwait Amir, Crown Prince and Prime Minister receive UAE Deputy PM



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.



Amiri Diwan, Crown Prince Diwan, Prime Minister Diwan photos  
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Wednesday Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and the accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace.

Sheikh Abdullah conveyed to His Highness the Amir the greetings and best wishes of UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and Vice President and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, wishing His Highness the Amir continued good health and prosperity for Kuwait and its people.

In return, His Highness the Amir asked Sheikh Abdullah to convey his greetings to Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed and Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid, wishing them continued health and more progress and prosperity to UAE and its people.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Director of His Highness the Amir's Office, Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Jamal Al-Theyab, Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Abdulaziz Mishal Mubarak Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs at the Amiri Diwan Mazen Al-

Issa.

### Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Wednesday Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and the accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace.

Sheikh Abdullah conveyed to His Highness the Crown Prince the greetings and best wishes of UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and Vice President and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, wishing His Highness the Crown Prince continued good health.

In return, His Highness the Crown Prince asked Sheikh Abdullah to convey his greetings to Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed and Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid, wishing them continued health.

The meeting was attended by Chief of the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Sabah, Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya and senior officials.

### Prime Minister

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Wednesday Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and the accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace.

Sheikh Abdullah conveyed to His Highness the Prime Minister the greetings and best wishes of UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and Vice President and Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, wishing His Highness the Prime Minister continued good health.

In return, His Highness the Prime Minister asked Sheikh Abdullah to convey his greetings to Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed and Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid, wishing them continued health.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Acting Head of Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikh Khaled Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, Kuwait's Ambassador to the UAE Jamal Al-Ghunaim, and Assistant Foreign Minister for GCC Affairs Ambassador Najeeb Al-Bader.



Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah receives UAE Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and prominent guests from the royal family .

### Amiri Diwan minister holds banquet in honor of UAE Dep. PM

Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah held a banquet Wednesday in honor of visiting UAE Deputy Premier and Foreign

Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and his accompanying delegation at Diwan Salwa. The luncheon was attended by First Deputy Prime Min-

ister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah and Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, in addition to a host of senior officials. (KUNA):

## KRCS calls for improvement in humanitarian legislation

GCC Red Crescent bodies participate in workshop

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28, (KUNA): **Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) organized a two-day workshop titled “experiences of Red Crescent societies in harmonizing local laws with humanitarian legislation”, with participation from GCC Red Crescent bodies, the GCC General Secretariat, and Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies.**

KRCS Chairman Khaled Al-Mughamis told KUNA that the workshop reflects the depth of Gulf humanitarian partnership and the GCC's commitment to developing legal frameworks that keep pace with evolving humanitarian challenges.

He said the workshop implements recommendations from the 21st meeting of GCC Red Crescent heads, emphasizing national societies' experiences in aligning domestic laws with international humanitarian legislation, preserving the independence and neutrality of humanitarian



Khaled Al-Mughamis

work.

Al-Mughamis added that the event provides a platform for exchanging expertise, reviewing Gulf legislative experiences, identifying challenges, and strengthening legal frameworks, while highlighting Kuwait's commitment to updating its laws in line with international obligations.

Deputy Director of the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies, Counselor Dr. Ahmad

Al-Muqalled, told KUNA that the workshop underscores the growing importance of harmonizing national legislation with humanitarian principles, and reflects awareness of national societies' roles.

He said that it results from a memorandum of understanding with KRCS to build expertise in international humanitarian law.

Representative of the Saudi Red Crescent, Mai Al-Assem, said the workshop enhances knowledge exchange among GCC societies.

Al-Assem reviewed Saudi experiences in harmonizing local laws with international humanitarian legislation, protecting the Red Crescent emblem, and improving emergency response procedures.

She added that this experience reflects Saudi Arabia's commitment to developing its institutional framework according to international best practices.

The Saudi official highlighted the importance of such workshops in exchanging expertise and benefiting from leading Gulf experiences to strengthen joint humanitarian work and support integration among Red Crescent societies across the GCC.



Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber



Abdulrahman Al-Otaibi



Ahmad Al-Aqab



Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri

## Prominent personalities call to check on Al-Jarallah health

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah received numerous telephone calls on Wednesday to check on his health following his return from medical treatment in France.

Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber, Abdulrahman Al-

Otaibi, Ahmed Al-Aqab and Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri called to express their sincere wishes for his good health and well-being.

Ambassador Abdulrahman Al-Otaibi also sent a cake with a card expressing his joy over Al-Jarallah's recovery and wishing him good health and well-being.

### Security, energy, trade fields tapped

## Arab-Indian cooperation forum bridge for bright future

NEW DELHI, Jan 28, (KUNA): Ambassador of Kuwait to India Mishal Al-Shemali said Wednesday that the Arab-Indian Cooperation Forum is a bridge to strategic partnership for a bright future.

In a statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Ambassador Al-Shemali said that the ministerial meeting, to be held on January 30 as part of the Cooperation Forum, will contribute to strengthening relations and elevating them to broader horizons in all fields.

He pointed out that cooperation includes areas of security, energy, investment, and creating new trade markets.

Unifying efforts and benefiting from Indian capabilities in the fields of information technology, science, arti-

ficial intelligence, and environmental protection are all possible avenues of cooperation, he added.

Al-Shemali said that the Kuwaiti delegation participating in the meeting will be headed by the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the Arab League, Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi.

Experts from the Arab Affairs and Asian Affairs departments at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs will also participate in the event.

He added that there are great possibilities for expanding the scope of cooperation between the two sides, noting that India and many Arab countries share many major regional and international challenges and aim to build solid foundations of trust and mutual respect.



Ambassador Mishal Al-Shemali

### Cultural center launches initiative

## UAE-Kuwait bonds deep-rooted

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: In light of the deep-rooted fraternal and historical ties that bind the State of Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center announced its participation in the initiative to launch the UAE-Kuwait Relations Week, reports Al-Anba daily.

This initiative aims to strengthen cultural bonds between the two countries and their brotherly peoples.

The center disclosed that the initiative

includes providing free entry for UAE citizens to its facilities for one week, starting Jan 29, 2026. This step reflects the strength of bilateral relations and the commitment of both sides to expand the horizons of cultural cooperation.

It clarified that the entry will be through the free ticket booth, requiring the presentation of an Emirates identification card.

An official announcement detailing the initiative for visitors from the UAE will also be published on the website of the center.



HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah



# This is why a European king abandoned the throne in favor of Moulay Idris

History states that in the year 169 AH, a battle took place in Makkah at a location called Fakh, near the grave of the Companion of Prophet Mohammad, Abdullah ibn Umar.

At Fakh, more than 198 members of the Prophet’s family were killed by the Abbasids—their own cousins. Only one survived: Idris, later known as Moulay Idris ibn Abdullah al-Kamil, ibn al-Hasan al-Muthanna, ibn al-Hasan, ibn Ali, ibn Fatima al-Zahra (may Allah be pleased with her), the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) from his first wife, Khadija (may Allah be pleased with her).

The sole survivor fled alone to Morocco as a wanted fugitive, without an army, family or power. Upon arriving, he found a king crowned by a European kingdom, named Ishaq ibn Abd al-Hamid al-Urubi. When this ruler learned of Moulay Idris’s lineage to Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), he relinquished the throne in his favor, despite Idris having arrived alone and without influence.

### The Sultan and the Madman

It is said that one day a sultan left his palace for a short time. During his absence, a madman entered the palace and sat on the sultan’s throne. When the guards saw him, they condemned his act, dragged him down from the throne, beat him severely, and left him crying in a corner of the palace.

When the sultan returned and saw him in that condition, he felt compassion and asked why he was crying, and whether the beating had hurt him.

The madman replied, “I am not crying because of the beating, I am crying over you.”

Surprised, the sultan asked, “How can you cry over me?”

The madman said, “I sat on this throne for only a few moments, and all this suffering befell

- The sole survivor of the Abbasid massacre in Makkah fled to Morocco.
- A sultan once went out for a stroll, and a madman sat on the throne.
- The guards beat him harshly and left him crying in a corner of the palace.
- He said to the ruler, “I am not weeping from the beating, but I am crying over you.”
- “I endured immense pain for sitting on the throne for just a few moments.”
- “How will your condition be tomorrow when you are questioned about governance and justice?”
- Sultan Murad IV ascended the throne at the age of 12.
- The governor of Tripoli exploited weakness and chaos and declared independence.
- Murad IV died in 1640 after restoring lost glory.

me. You have sat on it for years. What will your condition be tomorrow when you are questioned about governance and justice?”

The sultan wept and realized that kingship is a heavy responsibility, and that accountability increases with authority.

Thus, thrones are not measured by their splendor, but by the weight of the trust placed upon those who occupy them. The longer a ruler remains in power, the longer his questioning before Allah will be.

Blessed is the one who remembers his responsibility before judgment comes.

It is narrated that Commander of the Faith-

ful Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), once said:

“If a mule were to stumble in Baghdad, I would fear that Allah would question me about it: ‘Why did you not pave the road for it, O Umar?’”

### The Story of Murad IV

After the deposition of Sultan Mustafa in 1622 CE, Sultan Murad IV ascended the Ottoman throne at the age of 12.

His mother, Kösem Sultan — a Janissary assumed the role of regent and exercised real authority on his behalf.

At the time, the Ottoman Empire was facing severe internal turmoil. The governor of Tripoli in Syria took advantage of the weakness and chaos and declared independence from the Ottoman State. Abaza Pasha did the same in Erzurum.

Meanwhile, the Safavid State seized Baghdad, and the Janissaries revolted against the Sultan following the dismissal of Khusraw Pasha, to whom they were loyal.

After Kösem Sultan’s guardianship over her son ended, Murad IV resolved to reform internal affairs so that he could confront external threats.

He began eliminating the Janissary tyrants, executing rebels in Istanbul and throughout the empire. He established a powerful intelligence network, through which he identified despots throughout the state. Whenever Murad IV traveled to a region, he would arrest the rebels and order their immediate execution.

Through patience, determination, and strategic cunning, Murad IV consolidated power and shifted the balance decisively in his favor.

In 1634, war erupted with the Safavids in Iraq. Sultan Murad IV personally led the army and

■ Kuwait is in need of a hospital—or several hospitals—dedicated to addiction treatment. A strong and sustained fight against drugs has been lacking. Today, society is sinking into a widespread drug crisis, which is why the Ministry of Interior has tightened penalties against drug dealers.



■ People speak about you when they do not possess what you have, when they cannot be like you, and when they cannot reach where you are.



■ A friend will abandon you when their affection is false. Sometimes you may find no true friend, no loyal lover, and not even a stranger who remains by your side.



At times, nostalgia for the past can be a mistake—or even a tragedy. Every stage of life has its own beauty, comfort and way of living. Let us release the past so that we do not neglect the future.

marched on Baghdad, which Abbas Shah captured after killing the Ottoman governor.

Murad IV besieged Baghdad, destroyed its walls with artillery, and successfully recaptured the city. He ordered its reconstruction, repaired its defenses, and appointed a new governor of Iraq.

Sultan Murad IV died in 1640 after restoring the lost prestige and glory of the Ottoman Empire.



Farwaniya Governorate photo  
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah meets a committee member.

## ‘Need to better serve Farwaniya residents’

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah met with the heads of the Farwaniya Governorate Council committees, including Head of the Complaints and Petitions Committee Dr. Mundker Wael Al-Hassawi, Head of the Public Services Committee retired Lieutenant General Ali Abdulhadi Al-Shanfa, Head of the Development and Initiatives Committee Hessa Abdullah Al-Mutawa, and Council Member Saad Abdullah Al-Hadba.

During the meeting , a number of issues related to improving the services provided to the residents of the governorate were discussed, along with mechanisms to strengthen cooperation among the committees and the concerned authorities. This is aimed at improving the services and performance in all areas of the governorate.

The Governor underscored the important role played by the committees in monitoring citizens’ demands and addressing their concerns and suggestions, stressing the need for integrated efforts and teamwork to achieve the desired results.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the attendees expressed their appreciation to the Governor for his unwavering support and commitment to intensify joint action and better serve the residents of the governorate.

## Guard efforts in securing vital sites, camps hailed

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Undersecretary of the National Guard Lieutenant General Hamad Al-Barjas visited the Security Affairs Command, which included the First Protection Brigade, Second Protection Brigade and Military Police Directorate.

Al-Barjas praised the efforts of National Guard personnel in securing and protecting vital sites and camps, stressing the importance of continuous training to achieve the highest levels of efficiency and readiness, as well as maintain vigilance and caution at all locations.

In a press statement, the National Guard said that Al-Barjas conveyed to the personnel the greetings and appreciation of the National Guard leadership, represented by President Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah and Vice President Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf, and their pride in the vital role played by the personnel in securing important sites. The statement added that during the field tour, Al-Barjas was briefed on the units, including their capabilities, operational plans, available resources, and the future vision of their commanders.

# Brother not his ‘actual’ brother

Ex-MP’s file reopened

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The concerned authorities reopened the file of the former Member of Parliament (MP), in which it was previously established that the brother listed under the file of the former MP’s father as his ‘brother’ is not his real brother, reports Al-Rai daily quoting sources.

Sources confirmed that the Higher Committee for Citizenship Investigation revoked his Kuwaiti citizenship. Sources said this case was not been closed. Instead, it has been subjected to further in-depth investigations, including DNA testing of those listed under the file of the deceased father of the former MP.

Sources disclosed that the scientific tests confirmed the existence of a second brother of the former MP listed in the same file. It was established that this brother is neither the son of the file holder nor the real brother of the former MP.

Sources added that the ongoing investigations are still exploring other names. Suspicion currently surrounds three additional individuals who are believed to have been fraudulently listed under the file of the father. This brings the total number of potential fake brothers to five. Two of these individuals have already been proven not to be the sons of the file holder, while it appears that the other three are on the path to being proven otherwise.

## Nationality fake, Gulf citizen admits

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: In a new case filed based on a report made through the hotline, the relevant authorities received information about a person holding Kuwaiti citizenship but possessing Gulf documents under a different name, and that the first name is identical in both documents, while the rest of the names differed, reports Al-Rai daily quoting sources.

Sources asserted that the hotline once again served its purpose by receiving the report. They indicated that based on the suspect’s photograph in the Gulf document and its comparison with Kuwaiti documents by the forensic personnel, it was confirmed to be the same photograph taken by the same photographer. Sources said he submitted it to official authorities in both countries and used it to forge his identity documents in Kuwait and another Gulf state.

Sources indicated that the three names suspected of being fraudulent, along with the fourth individual whose identity was recently proven to be forged, and the first brother whose citizenship was previously revoked, were not listed in the family’s inheritance registry. This omission provided further evidence that strengthened suspicions and bolstered the investigation.

Sources pointed out that the case file, after its completion, was referred to the Public Prosecution for legal action regarding the established facts.

About the second brother, who was proven not to be the former MP’s biological brother, sources stated that he is a fugitive. He left Kuwait about 18 months ago and is officially registered as having been born in 1935, although there are serious doubts about the accuracy of his recorded birth year.

Sources added that most of his children have also left Kuwait. The forgery was confirmed through DNA testing, as well as a Gulf document bearing his real name, and the fact that his name is not listed in the inheritance registry. The Higher Committee decided to revoke the Kuwaiti citizenship of the aforementioned individual, whose file lists 68 dependents, including children and grandchildren.

Sources revealed that the suspicions surrounding his registered birth year of 1935 stem from his desire to register a fictitious son under his file. Gulf documents indicate his actual birth date is in the latter half of the 1940s, meaning he is around 10 to 15 years younger than his registered Kuwaiti age.

Sources added investigations revealed that the suspect was in Kuwait, working in the public sector. He was summoned for official questioning and he complied, immediately reporting to the Citizenship Investigation Department.

During questioning, the suspect confessed to forging Kuwaiti citizenship by claiming a fictitious father who was, in reality, a friend of his Gulf father.

He admitted to having entered the Kuwaiti citizenship file when he was 18 years old.

Sources reported that the accused was referred to the Public Prosecution and is currently being held in the Central Prison pending investigation and trial.

DNA samples were taken from him and compared to those of his alleged brothers in Kuwait to prove, with conclusive scientific evidence, that he is not their brother.

## Arab expat accused of embezzling cash

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The representative of a food company lodged a complaint at Shaab Police Station, accusing an Arab of breaching trust as he allegedly embezzled company funds amounting to KD1,720, reports Al-Anba daily.

The lawyer of the company disclosed that the accused received the money from the company’s driver but retained it for himself instead of delivering it to the com-

pany. The lawyer said the incident took place in front of the residence of the accused in Hawally.

A security source confirmed that the case was referred to the Criminal Investigation Department in the Interior Ministry, indicating the accused was summoned for questioning. He added the accused voluntarily reported to the investigation office.

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Child Buffet	Adult Buffet
<del>KD 4.250</del>	<del>KD 7.450</del>
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# Australia and Kuwait forge stronger ties as Federation marks 125 years

Ambassador Kelly highlights growing cooperation

By Fares Ghaleb  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Australian Ambassador to Kuwait Melissa Kelly highlighted the special significance of this year's Australian National Day, which marks the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Australian Federation.**

The occasion is a moment to reflect on the historical milestones that shaped Australia's national identity.

During the celebration on Wednesday, Kelly underscored these pivotal moments in Australian history, from the rich legacy of indigenous peoples to the adoption of the Westminster-style parliamentary system. She emphasized the nation's multicultural fabric, which binds Australia to the global community.

The day also served as an opportunity



Photo by Samer Shaqir  
Australian Ambassador to Kuwait Melissa Kelly addresses guests during the Australian National Day celebration in Kuwait, marking the 125th anniversary of the Australian Federation.

nity to celebrate the strong partnership between Australia and Kuwait, and to acknowledge the important contributions of the Australian community living in Kuwait.

Kelly described the bilateral relationship

between the two nations as "progressing excellently," focusing on three priority areas: food security, education and investment. She pointed out that remarkable progress has been made in all these sectors, calling the developments "very positive."

Kuwait remains Australia's largest Middle Eastern investor, reflecting the strong economic ties between the two countries. While it is difficult to pinpoint the exact size of investments due to conservative Australian reporting practices, estimates suggest that Kuwait's investments are around \$13 billion.

Kelly hinted that discussions with Kuwaiti partners suggest the actual figure could be much higher, preferring not to release potentially inaccurate data.

Bilateral trade exceeds half a billion dollars, though fluctuations can occur due to the commodity-based nature of the trade.

The agricultural exports to Kuwait have been steadily growing, particularly in the areas of meat, wheat and

vegetables. Australian beef, including locally slaughtered varieties, is widely available through the Livestock Company, alongside an increasing supply of high-quality chilled beef. Livestock shipments continue year-round, with a seasonal ban in place during the summer months.

The education sector is thriving as well, with two Australian universities operating in Kuwait and a notable year-on-year increase in student enrollment.

The Ambassador expressed satisfaction with the continuous growth of academic cooperation.

Regarding the Australian expatriate community, she indicated that the number of Australians living in Kuwait remains stable at approximately 1,000. She also mentioned that there are no recent statistics available on the number of visitors from Kuwait to Australia.

When asked about upcoming high-level visits, she stated that "there are no announced visits at present."

## Kuwait, Armenia explore investment partnerships

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28, (KUNA):** Kuwaiti Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem and Armenian First Deputy Minister of High-Tech Industry Gevorg Mantashyan and Enterprise Armenia's CEO Gohar Abajyan discussed joint investment issues.

This came during a meeting held by both sides on Tuesday on the sidelines of an official visit by an Armenian investment and economic delegation to Kuwait, in the presence of Armenian Ambassador in Kuwait Arsen Arakelyan, the Ministry of Finance said in a press release.

During the meeting, they tackled a set of investment and economic matters pertinent to developing projects and promoting bilateral partnerships as well as future cooperation, it added. They also considered preparations for Kuwaiti-Armenian ministerial committee meetings during the coming period.



Ministry of Finance photo  
Kuwaiti and Armenian officials meet in Kuwait to discuss high-tech and infrastructure investment cooperation, on the sidelines of an Armenian economic delegation's official visit.

## Kuwait's Al-Mansour secures APA vice presidency in Cairo elections

**CAIRO, Jan 28, (KUNA):** Kuwait secured the vice presidency of the Arab Publishers Association (APA) Tuesday after elections held in Cairo to form a new board for the 2026-2028 term, reinforcing its growing presence in publishing institutions.

APA said in a statement that the vote resulted in election of Egypt's Mohamed Rashad as president, while General-Director of Kuwait's publishing house That Al-Salasil Saud Al-Mansour won the post of vice president, marking his fifth term as



Al-Mansour

a board member.

The statement added that 29 candidates from 11 Arab countries competed for 16 posts on the new board.

It noted that the General Assembly also reviewed the board's report on activities during the 2022-2025 term, including major events, as well as the association's financial and administrative performance.

Founded in 1962 by the Arab League and headquartered in Cairo, APA aims to protect intellectual property rights and advance the publishing industry across the Arab world.

It currently includes more than 1,250 publishers representing 20 national publishing associations, in addition to members from countries without local publishers' Association.

## Jahra pumping station approved

## New PAFN HQ moves forward

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28:** The Ministry of Public Works is moving forward on two significant fronts -- securing a new headquarters for the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) and finalizing the contract award for the Jahra pumping station project.

The ministry recently asked the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to issue a tender for the comprehensive study, design and supervision of the construction of the new PAFN headquarters.

However, the Board of Directors of CAPT postponed the issuance of a decision regarding the project and it is waiting for the follow up letter from the ministry detailing amendments that were discussed recently.

Conducting a feasibility study is a crucial preparatory step toward the construction of the new headquarters.

PAFN is one of the government entities whose construction is overseen by the ministry. This project aims to establish a modern facility that guarantees a suitable working environment

for both the employees and visitors.

To ensure the project achieves its objectives, the ministry will coordinate closely with PAFN to finalize the requirements for the building, taking into consideration the quantitative and qualitative specifications. Upon completion of the study and design phase, a separate tender will be issued for the construction, which will adhere to the highest engineering and technical standards, benefiting from the extensive construction experience of the ministry.

In another development, the ministry obtained approval from CAPT through a majority vote to award the contract for the management, development, operation and maintenance of the Jahra pumping station.

The project was awarded to the second lowest bidder with a contract value of KD1.864 million.

This project is integral to the broader strategy of the ministry to develop its pumping stations throughout the country. The main goal is to increase the capacity and operational lifespan of these stations, and make sure that they perform without disruption caused by malfunctions.

## Other Voices

## Secrets of the Rothschilds

By Ahmed alsarraf

**B**ehind towering walls overlooking Lake Geneva stands a museum that houses one of the world's most valuable private collections, containing an extensive array of artistic masterpieces that is part of the Rothschild family fortune. For decades, these treasures have remained secured behind reinforced doors inside the Château de Brienne.

In recent times, this collection has become the focus of a legal confrontation between 93-year-old Nadine de Rothschild and her daughter-in-law, Baroness Ariane de Rothschild, who currently holds the title.

The lawsuits revolve around the daughter-in-law's insistence on keeping the collection within the 19th-century château, while the mother-in-law seeks to transfer it to a newly established museum in Geneva.

The château is filled with works by Old Masters, Renaissance-era artifacts, chests and suits of armor, intricately carved side tables, gilded mirrors and invaluable paintings by El Greco, regarded as among the most treasured items in the residence, along with rare royal furnishings.

The collection is estimated to be worth hundreds of millions of dollars and includes works attributed to Goya and Rembrandt, earning it the description of a miniature Louvre.

This dispute marks the first legal conflict of its kind in the history of this extraordinarily wealthy family since its emergence as a dominant force in banking and finance during the 18th century.

The Rothschilds—whose name is not their original surname—are a prosperous German Jewish family that rose to prominence through banking and financial activities. Originating in Frankfurt, they later expanded into the most influential European capitals of the era



alsarraf

— London, Paris, Vienna, Naples and Frankfurt.

Their founder, Mayer Amschel (1744–1812), was a visionary figure who devised an innovative strategy by sending his five sons abroad to manage the family's overseas branches, a system that has endured for nearly three centuries.

Mayer, the family patriarch and its principal driving force, began his professional life as a currency trader and financial adviser to a European prince. In the 1760s, he established a banking enterprise and made a calculated decision to dispatch his five sons to set up financial branches within a broad network that enabled the swift movement of information and capital by the standards of the time.

Through this structure, the family became instrumental in financing European governments, particularly during the Napoleonic Wars, as well as in underwriting sovereign loans and large-scale projects.

As a result, they accumulated immense wealth and were granted noble titles in the Austrian Empire and the United Kingdom, including the title of 'Baron', which conferred upon them a social status equal to their financial influence.

Mayer selected the name "Rothschild," meaning "red shield," derived from the family home in Frankfurt's Jewish quarter.

Contrary to widespread assumptions, certain branches of the Rothschild family experienced significant setbacks in the 20th century as a result of the World Wars, Nazi persecution of Jews, and the nationalization of banks in countries such as France and Austria, leading to a reduction in their influence compared to earlier periods.

Even so, the family continues to own private banks and influential investment institutions, though not with the absolute financial dominance it once enjoyed, nor with the power portrayed in conspiracy theories alleging that they control half of the world's wealth—claims that many historians and scholars firmly reject.

□ □ □

## Online confirmation now open

## KU admits 132 non-Kuwaiti students

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28:** Kuwait University announced the admission of 132 international students who will be studying at their own expense. The admitted students, who are high school graduates of various nationalities, will join the university in the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year.

In a press statement, acting Dean of Admissions and Registration Dr. Fadel Abbas Aziz explained that the admission of these international students is based on their ranked preferences, in accordance with the quotas approved by the University Council and the Council of Public Universities.

He pointed out that the admission process took into consideration the minimum admission requirements applied to Kuwaiti students in each college, as well as the admission

policy for the 2025/2026 academic year.

He said the admission of any non-Kuwaiti student to any university major requires that their high school grades or equivalent GPA meet or exceed the minimum percentage required for Kuwaiti students admitted to the same major.

He added that text messages will be sent to all accepted students to inform them of their assigned majors.

He stated that admission must be confirmed online through the electronic admissions system through the website <http://portal.ku.edu.kw/admission>, along with payment of the KD10 fee. All applicants can also check their admission status by logging into the online application portal.



JANUARY



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KUNA photo  
The Minister of Foreign Affairs receives the UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs at the airport on the occasion of his official visit to the country.

## Kuwait FM welcomes UAE counterpart

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya welcomed Emirati Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister

Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and his accompanying delegation at Kuwait International Airport on Tuesday.



PM Diwan photo  
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives the Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to the State of Kuwait, His Highness Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud.

## Kuwait PM receives Saudi envoy

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Wednesday Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud at Bayan

Palace. The reception was attended by Acting Head of His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikh Khaled Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah.

Diwaniya in Jabriya strengthens social bonds

## Sheikh Duaij, Sheikh Faisal host guests in evening of fellowship



Eng. Thabet Al-Muhanna and Hamid Al-Omari

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Sheikh Duaij Al-Khalifa Al-Malik Al-Sabah and his brother, Sheikh Faisal Al-Khalifa Al-Malik Al-Sabah, received guests at their diwaniya in Jabriya on Monday evening. A warm and friendly atmosphere prevailed at the diwaniya, reflecting the spirit of social cohesion that characterizes Kuwaiti society. Those present engaged in friendly conversation, reminiscing about the strong social bonds that unite the Kuwaiti people and the role of diwanias as gathering spaces, which foster brotherhood, love and solidarity among all.



Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Mishaal and Sheikh Duwaij



Sheikh Duaij welcomes the Iranian ambassador.



Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Sheikh Hamad Al-Salem, and Sheikh Duwaij Khalifa Al-Malik



Photos by Samer Shaqir

Guests gather with Sheikh Duaij and Sheikh Faisal to celebrate unity and Kuwaiti traditions.

Continued from Page 1

### Jleeb security

Authorities also took action against local businesses operating unlawfully, shutting down an unlicensed vegetable warehouse and a barbershop without the required permit. A street vendor was arrested for regulatory violations, and legal proceedings have been initiated against him. The operation also led to the apprehension of an individual with an outstanding absconding warrant, as well as the arrest of three others wanted for involvement in different cases. Two individuals were deported after completing the legal procedures.

In a related development, the Kuwait Municipality issued two violation citations, and power was cut off from two residences found to be in violation of building codes. The ministry reaffirmed its commitment to conduct comprehensive security campaigns nationwide in order to track down violators and wanted individuals, as well as maintain national security.

### 'Doomsday Clock'

Starting in 1947, the advocacy group used a clock to symbolize the potential and even likelihood of people doing something to end hu-

manity. At the end of the Cold War, it was as close as 17 minutes to midnight. In the past few years, to address rapid global changes, the group has changed from counting down the minutes until midnight to counting down the seconds. The group said the clock could be turned back if leaders and nations worked together to address existential risks.

### Proposal eyes

He underscored the importance of the road as a major urban landmark, featuring buildings and sites of architectural, touristic and cultural value,

as well as its vital connection to the beaches and waterfront. He pointed out this makes the road a crucial destination for all pedestrians. He added the proposal is in light of the recent increase in serious pedestrian accidents, resulting in injuries and fatalities. He said the existing pedestrian bridges are insufficient and pose mobility obstacles for individuals using wheelchairs and strollers. He stated that the implementation of this proposal requires coordination with the Ministry of Interior to guarantee pedestrian safety and accessibility.

### Storms persist

He said the rainfall will be accom-

panied by southerly to southeasterly winds that will later turn northwesterly, blowing at light to moderate speeds. He added that the winds may occasionally become active, raising dust and reducing horizontal visibility in certain areas, particularly the open locations. He also revealed that wind speeds are expected to range from 15 to 55 kilometers per hour, resulting in sea waves rising to more than six feet. He went on to say that maximum temperatures in the coming days are expected to range between 20 and 23 degrees Celsius, while minimum temperatures will range between eight and 11 degrees Celsius.

### Kuwait, Qatar

Meanwhile, Al-Mahmoud said Qatar values the strong ties with Kuwait, commended existing cooperation, and reiterated his country's keenness to expand coordination and cooperation in various areas. The talks were held during Saudi Minister Prince Khalid reception of Sheikh Abdullah in Riyadh. The ministers also mulled the latest developments in the region, the efforts exerted to deal with them as well as several other issues of common interest.

### Minister of



INTERNATIONAL

More ‘No Kings’ protests planned for March 28 as outrage spreads over Minneapolis deaths

WASHINGTON, Jan 28, (AP): A third round of “No Kings” protests is coming this spring, with organizers saying they are planning their largest demonstrations yet across the United States to oppose what they describe as authoritarianism under President Donald Trump.

Previous rallies have drawn millions of people, and organizers said they expect even greater numbers on March 28 in the wake of Trump’s immigration crackdown in Minneapolis, where violent clashes have led to the death of two people.

“We expect this to be the largest protest in American history,” Ezra Levin, co-executive director of the nonprofit Indivisible, told The Associated Press ahead of Wednesday’s announcement. He predicted that as many as 9 million people will turn out.

“No Kings” protests, which are organized by a constellation of groups around the country, have been a focal point for outrage over Trump’s attempts to consolidate and expand his power.

“This is in large part a response to a combination of the heinous attacks on our democracy and communities coming from the regime, and a sense that nobody’s coming to save us,” Levin said.

Last year, Trump said he felt attendees were “not representative of the people of our country,” and he insisted that “I’m not a king.”

The latest round of protests had been in the works before the crackdown in Minneapolis. However, the killing of two people by federal agents in recent weeks has refocused plans.

Levin said they want to show “support for Minnesota and immigrant communities all over” and oppose “the secret police force that is murdering Americans and infringing on their basic constitutional rights.”

“And what we know is, the only way to defend those rights is to exercise them, and you do that in nonviolent but forceful ways, and that’s what I expect to see in ‘No Kings’ three,” Levin said.

Trump has broadly defended his aggressive deportation campaign and blamed local officials for refusing to cooperate. However, he’s more recently signaled a shift in response to bipartisan concern over the killing of Alex Pretti in Minneapolis on Saturday.

In June, the first “No Kings” rallies were organized in nearly 2,000 locations nationwide, including cities, towns and community spaces. Those protests followed unrest over federal immigration raids and Trump’s deployment of the National Guard and Marines to Los Angeles, where tensions escalated with protesters blocking a freeway and setting vehicles on fire.

They were organized also in large part to protest a military parade in the nation’s

capital that marked the Army’s 250th anniversary and coincided with Trump’s birthday. “No Kings” organizers at the time called the parade a “coronation” that was symbolic of what they characterized as Trump’s growing authoritarian overreach.

In response, some conservative politicians condemned the protests as “Hate America” rallies.

During a second round of protests in October, organizers said demonstrations were held in about 2,700 cities and towns across the country. At the time, Levin pointed to Trump’s sweeping immigration crackdown, his unprecedented promises to use federal power to influence midterm elections, restrictions on press freedom and retribution against political opponents, steps he said cumulatively represented a direct threat to constitutionally protected rights.

On social media, both Trump and the official White House account mocked the protests, posting computer-generated images of the president wearing a crown.

The big protest days are headline-grabbing moments, but Levin said groups like his are determined to keep up steady trainings and intermediate-level organizing in hopes of growing sustainable resistance to the Trump administration’s actions.

“This isn’t about Democrats versus Republicans. This is about do we have a democracy at all, and what are we going

to tell our kids and our grandkids about what we did in this moment?” Levin said. “I think that demands the kind of persistent engagement.”

**Also:**

**MINNEAPOLIS:** A man sprayed an unknown substance on Democratic US Rep Ilhan Omar and was tackled to the ground Tuesday during a town hall in Minneapolis, where tensions over federal immigration enforcement have come to a head after agents fatally shot an intensive care nurse and a mother of three this month.

The audience cheered as the man was pinned down and his arms were tied behind his back. In video of the incident, someone in the crowd can be heard saying, “Oh my, he sprayed something on her.”

Just before that Omar had called for the abolishment of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement and for Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem to resign or face impeachment. Calls are mounting on Capitol Hill for Noem to step down after the shooting deaths in Minneapolis of two people who protested deportations. Few Republicans have risen to her defense.

“ICE cannot be reformed,” Omar said, seconds before the attack.

Minneapolis police said officers saw the man use a syringe to spray an unknown liquid at Omar.



People protest as part of the ‘No Kings Day’ protest on Presidents Day in Washington on Feb 17, 2025, near the Capitol in Washington. (AP)



A man is tackled to the ground after spraying an unknown substance on U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar, during a town hall on Jan 27, 2026, in Minneapolis. (AP)

Aviation system returns to normal

Bitter cold grips eastern US as winter storm deaths rise and power outages linger

WASHINGTON, Jan 28, (AP): Three Texas siblings who perished in an icy pond were among several dozen deaths in US states gripped by frigid cold as crews scrambled Tuesday to repair hundreds of thousands of power outages in the shivering South and forecasters warned the winter weather is expected to get worse.

Brutal cold lingered in the wake of a massive storm that dumped deep snow across more than 1,300 miles (2,100 kilometers) from Arkansas to New England and left parts of the South coated in treacherous ice.

Freezing temperatures hovered Tuesday as far south as Tennessee, Arkansas and North Carolina and were forecast to plunge again overnight. Parts of northern Florida were expected to sink to 25 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 3.9 degrees Celsius) late Tuesday into early Wednesday.

The US aviation system was returning to normal after a brutal weekend that saw more than 17,000 commercial flights canceled. There were about 6,300 cancellations in the U.S. Monday

and about 2,500 Tuesday, according to FlightAware, a flight tracking and data company. Less than 500 were anticipated to be canceled Wednesday.

The arctic misery over the eastern half of the U.S. was expected to worsen Friday and Saturday. The National Weather Service said another winter storm could hit parts of the East Coast this weekend, and more record lows were forecast as far south as Florida.

“This could be the coldest temperature seen in several years for some places and the longest duration of cold in several decades,” the agency’s Weather Prediction Center warned Tuesday.

Crews were working feverishly to restore power to the more than 410,000 homes and businesses without electricity Tuesday evening. Over half the outages were in Tennessee and Mississippi, where temperatures could bottom out at the end of the week. In Nashville, the low Friday night is predicted to dip to 4 F (minus 15.6 C), while Oxford, in northern Mississippi, could hit 10 F (minus 12.2 C), according to the



The US Capitol is photographed after a snowstorm on Jan 27, in Washington. (AP)

National Weather Service. Officials in states afflicted with severe cold reported at least 50 deaths. Three brothers ages 6, 8 and 9 died

Monday after falling through ice on a private pond near Bonham, Texas, Fannin County Sheriff Cody Shook said Tuesday. The boys’ mother said

she ran into the freezing lake and frantically tried to pull her sons from the water, but the ice kept breaking beneath them.

“They were just screaming, telling me to help them,” Cheyenne Hanganman told The Associated Press. “And I watched all of them struggle, struggle to stay above the water. I watched all of them fight.”

Dozens of Mississippi counties were in need of bottled water, blankets, tarps, fuel and generators, and the state’s National Guard is using aircraft to deliver supplies to hard-hit communities, Gov. Tate Reeves said Tuesday evening.

Three 18-wheeler trucks stalled on an icy Interstate 55 in northern Mississippi, causing a major backup Tuesday night, according to the state’s Department of Transportation. The governor said various resources from first responders to drones and tow trucks were being deployed to clear the highway and help stranded drivers.

Jean Kirkland used a lighter and paper Tuesday to ignite her gas stove top. Her neighborhood in Lexington,

Mississippi, lost power Sunday, and Kirkland and her daughter have been relying on the stove and a couple of gas-powered heaters to keep warm.

“When you’re used to certain things, you miss them when they’re gone,” said Kirkland, who’s been getting by without hot water and lights at night.

Health officials warn against using gas-powered stoves to heat a home. They can give off fumes that increase the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. At least one carbon monoxide death was reported in Louisiana, according to the state Health Department.

North Carolina’s largest public school system closed schools again on Wednesday, with the Wake County school system saying on Facebook that it was “due to the continued threat of black ice.”

More than 110,000 outages remained in Nashville, Tennessee, and neighboring communities Tuesday. Nashville Electric Service said on social media it had dispatched more than 740 workers to restore power.

Spain grants legal status to immigrants lacking authorization – potentially 500,000

BARCELONA, Spain, Jan 28, (AP): Spain’s government announced Tuesday it will grant legal status to potentially hundreds of thousands of immigrants living and working in the country without authorization, the latest way the country has bucked a trend toward increasingly harsh immigration policies imposed in the United States and much of Europe.

The extraordinary measure will be implemented by expediting a decree to amend immigration laws, according to Spanish Minister of Migration Elma Saiz, bypassing a similar bill that has stalled in parliament. Eligible immigrants will be granted up to one year of legal residency as well as permission to work.

In contrast to other nations that have moved to restrict immigration and asylum, many emboldened by the Trump administration’s policies, Spain has moved in the opposite direction with Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and his ministers often extolling the benefits of legal migration to the country’s economy and aging workforce.

Spain “will not look the other way,” Saiz told journalists during a press conference. The government is “dignifying and recognizing people who are already in our country,” she said.

The measure could benefit an estimated 500,000 people living in Spain without authorization, Saiz said. Other



Migrants sit together with their belongings after being evicted by police from an abandoned school where they had been living in Badalona, near Barcelona, Spain, on Dec. 17, 2025. (AP)

organizations have estimated up to 800,000 people live in the shadows of Spanish society. Many are immigrants from Latin American or African countries working in the agricultural, tourism or service sectors, backbones of Spain’s booming economy.

Foreigners who arrived in Spain before Dec. 31, 2025 and can prove they have been living in the country for at least five months will be eligible. They

must also prove they have no criminal record.

Saiz said she expects those eligible will be able to start applying for their legal status from April until the end of June. She added that resources would be in place to process them smoothly and efficiently after a union representing Spain’s national police officers, responsible for processing applications, warned of a possible collapse.

Europe

**‘Belarus to deepen strategic ties with China’:** Belarus plans to further strengthen its high-level strategic partnership with China, President **Alexander Lukashenko** said on Tuesday.

Speaking at a meeting on bilateral cooperation, Lukashenko highlighted China’s growing importance as a key pillar of Belarus’s foreign and economic policy amid global geopolitical shifts. “China is not only our most important partner, but also a major partner for all countries committed to development,” Lukashenko said.

China is now Belarus’s second-largest trading partner, with exports to China surpassing those to the EU, Lukashenko said. He called for more proactive efforts to expand market access to China and attract more Chinese investment. (Xinhua)



Lukashenko

**5 killed in Russia house fire:** Five people, including three children, were killed in a house fire overnight on Wednesday in Russia’s Yakutia region, said the regional office of Russia’s Emergencies Ministry.

The fire damaged the building, and 10 firefighters were deployed to put out the blaze.

“According to operational services, five people, including children, died as a result of the fire. Two people, including one child, were taken to a medical facility,” the Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Sakha said.

An ongoing investigation found that the preliminary cause of the fire was a short circuit in the electrical wiring. (Xinhua)

**Romania minibus crash kills 7:** Greece’s embassy in Romania confirmed that the seven people killed Tuesday in a minibus crash on DN6 in western Timis County were supporters of Thessaloniki football club PAOK.

In an official Facebook post, the Embassy of Greece quoted Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis as saying that the Greek government and the embassy are working closely with local authorities to provide all possible support.

According to the Timis County Police Inspectorate, the victims were all Greek men. The minibus involved in the crash had eight passenger seats and a driver’s seat and was also registered in Greece.

Police said a 29-year-old man was driving the minibus from the city of Caransebes toward Lugoj when he entered the opposite lane and collided head-on with a heavy goods truck. (Xinhua)



Aerial view of the village of Niscemi near the Sicilian town of Caltanissetta, southern Italy on Jan 27, where severe storms provoked a landslide, and some 1,500 people had to be evacuated from their homes. (AP)

Landslide leaves Sicilian homes teetering on cliff edge

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni visited a southern town in Sicily on Wednesday that has been left teetering on the edge of a cliff after days of heavy rains from a cyclone triggered a huge landslide that brought down properties and forced the evacuation of over 1,500 people.

The landslide in Niscemi, a town in the southwest of the island, spanned 4 kilometers (2.5 miles). Images showed cars and structures that had fallen 20 meters (yards) off the newly formed cliff, while many other homes remained perched perilously on the cliff edge.

Civil protection crews have created a 150-meter wide “no go zone” in the town, which is just inland from the coastal city of Gela.

“The entire hill is collapsing onto the plain of Gela,” civil protection chief Fabio Ciciliano said. “To be honest, there are houses located on the edge of the landslide that obviously can no longer be inhabited, so we need to work with the mayor to find a permanent relocation for these families.”

Authorities have warned that res-

idents with homes in the area will have to find long-term alternatives to moving back since the water-soaked ground was still shifting and too unstable to live.

The federal government included Niscemi in a state of emergency declaration on Monday for three southern regions hard hit by Cyclone Harry and set aside an initial 100 million euros (\$120 million) to be divided among them. Sicilian regional officials estimated on Wednesday the overall damage to Sicily stood at 2 billion euros. (AP)

Lawmakers in German state elect new gov to counter far-right rise

BERLIN, Jan 28, (AP): Lawmakers in an eastern German state elected a new governor on Wednesday as mainstream parties try to prevent a victory for the far-right Alternative for Germany in a regional election that is only seven months away.

The state legislature in Saxony-Anhalt elected Sven Schulze, a member of German Chancellor Friedrich Merz’s center-right Christian Democratic Union, to replace long-serving incumbent Reiner Haseloff.

Haseloff, 71, has led the state of some 2.2 million people since 2011. Schulze, 46, was designated last year as the CDU’s candidate for governor to succeed him in a state election on Sept. 6.

Although it’s quite common in Germany for governors to hand over the reins in midterm to allow their successors a chance to become better-known to voters, Haseloff originally appeared minded to serve out his term. But with regional support very high for Alternative for Germa-



German Chancellor Friedrich Merz arrives for the cabinet meeting at the chancellery in Berlin, Germany on Jan 28. (AP)

ny, or AfD, he announced this month that he would step down early.

AFD, which became the second-

biggest party in Germany’s federal parliament in a national election last year, is at its strongest in the formerly communist and less prosperous east. Opposition to migration is the signature issue of AfD, with which mainstream parties refuse to work. But it also has shown a talent for capitalizing on discontent with other issues, such as the country’s sluggish economy.

In recent years, some sitting governors in the east - including Haseloff himself in the state’s last election in 2021 - have managed to beat back challenges from AfD as relatively popular incumbents. Schulze, who was Saxony-Anhalt’s economy minister until now, would have lacked that potential advantage if Haseloff had stayed in office.

AFD so far has emerged as the biggest party in one state election, in the neighboring eastern region of Thuringia in 2024, but it has yet to take power at state level.



## INTERNATIONAL

# Upcoming party congress to unveil plans to bolster nuke deterrent: Kim

SEOUL, South Korea, Jan 28, (AP): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his country will unveil plans to further bolster its nuclear program at the upcoming ruling party congress, as he observed the North's latest weapons launch, state media reported Wednesday.

The Korean Central News Agency said North Korea performed a live-fire drill of an upgraded large-caliber multiple rocket launcher system in the presence of Kim on Tuesday, an apparent reference to what South Korea and Japan earlier described as ballistic missile launches from North Korea.

State media photos show Kim walking near a huge launch truck with his teenage daughter in her latest public appearance with her father. South Korea's spy service said in early 2024 it considered the girl, reportedly named Kim Ju Ae, as her father's likely heir.

KCNA quoted Kim Jong Un saying the test launch was meant to enhance the effectiveness of the country's "strategic deterrent," a term used to describe its nuclear weapons capability. KCNA said the launcher system's mobility and strike accuracy have been improved.



In this photo provided by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un delivers a speech during a ceremony marking the completion of a first-stage modernization project at the Ryongsong Machine Complex in North Korea on Jan 19. (AP)

Experts say North Korea's large-sized rocket launchers blur the boundaries between artillery systems and ballistic missiles because they can create their own thrust and are guided during delivery. North Korea has said some of these systems are capable of delivering nuclear warheads.

Kim said that boosting the country's military capability is the invariable line of the ruling Workers' Party. He said the upcoming party congress, the first of its kind in five years, will be a venue to declare "next-stage plans for further bolstering up the country's nuclear war deterrent," KCNA said.

Enforcement of peace plan discussed

## ASEAN's top diplomats under pressure to end Myanmar war

CEBU, Philippines, Jan 28, (AP): Southeast Asia's top diplomats met Wednesday under growing pressure to push a peace plan that has so far failed to end Myanmar's civil war, and to beat a deadline to conclude talks on a non-aggression pact with China this year.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a diverse 11-national bloc, has struggled to project unity and relevance for years. But it faced its latest setback last year when deadly fighting erupted between two members, Thailand and Cambodia, over a longtime border conflict.

Fighting ended with a ceasefire that was brokered by Malaysia and pushed through by pressure from US President Donald Trump, who threatened to withhold trade privileges unless they agreed. Helping sustain that fragile ceasefire is high on the agenda of the ASEAN's foreign ministers' annual meeting in the central Philippine city of Cebu.

The Philippines holds ASEAN's rotating chair this year, taking what would have been Myanmar's turn after the country was suspended from chairing the meeting after its army forcibly ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's democratically elected government in 2021.



A woman adjusts the flag of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Cebu, Philippines on Jan 28. (AP)

ASEAN does not recognize the country's military government, and its leaders are barred from attending the regional bloc's meetings, although lower-level career diplomats have been allowed to participate.

The resulting war has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced millions in a crisis that has emerged as one of ASEAN's biggest challenges and source of embarrassment as Western govern-

ments demanded the bloc to do more.

Last week, Malaysian Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan said that ASEAN leaders decided in their annual summit in October not to send observers to Myanmar's recent elections because conditions for credible polls were not met, though some member countries, like Cambodia and Vietnam, chose to do so individually.

ASEAN leaders proposed a five-

# South Korea's former first lady sentenced to 20 months in prison for corruption

SEOUL, South Korea, Jan 28, (AP): The wife of South Korea's ousted President Yoon Suk Yeol was sentenced to 20 months in prison for corruption Wednesday, as her husband awaits a verdict on a high-stakes rebellion charge that could result in the death penalty or life imprisonment.

The presidential couple, who have been jailed separately for months, suffered a spectacular fall from grace after Yoon's martial law debacle in December 2024 led to his impeachment and eventually his removal from office. Yoon was handed a five-year prison term this month for defying authorities' attempts to detain him and other charges related to the martial law decree.

Investigators say Kim was not involved in Yoon's martial law enforcement.

On Wednesday, Seoul Central District Court sentenced Kim for receiving luxury gifts like a Graff diamond necklace and a Chanel bag from the Unification Church in return for promises of political favors.

"Being closest to a president, a first lady can exert significant influence on him and is a symbolic figure who represents the country together with a president," the court said in a televised verdict. "But the defendant exploited her position to seek personal gains."

Kim said via her lawyers that she



Kim Keon Hee, the wife of South Korea's jailed former President Yoon Suk Yeol, arrives for her first trial hearing on corruption charges at a courtroom of the Seoul Central District Court on Sept 24, 2025 in Seoul, South Korea. (AP)

would "humbly accept" the court's view and "apologizes again to everyone for causing concerns."

The 20-month sentence was a surprise after independent counsel Min Joong-ki called for a 15-year prison term for Kim on three charges including stock price manipulation, political funding law violations and accepting bribes. The court acquitted Kim of two

other charges, citing a lack of evidence and other reasons.

Min's team responded that it cannot accept the ruling and will appeal to a higher court. The governing liberal Democratic Party, which led Yoon's ouster, slammed the verdict as sending a wrong signal that "abuse of power like Kim Keon Hee's can be tolerated."

## US takes first steps to possibly reopen embassy in Venezuela

WASHINGTON, Jan 28, (AP): The Trump administration has notified Congress that it is taking the first steps to possibly reopen the shuttered US Embassy in Venezuela as it explores restoring relations with the South American country following the US military raid that ousted then-President Nicolás Maduro.

In a notice to lawmakers dated Monday and obtained by The Associated Press on Tuesday, the State Department said it was sending in a regular and growing contingent of temporary staffers to conduct "select" diplomatic functions.



Rubio

"We are writing to notify the committee of the Department of State's intent to implement a phased approach to potentially resume Embassy Caracas operations," the department said in separate but identical letters to 10 House and Senate committees.

The notification, sent to Capitol Hill just two days before Secretary of State Marco Rubio is due to testify on Venezuela before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said the staffers would live and work in a temporary facility while the existing embassy compound is brought up to standard.

It is the first formal notice of the administration's intent to re-open the embassy in Caracas. Such a move would be key to the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries, which have been broken since March 2019 when the embassy was shuttered.

The Trump administration has moved slowly but surely to try to normalize ties with Maduro's successor and current acting President Delcy Rodríguez. However, doing so would require the U.S. to revoke its decision to recognize the Venezuelan parliament elected in 2015 as the legitimate government.

Rodríguez on Tuesday said her government and the Trump administration "have established respectful and courteous channels of communication" since Jan. 3, when Maduro was captured.

She did not address the US government's first steps to possibly reopen its embassy, but during her televised remarks from a public hospital tour, Rodríguez said she is working with President Donald Trump and Rubio to set "a working agenda."

# Trump-backed businessman Asfura sworn in as president of Honduras

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Jan 28, (AP): Trump-backed businessman Nasry Asfura was sworn in Tuesday as president of Honduras, and pledged to create jobs, crack down on crime and improve key social services like education and health care.

The 67-year-old president said he would lead the country "with the full commitment required to deliver real solutions to every corner of our beloved Honduras."

The inauguration was held in an austere, simple ceremony at Congress without the presence of dignitaries from other nations, though representatives of various countries attended through the diplomatic corps and international organizations.

Asfura's rise to power was marked with controversy after US President Donald Trump threw his support behind the Honduran conservative in the lead up to the election. Competitors called the elections fraudulent as vote counts dragged on for weeks and Asfura won by less than a 1% lead.

Honduran authorities said Asfura won with 40.27% of the vote, just ahead of conservative competitor Salvador Nasralla with 39.53%. Nasralla maintains he's the rightful president.

Asfura on Tuesday said he would



Honduran President Nasry Asfura wears the presidential sash alongside his wife, first lady Lissette del Cid, after his inauguration ceremony as they leave Congress in Tegucigalpa, Honduras on Jan 27. (AP)

shrink the size of the state to improve efficiency and direct resources to those most in need.

He pledged to "confront insecurity head-on" as gang violence continues to ravage the Central American nation, and said he would invest in health care and education. Asfura also emphasized

the need to attract investment to generate jobs and to boost infrastructure so there is greater connectivity among municipalities.

Asfura served two terms as mayor of Tegucigalpa from 2014 to 2022. He previously served as secretary of the Honduran Social Investment Fund during the administration of Porfirio Lobo Sosa (2010-2014).

The new president won the presidency on his second attempt as the candidate of the conservative National Party, after losing in 2021 to former President Xiomara Castro of the leftist Liberty and Refoundation Party, known as Libre.

Asfura is from the same political party as former President Juan Orlando Hernández, who was pardoned and freed from U.S. prison by Trump in the midst of the election. Hernández, who was extradited to the U.S. after leaving office in 2022, was serving a 45-year sentence for his role in a drug trafficking operation that moved hundreds of tons of cocaine to the U.S.

The outcome of the complicated election is part of a broader shift to the right taking place in Latin America and came after Chile elected far-right politician José Antonio Kast as president.



Vehicles loaded with belongings of families who fled from Tirah, a town in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, amid uncertainty over a military operation against the Pakistani Taleban, travel to a registration center in Bara, a town of Pakistan's northwestern Khyber district on Jan 27. (AP)

## Tens of thousands flee Pakistan over fears of military operation

More than 70,000 people, mostly women and children, have fled a remote region in northwestern Pakistan bordering Afghanistan over uncertainty of a military operation against the Pakistani Taleban, residents and officials said Tuesday.

Pakistan's Defense Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif has denied the claim by residents and provincial authorities. He said no military operation was underway or planned in Tirah, a town in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Speaking at a news conference in Islamabad, he said harsh weather, rather than military action, was driving the migration. His comments came weeks after residents started fleeing Tirah over fears of a possible army operation. (AP)

# Private plane crashes in India, kills deputy chief minister and 4 others

NEW DELHI, Jan 28, (AP): A private plane carrying a deputy chief minister crashed in an open field in western India on Wednesday, killing the official and four other people on board, aviation authorities said. There were no survivors.

The aircraft was en route from India's financial capital of Mumbai to Ajit Pawar's home city Baramati when it crash-landed and burst into flames some 254 kilometers (159 miles) from Mumbai. The reason for the crash was not immediately known. Television footage showed smoke rising from the wreckage.

Pawar, 66, was the deputy chief minister of India's western Maharashtra state. He was traveling to Baramati to campaign in a local election when the privately-operated aircraft went down.

Two of his staffs and two crew members on board the mid-size Learjet 45 also died, the directorate general of civil aviation said in an initial statement.

Pawar was a key figure in state politics and served as the second highest elected official in Maharashtra as part



Rescuers are in operation at the site of an air crash at Baramati airport in Pune district, Maharashtra state of India on Jan 28. (Xinhua)

of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling coalition in the state. He wielded considerable influence in the state's sugar belt and was known for his ability to mobilize rural voters.

Modi expressed his condolences, calling Pawar a committed public servant.

"His understanding of administrative matters and passion for empowering the poor and downtrodden were also noteworthy," Modi said on X. "His untimely demise is very shocking and saddening. Condolences to his family and countless admirers."

## Africa

**Uganda's army on hunt for Wine:** Where is Bobi Wine?

In a recent video shared from hiding, the Ugandan opposition leader walks in a family graveyard in central Uganda, taunting the army chief who has failed to find him and lamenting what he calls the injustice that has befallen him.

The 43-year-old musician-turned-politician has been evading a military hunt for over a week, infuriating Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba - the army chief and president's son - in what has become a very public rivalry.

Wine went into hiding shortly after Uganda's disputed presidential election on Jan. 15. The vote was marred by an internet shutdown and the failure of biometric voter identification kits meant to prevent ballot stuffing. (AP)

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**Bah reappointed as Guinea's PM:** Amadou Oury Bah, the outgoing prime minister and head of government, was reappointed Monday as prime minister and head of government of the Republic of Guinea, according to a presidential decree read on national television on Monday evening.

According to the decree signed by President Mamady Doumbouya, the reappointment was made following the opinion of the National Council of the Transition, the legislative body in the transitional period.

In his duties, Bah will have the primary mission of coordinating government action and ensuring the implementation of the government's policy, particularly in the country's socio-economic development.

Meanwhile, in a second decree, the president announced the new cabinet list of 27 ministries and two secretariats,



Uganda opposition presidential candidate Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, famously known as Bobi Wine of the National Unity Platform (NUP), arrives with his wife to cast their votes, during the presidential election at a polling station, in Kampala, Uganda on Jan 15. (AP)

proposed by the prime minister. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

**South Africa mulls army deployment:** South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said the government is considering deploying the army to gang violence hotspots to tackle persistent gang-related crime.

The president's remarks came amid a surge in gang-related fatal incidents in several parts of the country.

"A call has been made to deploy the army," Ramaphosa told journalists on Saturday morning outside the African National Congress National Executive Committee Lekgotla, a local term referring a key political or government meeting. (Xinhua)



## Kuwaiti oil barrel price down to \$61.47

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil barrel went down 68 cents to reach USD 61.47 per barrel on Tuesday, compared with USD 62.15 pb the day before, according to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Wednesday.

day.

In international markets, Brent crude oil price went up USD 1.98 to stand at USD 67.57 pb, while West Texas crude rose USD 1.76 to stand at USD 62.39 pb.

# Business

## Kuwait: Strong residential activity in Q4 propels 2025 property sales to historic high

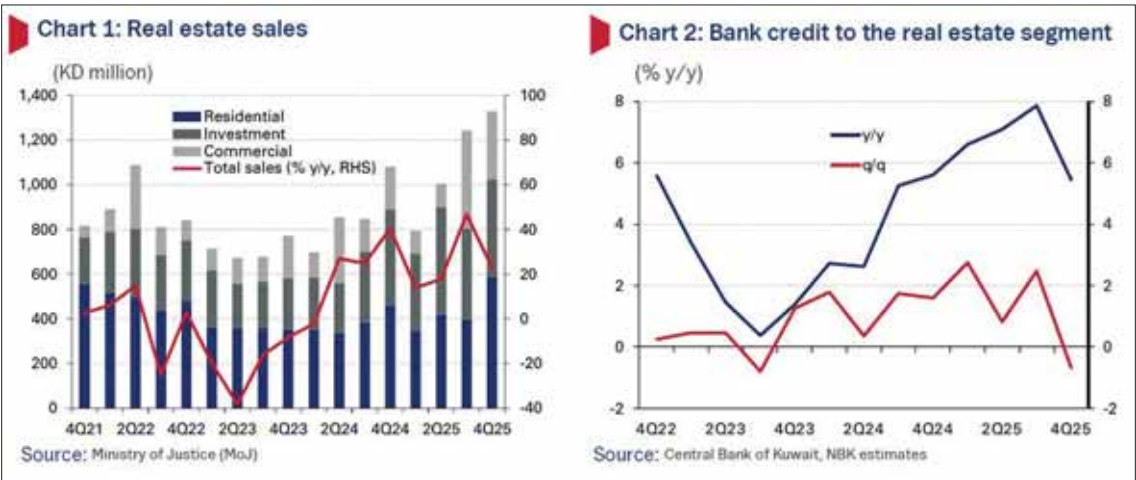
By National Bank of Kuwait

Property sales in Q4 2025 reached strong levels, supported by a significant increase in residential sales and robust commercial sales. For the full year, sales came in at KD4.4 billion, the best on record. This increase was aided by gains in the investment and commercial segments as well as a rise in residential plot sales, with sellers perhaps offloading empty residential plots before the residential land monopoly law came into effect this year. The prospects for the real estate market in 2026 look positive, with sales momentum supported by potential further monetary easing, legislation including granting foreign shareholders the right to own property (excluding private residences) and the anticipated approval of the real estate financing law on top of activation of the residential land monopoly law to curb hoarding of idle residential lands.

### Residential activity drives sales higher in Q4 2025

Total real estate sales reached KD 1.3 billion in Q4 2025, surpassing the previous quarterly peak recorded in Q2 2014. This increase was driven by a sharp acceleration in residential sales to KD587 million (+48% q/q; +29% y/y), the strongest quarterly reading since Q3 2021. (Chart 1.) The surge was primarily driven by a pronounced increase in residential plot sales in the Sabah Al-Ahmad coastal area (KD 129 million), perhaps reflecting the above mentioned implementation of the residential land monopoly in January 2026.

Stripping out these transactions, residential sales growth would have otherwise been much less strong (+15.8% q/q; +0.6% y/y) and resulted in an overall decline in the value of real estate transactions in Q4 (-3.5% q/q). Commercial activity, the most volatile segment, remained robust at KD303 million, albeit below the exceptional KD441 million recorded in Q3 2025. Sales in this segment were supported by several large-ticket deals, including sizable land sales in Al-Farwaniya and Kuwait City (KD63 million) and the sale of two commercial buildings in the Hawalli and Kuwait City governorates worth KD60 million in total. Meanwhile, investment property sales rose mod-



estly in Q4 (+7.3% q/q), despite a decline in transaction volumes.

### Real estate sales in 2025 hits a historical high

For the full year 2025, total sales were 27% higher than the previous year and the best performance in more than two decades of available data. This was underpinned by strong activity in the commercial and investment segments. Commercial sales reached an all-time high of KD953 million, while investment property sales recorded the fastest growth among all segments (+39% y/y to KD1.67 billion).

Meanwhile, residential sales continued to recover (+14.3% y/y to KD1.75 billion). The average transaction size in 2025 was down by -5.2%, which could indicate a possible shift toward smaller or lower-value units in outer areas.

The shift in sales toward the commercial and investment segments could reflect a change in investors' sentiment toward income-generating assets, partly in response to easing financial conditions. Moreover, amendments to investment housing regulations allied to government efforts to curb speculative activity in the residential segment (particularly through enforce-

ment of the residential land monopoly law) likely redirected liquidity to the investment and commercial segments. Additional regulatory changes that permit non-Kuwaiti participation in the real estate market (June 2025), including listed companies, licensed funds, and investment portfolios (excluding residential land), have contributed to a strong rebound in the sector's performance at Boursa Kuwait with the Real Estate Index (BKRE) expanding by 49.9% in 2025. We also note that bank credit for real estate purposes saw solid growth of 5.2% in 2025. (Chart 2.)

### Divergent sectoral price dynamics in Q4 2025

Prices, according to our real estate price index, continued to decline on a quarterly basis, but at a more moderate pace (-0.3% q/q from -3.1% in Q3), reflecting signs of stabilization rather than a broad-based recovery. This was driven by a rebound in investment prices of 1.4% q/q, partially offsetting weakness in the residential segment. Residential prices fell for the second consecutive quarter, though at a slower rate (-1.7% q/q). On a year-on-year basis, the overall price index slipped into negative territory for the first time since Q4 2024, driven by a marked deceleration in

investment price rises (0.4% y/y from 5.3% in Q3), alongside a deeper fall in residential prices (-4.7% y/y from -1.8%). A sustained recovery in residential prices could hinge on the approval of the real estate financing law, which is expected to enhance liquidity and broaden access to housing finance.

### PAHW launches prequalification invitations for three residential projects

The Public Authority for Housing and Welfare (PAHW) continued to advance infrastructure plans across several major housing projects in Q4 2025. Execution remained uneven, though. As of October 2025, the completion of main road works reached 49.2% in South Sa'ad Al-Abdullah and, in December, 75.8% in South Sabah Al-Ahmad. Moreover, PAHW has also signed several contracts to set up the electricity grid in South Sabah Al-Ahmad city. Furthermore, it initiated prequalification for three large-scale residential development projects, reflecting a strategic shift toward a long-term supervisory role, with development contracts structured for 30 years. The designated sites span Al-Mutla (2.12 million sqm), East Sa'ad Al-Abdullah (1.02 million sqm), and West Sa'ad Al-Abdullah and Jaber Sabah Al-Ahmad (1.01 million sqm in total). This follows the earlier introduction of a 'real estate developer' model, including the appointment of consultants to master plan three residential areas exceeding 5,000 units. At the same time, PAHW has maintained the suspension of plot distributions since July 2024, pending legislative reforms, most notably the mortgage law and broader revisions to allocation mechanisms for units. As a result, existing housing applications, which approached 100,000 by late 2024, reached 103,110 by June 2025. Meanwhile, Kuwait Credit Bank approvals for government plot loans rose for a third consecutive quarter in Q4 (+22% q/q to KD74.6 million), while disbursements rebounded modestly (+4.6% q/q to KD85 million). As for the full 2025, approved government plot loans fell sharply (by 49% y/y to KD221 million), with disbursements showing a more moderate contraction (-10.8% to KD363 million).

## Other Voices

### A costly corporate legal loophole

#### Absent partner ... present in liability

By Shaikha Al-Julaibi  
Attorney

In investment practice, partnerships are often formed on the basis of trust and flexibility rather than rigorous legal scrutiny. As such arrangements become common, certain structures appear stable on the surface while concealing deferred risks that emerge only when tested legally. In Kuwait's business environment, where commercial partnerships often intersect with family and social relationships, the non-active partner model has become widespread yet, legally misunderstood. Frequently viewed as a silent investor or nominal stakeholder, such a partner is assumed to be removed from operational risk. In reality, this assumption conceals a legal vulnerability that often surfaces at the first sign of dispute.

#### The law

Regarding Kuwaiti Companies, the Law doesn't distinguish between active and non-active partners. Once a partner status is established, legal obligations arise according to the company's form and do not disappear due to non-involvement in management. Accordingly, absence from operations do not equate to absence from liability. In commercial disputes, courts do not

confine their analysis to incorporation documents alone. Judicial assessment frequently extends to actual conduct, including presumed knowledge of company affairs, continued participation despite irregularities, and failure to exercise reasonable oversight. In this context, non-activity offers limited legal protection.

#### Risks

The risk becomes most apparent when disputes arise. Non-active partners often find themselves unexpectedly involved in litigation, facing claims they neither anticipated nor controlled - particularly where authority is unclear or management is concentrated in a single partner without safeguards. In many cases, the issue stems from poor legal structuring rather than bad faith. The solution lies not in excluding non-active partners, but in clearly defining their legal position. This includes aligning constitutional documents with operational reality, allocating powers and responsibilities precisely, implementing reporting mechanisms, and utilizing shareholders' agreements as preventive tools. In this sense, governance functions as a protective investment instrument.

The non-active partner is not inherently problematic. The real risk lies in assuming that lack of involvement eliminates legal exposure. In a dynamic market such as Kuwait's, early awareness and proper structuring can be decisive in preserving investment stability and avoiding costly disputes.

### Oil sector eyes solar shift

## KPC targets two gigawatts of solar power generation

By Najeh Bilal  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) intends to generate up to two gigawatts of solar power, despite signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to establish a power and steam generation plant in Ratqa - within the KOC operations.

Sources told the newspaper that this is a relevant move, taking into consideration that KPC and its subsidiaries consume about 1.7 gigawatts of the 17 gigawatts produced by the ministry.

Sources revealed that KPC will enlist the help of international and local companies specializing in this field to implement this project. They added that KPC will continue coordinating with the government to obtain the legal framework that will allow it to replace its electricity supply from the ministry with solar power.

Sources attributed the move of KPC towards alternative energy to reduce the cost of purchasing conventional electricity, especially since the corporation currently pays 25 fils per kilowatt-hour to the ministry. They pointed out that if the corporation were to fully transition to solar energy, the price per kilowatt-hour will range from seven to eight fils.

Sources also explained that the oil sector's reliance on government electricity in the future will be limited to nighttime hours

when oil companies are not engaged in production or exploration.

Sources stated that the KPC's implementation of solar energy production for all its operations will ease the load on the ministry during peak summer months.

Sources affirmed that KPC is taking serious steps to achieve its strategic goal of reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

To this end, it is targeting strategic investments related to alternative energy solutions. In line with this objective, Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) is currently conducting a feasibility study to install a suitable mix of renewable energy plants to generate one gigawatt to cover part of the company's electricity needs.

KOC also started a technical feasibility study for producing green hydrogen from renewable energy sources as part of its efforts to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. It adopted five strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing the energy transition in line with KPC's objectives.

These initiatives aim to achieve zero routine gas flaring, while enhancing energy efficiency, exploring opportunities in renewable energy, and focusing on carbon capture, storage and offsetting.

Moreover, KOC will establish a large-scale carbon capture center in the western part of the country, which will utilize gas-water alternating current (GAC) technology in enhanced oil recovery applications, as well as carbon dioxide capture and storage.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: National Bank of Kuwait has launched the "Wellness Week" initiative for its employees during the period from 19 until 26 January at the bank's headquarters.

This initiative, in which more than 10 companies specialized in the field of health will participate, aimed to reinforce the concept of wellness and wellbeing among employees by presenting diverse services and activities that support their mental and physical wellbeing, including fitness centers, health-promoting stores and products, and restaurants that offer subscriptions to meal plans, in addition to clinics that offer medical consultations and check-ups.

To ensure easier accessibility and allow the largest number of employees to participate, the initiative was held across three different locations at NBK's headquarters. This reflects the bank's commitment to offering a sustainable and healthy work environment that supports employees in achieving a balanced lifestyle while positively impacting their productivity and overall well being.

On this occasion, Yaqoub Al-Baqer, Assistant Vice President of the Public Relations and Event Management at NBK, commented: "NBK views its employees as the main driver behind its successes and achievements, which is why it's always devoted to making such initiatives that reflect its commitment to establishing a healthy and sustainable work environment, in addition to providing all it takes for employees to adopt a balanced and healthy lifestyle".

Al-Baqer added: "This initiative is not simply a passing awareness activity, but an event that echoes NBK's philosophy of investing in the mental and physical wellbeing of its employees, who represent the bank's true wealth, as continued giving and innovative contributions stem from the mentally and physically sound employee".

He also said: "We strive to continue implementing and developing these initiatives in line with the best world practices and standards, because our success as a financial institution does not rely solely on numbers, but also on our employees' quality of life, for they are the foundation to achieving our strategic goals".

Finally, Al-Baqer emphasized that NBK's longstanding relations with many companies and institutions across different fields enable it to bring forth valuable initiatives and expertise that provide services and solutions aimed at enhancing the employees' wellness and wellbeing. 000 also noted that these collaborations reflect the bank's commitment to strengthening collaborations with the private sectors and society in their endeavors to establish comprehensive workplaces.

For their part, the companies participating in the initiative expressed their pleasure in collaborating with a prestigious financial institution like NBK, stressing that such initiatives contribute to spreading health awareness and promoting a culture of wellness in the workplace, and represent an opportunity to provide innovative solutions

By Najeh Bilal  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) reduced gas import rates from 6.89 million tons in 2024 to 6.885 million tons in 2025, in line with its strategy to increase gas production capacity to two billion cubic feet per day by 2040.

Reliable sources told the newspaper that this success is attributed to the following:

■ Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) increased production of associated and non-associated gas last year through the discovery and repair of Jurassic wells.

■ Ongoing maintenance of oil facilities and all local refineries, as maintenance plays a significant role in reducing liquefied natural gas (LNG) con-

sumption.

■ KPC continues to closely monitor the performance of its subsidiaries to ensure adherence to LNG conservation policies in all their operations, which led to a decrease in LNG consumption rates compared to previous levels.

■ The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy relies on the fuel oil blend produced by the KPC at its domestic refineries (Zour, Mina Abdullah and Mina Al-Ahmadi) for use as fuel in some power and water plants, particularly during peak demand. This is in addition to the ministry's primary use of LNG as a main fuel source due to its lower emissions.

■ KPC's efficient utilization of the Zour LNG facility, which was inaugurated in 2021. This facility enabled KPC to maintain the required quan-

tities for use as needed.

Sources pointed out that the highest LNG import rate of Kuwait was in the third quarter of 2025, reaching 2.61 million tons. They said LNG import rates typically increase in the third quarter of each year due to the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy's increased consumption during the summer months to avoid scheduled power cuts.

On the average gas imports from supplying countries, Qatar ranks first in terms of LNG imports, reaching 4.79 million tons last year. Oman is second with 895,000 tons, followed by Nigeria in third place with 846,000 tons. The United States ranks fourth with 149,000 tons, Mozambique fifth with 76,000 tons, Angola sixth with 67,000 tons, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) last with 61,000 tons.

At the headquarters from 19 to 26 January

## NBK launches for its employees the 'Wellness Week' initiative with more than 10 companies



Yaqoub Al-Baqer

Al-Baqer

- NBK employees are the main driver of the bank's success, which is why its strategy places their wellbeing as an ultimate priority.
- The wellness and wellbeing week reflects our strong commitment to providing a sustainable and healthy work environment.
- We continue to develop programs that ensure the wellness and wellbeing of our employees as per the best international standards and practices.



Photos during the campaign.

and specialized services that help employees follow a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

It is worth noting that NBK is always keen to launch initiatives and events that positively and effectively impact society in many fields such as health, sports and education, stemming from its

social responsibility and its pioneering role in supporting sustainable development, promoting community awareness and providing healthier and more developed work and social environment, which ultimately leads to the achievement of national development goals.

Gas imports drop to 6.885 million tons in 2025

## KPC lowers LNG imports as local gas output rises



# KD 342.5 mn stc’s revenues for financial year ended 31 Dec 2025 with KD 34.1 mn net profit

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc), a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers and enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced its financial results for the financial year ended 31 December 2025, highlighting the most significant achievements as well as the financial and operational performance.

In this regard, Eng. Muataz Abdul-lah Aldharab, the company’s CEO, stated: “By the grace of Allah, Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc) delivered an outstanding financial and operational performance during 2025, driven by a strategic approach focused on enhancing the quality of growth and achieving operational excellence. Throughout the ongoing global economic and geopolitical challenges, stc has successfully reinforced its market leadership and sustained its market share in a highly competitive environment. stc also adopted a flexible operating model that supports internal business developments and the expansion of integrated technology solutions and advanced, innovative products that meet the expectations of both individual and enterprise customers. stc refined its strategic plans to deliver added value and sustainable returns to its shareholders, supported by the accelerating global demand for digital services and the 5G Advanced technologies.”

Commenting on stc’s key achievements during the fourth quarter of 2025, Eng. Aldharab, stated: “During the fourth quarter of 2025, stc completed several projects supported by the 5G Advanced services. This reflects the company’s excellence, its keenness to accelerate digital transformation and its continued commitment to delivering the latest innovative and advanced digital services as well as products that meet the needs of both consumer and enterprise customers. stc remains focused on enhancing digital experience in line with the rapid developments in the telecom and ICT sectors. These efforts weredemonstrated by receiving the “Best Digital Transformation Company” and “Best Digital Workplace & Employee Experience” awards in Kuwait for 2025”.

It is worth highlighting that stc has adopted artificial intelligence to enhance the efficiency of its internal operations and improve the quality of its services, thereby creating new opportunities across various sectors. AI solutions have also contributed to improving customer experience through process automation, faster response times, and more accurate handling of requests, in addition to boosting operational efficiency through advanced data analytics and proactive network management.

stc also takes pride in adhering to best practices in corporate governance in accordance with the highest local and international standards, through a comprehensive governance framework that is considered among the strongest in the telecommunicationssector.

This framework underscores the company’s commitment to transparency, the protection of shareholders’ and stakeholders’ rights, and the sustainability of performance and business quality over the long term. This well-established approach was further recognized by stc being awarded, for the second consecutive year, the “Best Telecommunications Company in Corporate Governance – 2025,” reaffirming its leadership and excellence in this field. Furthermore, the Corporate Affairs sector was recognized with the ‘Best Leadership in Compliance and Corporate Governance Initiatives – Telecommunications Sector 2025’ award, highlighting its leadership in embedding robust compliance and corporate governance practices across the company.”

Commenting on the financial results for the financial year ended 31



Eng. Muataz Aldharab



stc x Assima

December 2025, Eng. Muataz Aldharab stated: “stc achieved good financial performance during the financial year ended 31 December 2025, supported by sustainable growth across its various operating segments. Total revenues reached KD 342.5 million, recording a growth of 1.8% in 2025, compared to KD 336.5 million in the previous year. This growth was driven primarily by higher revenues from the Consumer segment, which accounted for 77.8% of total revenues. In addition, the Enterprise segment contributed 22.2% of total revenues, supported by ongoing efforts to enhance the company’s business model, expand digital services, and deliver integrated technology solutions that meet the needs of businesses across various sectors.”

**Aldharab added:** “These results led to a 9.6% increase in EBITDA, reaching KD 93.5 million for the financial year ended 31 December 2025, marking the highest level achieved in several years, compared to KD 85.3 million in 2024. This improvement was supported by higher revenues and enhanced operational efficiency.

Net profit amounted to KD 34.1 million (earnings per share of 34 fils), reflecting a growth rate of 8.7% during 2025, compared to KD 31.4 million (earnings per share of 31 fils) in 2024. This resilient financial performance reflects the company’s success in managing costs effectively, striking a balance between improving the quality of its operations and capturing promising future investment opportunities, while benefiting from the accelerating pace of digital transformation in the local and regional markets.

Furthermore, these results, together with the company’s continued focus on efficiency and innovation, highlight stc’s ability to enhance profitability and achieve sustainable growth. It is worth noting that stc’s customer base reached 2.3 million customers by the end of December 2025.”

Commenting on the company’s financial position as of December 31, 2025, Aldharab stated: “Total assets amounted to KD 479.2 million as at 31 December 2025, while total shareholders’ equity stood at KD 239.6 million, reflecting the company’s strong financial position and the stability of its capital structure.

The Board of Directors has recommended the distribution of cash dividends to shareholders of 38 fils per share, representing 38% of the

The financial results for financial year ended 31 December 2025	
Revenues	KD 342.5 mn
EBITDA	KD 93.5mn
Net Profit	KD 34.1mn
Earnings per share	34 Kuwaiti fils
Assets	KD 479.2mn
Shareholders' equity	KD 239.6mn
Book value per share	240 fils per share
Customer base	2.3mn customers

nominal value of the share, for the year 2025. This recommendation is subject to the approval of the company’s Ordinary General Assembly. The decision was based on stc’s confidence in the continued development of its business, the robustness of its financial position, and the strength of its cash flows.”

Aldharab also affirmed:“stc is keen to periodically review and update its financial strategy to enable the implementation of its strategic plans and projects as well as keeping pace with global developments in the telecom and ICT sectors.This enhances the company’s ability to seize growth opportunities that expand its product and service portfolio, while preserving a solid solvency and operational resilience across different market environments.

stc was able to achieve revenue diversification and enhance its financial as well as operational efficiency through the effective integration of its financial strategy with its corporate strategy. This alignment enables the company to implement precise financial planning that supports its strategic initiatives, strengthens its ability to respond to market challenges, and capitalize on potential opportunities, while ensuring sustainable financial performance and delivering added value to shareholders. In parallel, stc continues to invest in its human capital, and is keen on building a workplace that fosters trust, collaboration and growth. Consequently, stc also relies on monitoring key performance indicators to assess the outcomes of its strategic investments and evaluate operational efficiency, leveraging its innovative digital services.

Furthermore, stc is committed to applying the highest standards of governance and internal control, while fostering a culture of transparency and institutional efficiency. This commitment ensures business continuity and reinforces the Company’s ability to maintain market leadership and institutional excellence within a dynamic environment characterized by ongoing challenges and change.”

#### About stc

Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc) is a Kuwaiti shareholding company incorporated pursuant to Amiri Decree No. 187 on 22 July, 2008, to operate and manage the third GSM mobile network in Kuwait as per Law No. 2 of 2007. Accordingly, stc launched its operations in December 2008 and was listed on Boursa Kuwait in December 2014. It is a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers and enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, and is a subsidiary of stc Group. stc has rapidly reached a leadership stance in the market through its customer and employee centric strategy.

stc offers an innovative range of world-class products, services and solutions with high quality, that cater to the customers’ needs and demands, both for individuals and enterprises (solutions by stc). In 2019, stc acquired 100% of the share capital of the Internet Service Provider, Qualitynet General Trading and Contracting Company (solutions by stc) in Kuwait. In April 2022, stc acquired the entire share capital of e-portal Holding Company and its subsidiaries – the leading ICT services provider in Kuwait.

stc offers high internet speeds due to the implementation of the most advanced 5G network and deployment of the largest network nationwide.

stc seeks to support several initiatives within its social responsibility programme that support various initiatives in the areas of health, education, environment, sports and entrepreneurship that benefit society and employees.

## Kuwait Al-Soqoor for Security and Protection wins Best Security Services Company in Kuwait Award

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Kuwait Al-Soqoor for Security & Protection Co. W.L.L has been awarded the Best Security Services Company in the State of Kuwait for 2025, as issued by International Business Magazine, in recognition of its operational performance during the year.

The company stated that this recognition reflects its continued commitment to quality and operational efficiency in delivering security and guarding services,

in line with the requirements of its contracting entities.

Kuwait Al-Soqoor for Security & Protection has an extended operational track record since its establishment in 1988, and continues to carry out its activities in accordance with recognized professional best practices in the sector.

The company also expressed its appreciation to its employees and contracting partners for their support and trust.

As part of its participation in Kuwait Sustainability Event

## KFH fosters environmental awareness and sustainable community practices

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the Kuwait Sustainability Eventin its fifth edition at Murouj, reaffirming its ceaseless efforts to promoting environmental awareness and reinforcing sustainable practices within the community.

This year’s edition drew high participation from various entities and institutions, focusing on the SDGs and outlining practical frameworks for cross-sector sustainability in Kuwait via public-private partnerships. KFH is committed to participating in similar events to exchange expertise and highlight innovative solutions that enhance sustainable

environmental practices.

During the event, KFH showcased its environmentally friendly prepaid and credit cards, which are made from recycled materials. KFH further demonstrated its virtual cards available through KFHOnline app, which provides a sustainable alternative to traditional cards.

This initiative reflects the Bank’s commitment to environmental responsibility and its keenness to deliver innovative and more sustainable financial solutions that combine innovative design, practical features, and a positive environmental impact.

Affirming its leadership, KFH marked a year of significant success in 2025 by strengthening its standing in sustainability.

This was achieved by integrating sustainability into the Group’s strategy and adopting ESG principles.

These efforts align with Kuwait Vision 2035 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). KFH has further reinforced this vision through social initiatives, most notably the ‘Keep It Green’ campaign, which features a wide range of programs aimed at environmental protection and the optimal use of natural resources.

It is worth noting that KFH achieved an “A” rating in the MSCI ESG Index and included in the FTSE4Good Index for its outstanding performance in ESG practices. KFH received the GSAS Gold level certification for KFH Auto showroom, becoming the first bank in Kuwait to achieve this distinction.

#### Sustainability report

In 2025, KFH released its fifth Sustainability Report, highlighting its pioneering initiatives in sustainability and social responsibility.

#### Carbon footprint report

KFH further released its third Carbon Footprint Report, which provided a comprehensive assessment of the environmental impact of KFH’soperations withthe aim of supporting the Bank’s efforts in monitoring and measuring carbon emissions and improving performance.



Participating in the Sustainability Exhibition.

stc

The Board of Directors of **Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc)** is pleased to announce to its shareholders that the company has achieved a net profit of KD 34.1 million (earnings per share 34 fils) for the financial year ended 31 December 2025.

The Board has recommended a proposed cash dividends distribution of 38 fils per share for the year 2025, compared to 35 fils distributed last year.

Total Revenue

342.5

KD Million

+1.8%

EBITDA

93.5

KD Million

+9.6%

Net Profit

34.1

KD Million

+8.7%

EPS

34

Kuwait fils per share

+8.7%

Cash Dividends\*

38

Kuwaiti fils per share

\*Cash Dividends distribution for the year 2025 is subject to the approval of the Ordinary General Assembly.

Results are compared to the same period last year.



# Federal Reserve poised to stay on hold

Central bank balances growth, jobs, & inflation risks

**WASHINGTON, Jan 28, (AP):** Federal Reserve officials are expected to keep their short-term interest rate unchanged Wednesday after three cuts last year, ignoring huge pressure for lower borrowing costs from the White House in favor of waiting to see how the economy evolves.

The central bank's rate reductions last year were intended to shore up the economy and prevent a sharper deterioration in the job market, after hiring slowed to a near-crawl in the wake of President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs last April. Yet there are signs that unemployment has stabilized and the economy could be picking up. At the same time, inflation remains stubbornly above the Fed's 2% target. All those trends argue for keeping rates where they are.

A key issue that Chair Jerome Powell will likely address at his news conference Wednesday is how long the Fed will remain on hold. The rate-setting committee remains split between those officials opposed to further cuts until inflation comes down, and those who want to lower rates to further support hiring.

In December, just 12 of the 19 participants in the committee's meetings supported at least one more rate cut this year. Most economists forecast the Fed will cut twice this year, most likely at the June meeting or later.

Fed officials meet this week in the shadow of unprecedented pressure



Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell speaks at the Federal Reserve, Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2025, in Washington. (AP)

from the Trump White House. Powell said Jan. 11 that the Fed had received subpoenas from the Justice Department as part of a criminal investigation into his congressional testimony about a \$2.5 billion building renovation. Powell in an unusually blunt video statement said the subpoenas were a pretext to punish the Fed for not cutting rates more quickly.

And last week, the Supreme Court took up Trump's attempt from last year to fire Fed governor Lisa Cook over allegations of mortgage fraud, which she denies. No president has fired a governor in the Fed's 112-year history. The justices at an oral argument appeared to be leaning toward allowing her to stay in her job until the case is resolved.

At the same time, Trump has suggested he is close to naming a new Fed Chair, to replace Powell once his term ends in May. The announcement could

come as soon as this week, though it has been delayed before.

The president's efforts to pressure the Fed may have backfired, economists say, as Republicans in the Senate voiced support for Powell and threatened to block Trump's replacement chair.

"The last couple of weeks have been pretty positive for Fed independence," said Patricia Zobel, a former official at the New York Fed and now head of macroeconomic research at Guggenheim Investments.

Even so, all the turmoil may have led Powell to hunker down as he nears the end of his term as chair. Vincent Reinhart, a former Fed economist and now chief economist at BNY Investments, noted that Powell has given just one speech touching on the economy since September.

He could be letting other Fed officials take on the job of explaining

why the central bank may hold off on rate cuts in the coming months, Reinhart said. It also underscores that the chair does not make decisions on rates alone, he added.

"The contribution of Chair Powell to news about our understanding of the next Fed move has been as small as it's ever been, over his tenure," Reinhart said.

Only 12 of the 19 members of the Fed's rate-setting committee have a vote, including all seven members of the board of governors, the president of the New York Fed, and a rotating group of four presidents from the regional Fed banks.

This year, Beth Hammack, president of the Cleveland Fed; Neel Kashkari, president of the Minneapolis Fed; Lorie Logan, president of the Dallas Fed; and Anna Paulson, president of the Philadelphia Fed, will vote on rate decisions. All have recently expressed some skepticism of the need for further cuts anytime soon.

In a speech earlier this month, Paulson said an improving economy should allow more rate cuts later in the year.

"I see inflation moderating, the labor market stabilizing and growth coming in around 2% this year," she said. "If all of that happens, then some modest further adjustments" to the Fed's key rate "would likely be appropriate later in the year."

Larger-than-usual tax refunds over the next few months should help fuel more consumer spending, economists expect. And faster growth could eventually boost hiring, which has been noticeably weak even as the economy is expanding.

With businesses barely adding jobs, consumers remain gloomy about the economy. The Conference Board's measure of consumer confidence dropped to an 11-year low in January, the business research group said Tuesday.

# EU is seeking new trade partnerships. Here's why

BRUSSELS, Jan 28, (AP): The ambitious free trade agreement between the European Union and India underscores the EU's efforts to ink new global partnerships at a time when the Trump administration has rattled a continent deeply tied to Washington on trade, defense and diplomacy.

The agreement announced Tuesday reflects a new priority for the 27-nation EU, the world's largest trading bloc, after U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to impose tariffs because of opposition to American control of Greenland, only to back off days later. It follows trade deals struck or pending over the past year with India, Japan, Indonesia, Mexico and the five Mercosur nations of South America.

"The international order we relied upon for decades is no longer a given," said Nikos Christodoulides, president of Cyprus, in a speech last week at the European Parliament. He was outlining Cyprus' priorities as the island nation begins its six-month term at the helm of the EU.

"This moment calls for action, decisive, credible and united action. It calls for a union that is more autonomous and open to the world," said Christodoulides, echoing widespread sentiment across the bloc.

After attending a military parade in New Delhi, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen signed the free trade agreement to deepen economic and strategic ties with India. She called it the "mother of all deals."

The pact could affect as many as 2 billion people and slash tariffs on nearly 97% of EU exports to India like cars and wine, and 99% of India's shipments of goods like textiles and medicines to the EU.

"Europe and India need each other today like never before," said Garima Mohan, a senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund. She said that both Brussels and New Delhi had long sought closer ties as a counterweight to China's economic rise. But the Trump administration's newly aggressive stance on economic and security issues clinched the deal.

"This movement towards diversification, looking for new partners as well as building self-reliance was precipitated by the tensions with China and really driven home by the fracture of the trans-Atlantic partnership," Mohan said. The deal "only came to pass at this particular geopolitical juncture, and that says something of the world we live in."

The EU struck its first trade deal in July with Indonesia. Two weeks ago, von der Leyen signed a deal with the Mercosur nations of South America that was decades in the making to create a free trade market of more than 700 million people - and she's said she has the authority to implement it despite objections raised by European Parliament.

The EU has also upgraded ties with Japan, South Korea and Australia, Pacific nations wary of Beijing's strategic ambitions and Washington's turbulent politics. Canada is "knocking on

our door" to do the same, said Manfred Weber, head of the European People's Party, Europe's largest political bloc.

"There is a hope that things will change given the importance of the U.S. for us ... but there is a realization now that we are a bit more alone in this world," said Ivano di Carlo, a senior policy analyst at the European Policy Centre.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine drove the EU to create financial tools to boost the bloc's defense industry and infrastructure like trains, roads and ports - but the Trump administration's criticism of the continent's low levels of defense spending kicked those initiatives into overdrive.

Denmark's prime minister has said Russia could pose a credible security threat to the EU by the end of the decade and that defense industries in Europe and Ukraine must be able to thwart that threat.

France has led calls for Europe to build "strategic autonomy," and support for its stance has grown since the Trump administration warned last year that its security priorities lie elsewhere and that the Europeans would have to fend for themselves.

Shortly after Trump began his second term in the White House, EU leaders agreed to increase their own defense budgets. As a priority, 150 billion euros (\$162 billion) in loans are designated for air and missile defense, artillery systems, ammunition, drones and air transport, as well as cyber systems, artificial intelligence and electronic warfare.

Industry leaders and experts across Europe have said truly self-sufficient military power would require overcoming a decades-long reliance on the U.S. as well as the fragmentation along national lines of Europe's own defense industry.

Stocks in Europe's major arms makers like Leonardo (Italy), Rheinmetall (Germany), Thales (France) and Saab (Sweden) have all been on the rise.

While trying to cut its energy ties with Russia, the EU began buying more U.S. energy, according to the Institute for Energy Economic and Financial Analysis. But that too is risky for the bloc, said Dan Jørgensen, European commissioner for energy and housing, during a North Sea Summit in Hamburg, Germany on Monday.

The EU imports 14.5% of its oil and 60% of its liquefied natural gas from the U.S., according to the EU statistics agency Eurostat.

Jørgensen said the EU should seek further energy independence by investing in energy production and alternate suppliers.

"We do not want to replace one dependency for another - we need to diversify," Jørgensen said.

Brussels is eyeing sources in the eastern Mediterranean and the Gulf, where negotiations are underway for a free trade deal with the United Arab Emirates.

"Decoupling is easier said than done," but forging new global relationships gives the EU an edge in dealing with Beijing, Moscow and Washington, Mohan said.

## Trade pact covers nearly all goods, from cars to textiles

# India, EU seal historic free trade agreement

NEW DELHI, Jan 28, (AP): India and the European Union reached a free trade agreement Tuesday that could affect as many as 2 billion people after nearly two decades of negotiations.

The accord, which the head of the EU's executive branch described as the "mother of all deals," will see free trade on almost all goods between the EU's 27 members and India, covering everything from textiles to medicines, and bringing down high import taxes for European wine and cars. It will likely take several months before the agreement takes effect.

The deal between two of the world's biggest markets comes as Washington targets both the Asian powerhouse and the EU bloc with steep import tariffs, disrupting established trade flows and pushing major economies to seek alternate partnerships.

"This agreement will bring major opportunities for the people of India and Europe," Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a virtual address to an energy conference. "It represents 25% of the global GDP and one-third of global trade."

India and the EU also agreed on a framework for deeper defense and security cooperation, and a separate pact aimed at easing mobility for skilled workers and students, signaling that their partnership extends beyond commerce.

The negotiations for the India-EU deal got a new impetus after U.S. President Donald Trump's strong-arm trade tactics, including threatening his European allies with punitive tariffs over their objections to Trump's threats to take control of Greenland.

Modi, speaking at a joint news conference in New Delhi with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President António

Costa, said that the partnership with the EU "will strengthen stability in the international system" at a time of "turmoil in the global order."

"Europe and India are making history today. We have concluded the mother of all deals," von der Leyen posted on X.

In a speech later, she said that the accord was a tale of "two giants" who chose partnership "in a true win-win fashion." She also said that it sends "a strong message that cooperation is the best answer to global challenges."

The deal is expected to further integrate supply chains and strengthen joint manufacturing power between the two economies. It will also cut up to 4 billion euros (\$4.7 billion) in annual tariffs for exporters and create jobs for millions of workers in India and Europe.

A formal signing of the deal could come later this year after officials go through the legal details of the text and the European Parliament ratifies it. India's trade minister, Piyush Goyal, said that he expected the deal to take effect by the end of the year.

India is expected to reduce or eliminate tariffs for 96.6% of EU exports, while Brussels will reciprocate with similar reductions in phases that eventually cover nearly 99% of India's shipments by trade value, according to statements from both sides.

India's sectors poised to gain from the deal include textiles, apparel, engineering goods, and leather, handicraft, footwear and marine products, while the EU's gains will be in wine, automobiles, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, among others.

A quota system for automobiles, wines and whisky has been agreed upon, bringing down steep duties.

## As part of the Bank's social responsibility and ESG commitment, supporting Kuwait Vision 2035

# Burgan Bank concludes its strategic sponsorship of 'Nuzhat Fohgah' in line with its effort to foster health and wellness

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: In its latest effort to foster health and wellness and encourage residents of Kuwait to engage in meaningful social experiences, Burgan Bank sponsored Fohgah's Picnic (Nuzhat Fohgah), a curated picnic experience at the crossover between lifestyle, food, and community building. The weekend outdoor event, organized by Fohgah app, took place at Al-Shaheed Park, one of Kuwait's most beautiful nature destinations, the event witnessed attendance that exceeded expectation from visitors including friends and families of varied ages.

This sponsorship echoes Burgan Bank's dedication to supporting its community's development on different fronts as part of its comprehensive strategy for social responsibility. In addition, it expands on the Bank's commitment to engraining environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations into its operations to guarantee sustainable growth that reflects positively on society, natural environment, and the economy as part of Burgan Bank's ongoing support for Kuwait Vision 2035.

"We are proud of our strategic partnership with the Fohgah app and our sponsorship of their iconic events and experiences that individuals can easily book and participate in through the app, in line with the Bank's digital transformation strategy," said Ms. Hessa Hussain Al-Najadah, Senior Manager – Media Relations and CSR Communications at Burgan Bank. "The Fohgah Picnic is an ideal example of the social events that revive that simple joy of spending time with friends and family amidst nature, enhancing community cohesion and strengthening bonds between community members. Our mission to reinforce a healthy lifestyle in Kuwait and to pay attention to community members' wellness by encouraging them to disconnect from electronic devices and



Burgan Bank and Fohgah teams in a group photo during the event.



Mr. Bader Al-Sumait, Co-founder of Fohgah



Burgan Bank's booth at the 'Nuzhat Fohgah' event.



Highlights from the event's activities and curated experiences.



Fun activities for all ages.

reconnect with loved ones and with nature, engaging in activities and games, and building lasting memories."

On his part, Mr. Bader Al-Sumait, Co-founder of Fohgah, said: "I would like to thank our supportive partners at Burgan Bank for con-

tinuing to be part of our ongoing success as we create new spaces and design new events where people of Kuwait can explore hobbies, engage with Kuwaiti culture and heritage, and most importantly refuel their mental and physical energy. With the everyday

pace speeding up, it is important to design events that invite people to slow down and find pleasure in the uninterrupted company of family and friends."

Under the sponsorship's umbrella, Burgan Bank offered its employees to

attend the picnic as volunteers, extending their yearlong efforts for fostering a work environment that prioritizes mental and physical wellbeing as well as genuine human connection outside of the professional context. This aligns with the Bank's mission to be an em-

ployer of choice, committed to remaining a certified Great Place to Work®.

In addition to providing pre-booked allotted spaces for each group of participants, the event featured a wide range of interactive activities and workshops for different ages and interests with day-long entertainment, music and sport, with the attendance and participation of a number of Burgan Bank employees and customers. The picnic also hosted local vendors from various fields and small retail businesses.

Burgan Bank representatives at the event also played an important role in spreading vital banking tips and financial literacy advice, in line with the Bank's ongoing contribution to the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) bank awareness campaign, supervised by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), with the support and participation of Kuwaiti banks. Conversations with the picnic attendees included information about the Bank's latest offerings and bespoke services as well as tips on secure online banking and precautions against financial fraud.

Fohgah is a Kuwait-based application that allows people to explore and book exciting experiences and spaces across Kuwait. Designed to bring communities together, the platform offers a wide range of workshops, events, and bookable spaces for social gatherings, celebrations, and creative activities. Founded by Mohammad Al-Mashan, Abdulaziz Al-Mershed, Bader Al-Sumait, and Hamad Al-Otaibi, Fohgah aims to redefine how people in Kuwait discover leisure by making meaningful, engaging, and community-driven experiences easily accessible.

Burgan Bank upholds its commitment to its social role by organizing diverse events and activities aimed at bringing together members of the community of all ages in an atmosphere that combines entertainment and education, allowing them to enjoy inspiring and meaningful experiences that enhance awareness and support the spirit of community participation, in line with the Bank's values and vision of contributing positively to building a more cohesive and sustainable society.



## Chalamet, DiCaprio among stars nominated for best actor

## 'One Battle After Another' tops BAFTA nominations with 14 nods

LONDON, Jan 28, (AP): Paul Thomas Anderson's politically charged action thriller "One Battle After Another" leads the race for the British Academy Film Awards, securing 14 nominations Tuesday including acting nods for five of its cast.

Ryan Coogler's blues-steeped vampire epic "Sinners" is close behind with 13 nominations for Britain's equivalent of the Oscars, while Chloé Zhao's Shakespearean family tragedy "Hamnet" and Josh Saffdie's ping-pong odyssey "Marty Supreme" have 11 apiece.

Guillermo del Toro's reimagining of "Frankenstein" and Norwegian family drama "Sentimental Value" each got eight nominations, rounding out a six-pack of leading contenders for both the British and Hollywood Academy Awards.

The best film nominees are "One Battle After Another," "Hamnet," "Marty Supreme," "Sinners" and "Sentimental Value."

BAFTA Chief Executive Jane Millichip said the nominations recognized "films like 'One Battle After Another,' 'Sinners,' tackling really big societal issues - the moral ambiguity of activism, Black identity," alongside films exploring "the most intimate side of family relationships."

"They're all doing it in quite different ways: Strong flavors, really bold storytelling," she said.

Best leading actor contenders are Timothée Chalamet for "Marty Supreme," Leonardo DiCaprio for "One Battle After Another," Ethan Hawke for Broadway biopic "Blue Moon," Michael B. Jordan for "Sinners" and Jesse Plemons for "Bugonia" and British actor Robert Aramayo for playing a man with Tourette's syndrome in biographical drama "I Swear."

Aramayo said it was "really crazy" to be nominated alongside Hollywood heavyweights. "It's absolutely amazing," he said. "I admire each and every one of them so much."

The leading actress category includes awards-season favorite Jessie Buckley for her performance as Agnes Hathaway, wife of William Shakespeare, in "Hamnet." She's up against Rose Byrne for "If I Had Legs I'd Kick You," Kate Hudson for "Song Sung Blue," Chase Infiniti for



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Leonardo DiCaprio in a scene from 'One Battle After Another.' (AP)

"One Battle After Another," Renate Reinsve for "Sentimental Value" and Emma Stone for dystopian tragicomedy "Bugonia."

"One Battle" actors Teyana Taylor, Benicio del Toro and Sean Penn are all nominated for supporting performances.

The Associated Press was recognized in the best documentary category with a nomination for Mstyslav Chernov's harrowing Ukraine war portrait "2000 Meters to Andriivka," co-produced by the AP and PBS Frontline.

The winners will be announced at a Feb. 22 ceremony in London hosted by actor Alan Cumming. The U.K. prizes - officially called the EE BAFTA Film Awards - often provide clues about who will triumph at Hollywood's Academy Awards, held this year on March 15.

This year, unusually, Oscar nominations were announced first, with "Sinners" securing a record 16 nominations, followed by 13 for "One Battle After Another."

The British academy has recognized several performers overlooked by the Oscars, including supporting actor nominees Paul Mescal for "Hamnet" and Odessa A'zion for "Marty Supreme."

The BAFTAs also have a distinctly British accent, with a separate category of best British film. Its 10 nominees include "The Ballad of Wallis Island," "Pillion," "I Swear" and "Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy."

Tom Basden, co-writer and star of "The Ballad of Wallis Island," the story of a musical duo reluctantly reunited by a superfan, said it was gratifying to receive three nominations for a movie filmed on a tiny budget in 18 days. Carey Mulligan, who spent 10 days on set, is nominated for best supporting actress.

"Sort of against the odds, we managed to create something in those conditions that we're really proud of and that's really hit home with people," Basden said. "So it's a lovely kind of underdog story in many ways."

Most BAFTA winners are chosen by 8,500 members of the U.K. academy of industry professionals, with one - the Rising Star Award - selected by public vote from a shortlist of nominees. This year's rising star contenders are Infiniti, Aramayo, "Sinners" star Miles Caton and British actors Archie Madekwe and Posy Sterling.

Like other major movie awards, Britain's film academy has introduced changes in recent years to increase diversity, including the addition of a longlist round before the final nominees are selected. Diversity has improved since 2020, when no women were nominated as best director for the seventh year running, and all 20 of the main acting nominees were white.

Still, Zhao is the only female nominee in the best director category, alongside Anderson, Saffdie, Coogler, Yorgos Lanthimos for "Bugonia" and Joachim Trier for "Sentimental Value." Across all categories including documentaries and shorts, 25% of the directing nominees are women.

## Variety

**NEW YORK:** Neil Young is giving the people of Greenland the gift of song - his songs, that is.

The veteran rocker announced Tuesday on his blog that he is providing free access to his entire music catalog to residents of Denmark's semiautonomous territory, whose futures have lately become a point of tension between the US and NATO.



Young

"I hope my music and music films will ease some of the unwarranted stress and threats you are experiencing from our unpopular and hopefully temporary government," Young wrote. "It is my sincere wish for you to be able to enjoy all of my music in your beautiful Greenland home, in its highest quality."

The offer is for a year - though Young said renewing is possible - and applicants need to have a Greenland-based cellphone. "This is an offer of Peace and Love," he wrote.

Young's manager confirmed to The Associated Press the rocker's message was genuine.

The offer is in stark contrast to Young's recent decision to deny listeners his catalog on the streaming Amazon Music platform, a swipe at its founder, Jeff Bezos, who has supported U.S. President Donald Trump.

"Amazon is owned by Jeff Bezos, a billionaire backer of the president," Young wrote last week. "The president's international policies and his support of ICE make it impossible for me to ignore his actions. If you feel as I do, I strongly recommend that you do not use Amazon." (AP)

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**NEW YORK:** Prize-winning composer Philip Glass has called off a scheduled world premiere at the Kennedy Center of a symphony about Abraham Lincoln, the latest in a wave of cancellations since President Donald Trump ousted the previous leadership.

Glass' Symphony No. 15, "Lincoln," was to have been led by Grammy-winning conductor Karen Kamensek for performances on June 12 and June 13.

"Symphony No. 15 is a portrait of Abraham Lincoln, and the values of the Kennedy Center today are in direct conflict with the message of the Symphony," Glass said in a statement released Tuesday by his publicist. "Therefore, I feel an obligation to withdraw this Symphony premiere from the Kennedy Center under its current leadership."

A spokesperson for the Kennedy Center did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Glass, who turns 89 on Saturday, was a Kennedy Center honoree in 2018. (AP)

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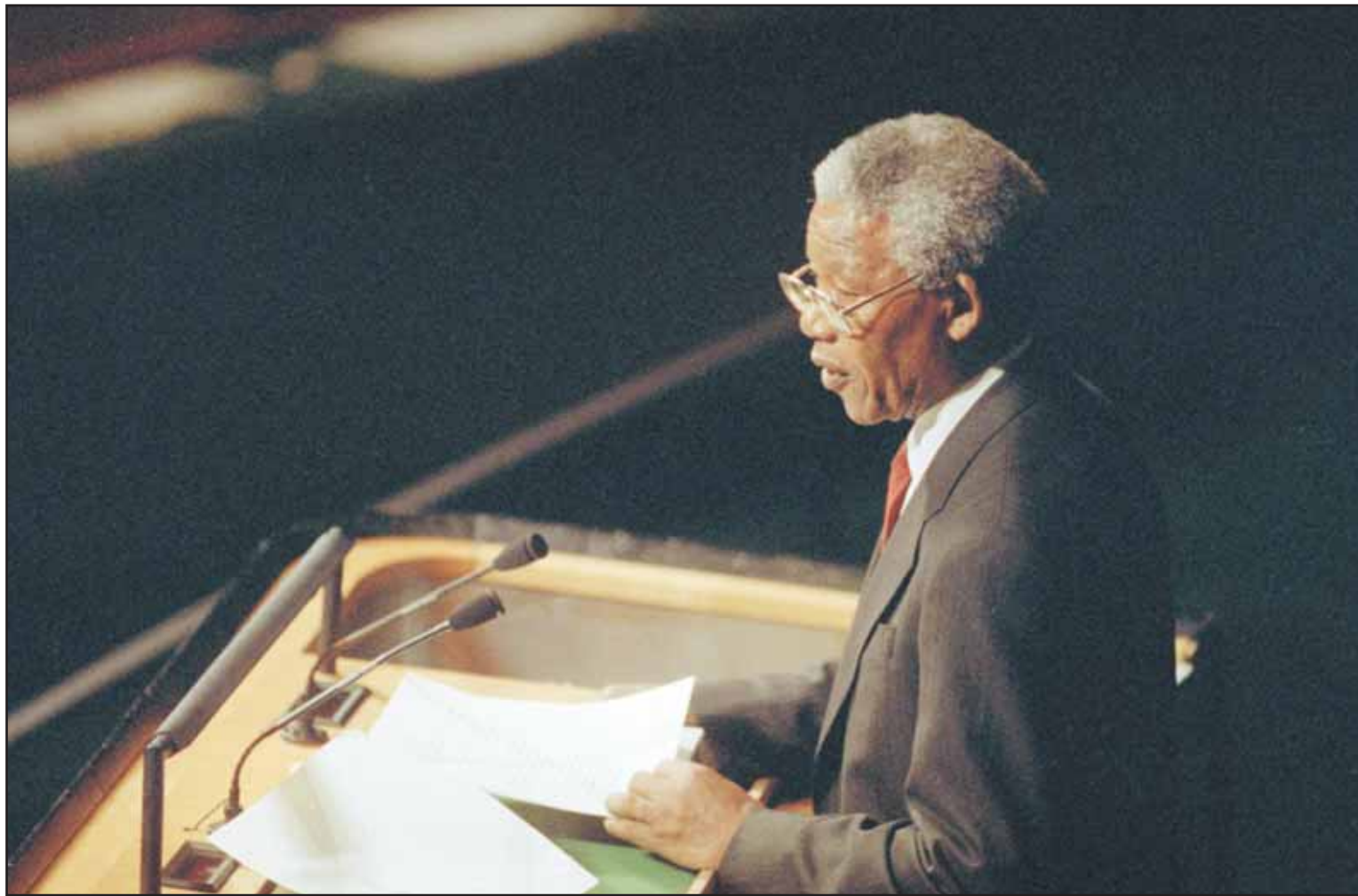
**LOS ANGELES:** Two-time Grammy Award-winning reggae drummer Sly Dunbar, who fueled countless tracks from Bob Marley to Bob Dylan and was one-half of the influential reggae rhythm section Sly & Robbie, has died. He was 73.

Dunbar's wife, Thelma, announced the death to the Jamaica Gleaner.

Dunbar and bassist Robbie Shakespeare - Sly & Robbie, also known as "The Riddim Twins" - played on reggae classics by Black Uhuru, Jimmy Cliff and Peter Tosh and would garner attention far from Jamaica, from the likes of Grace Jones and the Rolling Stones.

Sly & Robbie played on three of Jones' albums - "Warm Leatherette," "Nightclubbing" and "Living My Life" - as well as four albums by Serge Gainsbourg and three by Dylan, 1983's "Infidels," 1985's "Empire Burlesque" and 1988's "Down in the Groove." (AP)

## Film



Nelson Mandela, anti-apartheid leader and president of the African National Congress, addresses the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Dec. 3, 1991. (AP)

## Jay Duplass brings tragic comedy to Sundance

## 'Troublemaker' lets Mandela speak for himself

PARK CITY, Utah, Jan 28, (AP): Antoine Fuqua always knew Nelson Mandela as an icon. But he had no idea he was such a rebel too, and a literal fighter. He remembered walking into a restaurant and seeing a picture of a man in a boxing stance and asked why they had a poster of Muhammad Ali on the wall. They didn't, he was told: It was Mandela.

It was just part of what would be an enlightening journey in making the new documentary, "Troublemaker," which has its world premiere Tuesday at the Sundance Film Festival.

"He evolved into the Mandela that we all know and love," Fuqua said. "The troublemaker allows you to sort of see him not just a mythical character or as a global icon, but as a fallible human being, someone who became a great leader, who in the beginning was a rebel, if you will, and who was willing to engage in violence at some point, if necessary, for the greater good."

The film uses Mandela's own voice, drawn from over 70 hours of recordings to tell the story of the struggle against apartheid. Fuqua collaborated closely with Mac Maharaj, an anti-apartheid activist, who was imprisoned on Robben Island with Mandela and who played a key part in smuggling Mandela's writings, which would become "Long Walk to Freedom," out of the prison.

Fuqua, Maharaj and the film-making team traveled all around South Africa, visiting important locations in Mandela's story, from the University of Fort Hare, where Mandela was a student before being expelled for protest activities, and Robben Island, where he was imprisoned from 1964 to 1982, to Qunu, his final resting place.

He even slept a few nights on Robben Island, which he said



Skyler Bible, (from left), Lucy Boynton, Oliver Diego Silva, David Duchovny, Hope Davis, Ariela Barer and Cooper Raiff appear in a scene from "See You When I See You" by Jay Duplass, an official selection of the 2026 Sundance Film Festival. (AP)

was "very uncomfortable." While there they got a feeling for where Mandela spent 18 of his 27 imprisoned years and bonded at night over dinners. That's where Maharaj told him Mandela was a Tracy Chapman fan.

They met many people along the way, including some who were part of the resistance against apartheid, taking to heart their continued optimism and hope despite past and present grievances and racism.

"One gentleman came in and he had no arm, his eye was missing. He looked like a character out of James Bond. He had a Tommy Bahama shirt on, he had the hat on," Fuqua said. "And he was so full of life and so funny and so matter of fact about what happened to him, fighting for justice. I started to learn so much more about the people there."

The film, which Fuqua has been working on for over three years, blends archival footage and photographs, interviews with Maharaj and animation by South African artist Thabang Lehobye to fill in the gaps where footage didn't exist, like on Robben Island.

in Denver who got hit with something surprising and unbelievable. It's the story not only of how they survived it but came through better people."

The film, "See You When I See You," is having its world premiere Tuesday at the Sundance Film Festival where it is seeking distribution. It stars Cooper Raiff, Kaitlyn Dever, David Duchovny, Hope Davis and Lucy Boynton.

"I kind of see it an heir to their film 'The Big Sick,'" Duplass said, of Nanjiani and Gordon's Oscar-nominated romantic comedy.

Putting Raiff in the lead role over a more established movie star was an unconventional choice, to say the least, but Duplass was certain it was the right one. He's been Raiff's de facto mentor since before Raiff made his first feature. He saw in him a range that he hadn't quite observed in some of his peers.

"He's just so talented and smart and funny and emotionally available," Duplass said. "Frankly there aren't a lot of 27-year-olds who are all those things." (Raiff is now 28).

Rounding out the cast with more well-known names was then non-negotiable. But Duplass has noticed in the past 10 to 15 years that it's harder to get big name actors to join smaller art movies. Part of that, he said, is that actors are making "so much money in TV" and that the talent agencies are gatekeeping their talent on the off chance that a last minute offer will come in for one episode or a limited series.

He credits Dever, Duchovny, Davis and Boynton for being willing to commit to this film in spite of everything.

"It's not a lot of money," Duplass said. "These people are people who want to make art and who really were willing to take a chance and, you know, make something crazy with me."

## Books

## 'Love libraries'

## Majumdar and Li win ALA honors

NEW YORK, Jan 28, (AP): Novelist **Megha Majumdar**, one of this year's winners of medals presented by the American Library Association, doesn't only visit libraries for the reading.

There's the jigsaw puzzle table in midtown Manhattan and the telescope she borrowed from the central branch of Brooklyn Public Library so she could have a closer look at the sky at night. And libraries, wherever the location, are an ideal place to get some writing done.

"I go often enough that my I have favorite places to sit," she says.

The library association announced Tuesday that Majumdar has won the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction for "A Guardian and a Thief," her story of a woman's troubled quest to leave India and join her husband in the United States. Yiyun Li was awarded in nonfiction for the memoir "Things in Nature Merely Grow," in which she confronts the loss of her two sons, both of whom took their lives.

The authors each will receive \$5,000 and be formally honored when the ALA gathers in June in Chicago.

"Megha Majumdar's intoxicating novel is filled with emotion and relevance to all people and all places across time," Lillian Dabney, chair of the awards' selection committee, said in a statement. "Yiyun Li has courageously put almost inexplicable events into words that will benefit all who encounter her book."

Previous winners of the Carnegie medals include Percival Everett, Jennifer Egan and Donna Tartt.

Li, 53, is the recipient of numerous literary honors, including the PEN/Faulkner Award for her novel "The Book of Goose" and The Guardian First Book Award for the story collection "A Thousand Years of Good Prayers." A native of Beijing who emigrated to attend the University of Iowa in 2000, Li says she never saw the inside of a library until middle school, when she was chosen to be a librarian's assistant, "a monumental experience."

After moving to the US, she was dazzled, and educated, by the public library in Iowa City. "I would walk to shelf to shelf," she remembers. "That's how I discovered (British author) A.S. Byatt. There was a big collection of A.S. Byatt in the A's, so I started to read her. I read through the collections, from A to Z."

Li now teaches at Princeton University, where she is the Robert F. Goheen Professor in the Humanities, a position first held by Nobel laureate Toni Morrison. She gets writing done at the university library, and likes to visit the public library in town and "just look at the books and to look at the shelves - language books for immigrants and maps and travel books. I'm an old-fashioned person who likes to see the object."



Majumdar



Social media giants in court

TikTok settles landmark child addiction lawsuit before trial

LOS ANGELES, Jan 28, (AP): TikTok agreed to settle a landmark social media addiction lawsuit just before the trial kicked off, the plaintiff’s attorneys confirmed.

The social video platform was one of three companies - along with Meta’s Instagram and Google’s YouTube - facing claims that their platforms deliberately addict and harm children. A fourth company named in the lawsuit, Snapchat parent company Snap Inc., settled the case last week for an undisclosed sum.

Details of the settlement with TikTok were not disclosed, and the company did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

At the core of the case is a 19-year-old identified only by the initials “KGM,” whose case could determine how thousands of other, similar lawsuits against social media companies will play out. She and two other plaintiffs have been selected for bellwether trials - essentially test cases for both sides to see how their arguments play out before a jury and what damages, if any, may be awarded, said Clay Calvert, a nonresident senior fellow of technology policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

Joseph VanZandt, co-lead counsel for the plaintiff, said in a statement Tuesday that TikTok remains a defendant in the other personal injury cases, and that the trial will proceed as scheduled against Meta and YouTube.

Jury selection starts this week in the Los Angeles County Superior Court. It’s the first time the companies will argue their case before a jury, and the outcome could have profound effects on their businesses and how they will handle



The icon for the TikTok video sharing app is seen on a smartphone in Marple Township, Pa., Feb. 28, 2023. (AP)

children using their platforms. The selection process is expected to take at least a few days, with 75 potential jurors questioned each day through at least Thursday. A fourth company named in the lawsuit, Snapchat parent company Snap Inc., settled the case last week for an undisclosed sum.

“This was only the first case - there are hundreds of parents and school districts in the social media addiction trials that start today, and sadly, new families every day who are speaking out and bringing Big Tech to court for its delib-

erately harmful products,” said Sacha Haworth, executive director of the nonprofit Tech Oversight Project.

KGM claims that her use of social media from an early age addicted her to the technology and exacerbated depression and suicidal thoughts. Importantly, the lawsuit claims that this was done through deliberate design choices made by companies that sought to make their platforms more addictive to children to boost profits. This argument, if successful, could sidestep the companies’ First Amendment shield and Section 230, which protects tech companies from liability for material posted on their platforms.

“Borrowing heavily from the behavioral and neurobiological techniques used by slot machines and exploited by the cigarette industry, Defendants deliberately embedded in their products an array of design features aimed at maximizing youth engagement to drive advertising revenue,” the lawsuit says.

Executives, including Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, are expected to testify at the trial, which will last six to eight weeks. Experts have drawn similarities to the Big Tobacco trials that led to a 1998 settlement requiring cigarette companies to pay billions in health care costs and restrict marketing targeting minors.

“Plaintiffs are not merely the collateral damage of Defendants’ products,” the lawsuit says. “They are the direct victims of the intentional product design choices made by each Defendant. They are the intended targets of the harmful features that pushed them into self-destructive feedback loops.”

The tech companies dispute the claims that their products deliberately harm children, citing a bevy of safeguards they

have added over the years and arguing that they are not liable for content posted on their sites by third parties.

“Recently, a number of lawsuits have attempted to place the blame for teen mental health struggles squarely on social media companies,” Meta said in a recent blog post. “But this oversimplifies a serious issue. Clinicians and researchers find that mental health is a deeply complex and multifaceted issue, and trends regarding teens’ well-being aren’t clear-cut or universal. Narrowing the challenges faced by teens to a single factor ignores the scientific research and the many stressors impacting young people today, like academic pressure, school safety, socio-economic challenges and substance abuse.”

A Meta spokesperson said in a statement Monday the company strongly disagrees with the allegations outlined in the lawsuit and that it’s “confident the evidence will show our longstanding commitment to supporting young people.”

José Castañeda, a Google Spokesperson, said Monday that the allegations against YouTube are “simply not true.” In a statement, he said “Providing young people with a safer, healthier experience has always been core to our work.”

TikTok did not immediately respond to a request for comment Monday.

The case will be the first in a slew of cases beginning this year that seek to hold social media companies responsible for harming children’s mental well-being. A federal bellwether trial beginning in June in Oakland, California, will be the first to represent school districts that have sued social media platforms over harms to children.

Fashion



A model wears a creation as part of the Chanel Spring/Summer 2026 Haute Couture collection presented in Paris, Tuesday, Jan. 27. (AP)

Armani revamps with elegant edit

Chanel couture gets breath of fresh air, stars

PARIS, Jan 28, (AP): Fashion powerhouse Chanel stacked the Paris front row like a movie premiere Tuesday: Nicole Kidman, Dua Lipa, Penélope Cruz, ASAP Rocky, Gracie Abrams, Margaret Qualley.

Then, it handed the spotlight to its new designer, Matthieu Blazy, for his much-anticipated couture debut built on one big, confident swing: joy.

Inside the Grand Palais, the house went full fantasy.

The set was a dream-garden of candy-colored trees and giant pink-and-red mushrooms: a surreal antidote to the gray January day outside, and to the even heavier mood of the world beyond the doors.

Before the first look, Blazy even teased the mood with an animation film of woodland animals at work in the Chanel ateliers, “Cinderella” style: a wink that said this would be couture, but not grim.

Then came the clothes, and the message landed fast: lightness.

Blazy took Chanel’s most famous codes - the suit, the pearls, the chain-weighted hems - and made them feel almost weightless.

A classic skirt suit arrived as a sheer, barely-there version of itself, cut so delicately it looked like air had been tailored.

In a house where tweed can be armor, this was tweed as whisper.

Birds hovered over the collection as a guiding idea: freedom, motion, travel.

Featherlike textures and flighty embroideries fluttered across silhouettes that moved like breath in-

stead of structure.

There were flashes of plumage in color and surface - at times bright, at times raven-dark - and plenty of soft, floating chiffon that made the models look as if they were gliding rather than walking.

The best trick was how the craft wasn’t obvious.

Up close, the work was meticulous: a level of handwork couture clients pay for, and ateliers live for.

But the overall effect stayed easy, almost casual; as if the clothes were beautiful without demanding applause.

Blazy played with the artistic technique trompe l’oeil, including a tank top-and-jeans idea reimaged in organza, and with textures that were romantic but also a little strange; couture that winked.

In a brand built on total looks and strong house signa-

natures, Blazy offered something personal: choice.

Models were invited to pick symbols and messages to stitch into the clothes - a love note, a sign, a private mark.

It pushed Chanel away from “uniform” and toward intimacy: couture as a wearable secret, not just a public statement.

The show also had a sense of casting as storytell-

ing. Blazy’s runways have tended to carry an open, joyful energy, and that continued here - a mix of ages, backgrounds and presences that made the clothes feel lived-in.

Model Bhavitha Mandava, fresh off her viral mo-

ment at the house’s Métiers d’Art show, returned.

Later she closed as a couture bride, shimmering and feathered, smiling as if she knew she was ending the scene exactly on the right note.

The soundtrack shifted moods like a DJ set, moving from Disney sweetness to millennial nostalgia - including Moby’s “Porcelain,” and a mashup that blended Oasis’ “Wonderwall” with The Verve’s “Bitter Sweet Symphony.”

By the finale, the room was playing along.

Big sets are easy. Blazy’s debut didn’t try to overpower Chanel with noise or force a new era with aggression. Instead, he made it feel alive.

Silvana Armani stepped forward Tuesday with her first couture collection as creative director of Armani Privé, taking the spotlight after the death of her uncle, Giorgio Armani, in September.

Armani, who worked alongside him for more than four decades, becomes the only woman leading a couture house this season, in a week dominated by high-profile debuts from male designers.

Her debut kept the house’s signature restraint but pushed it toward a lighter, more wearable mood. The lineup was trimmed to about 60 looks, a sharper edit than the brand’s typical scale.

Tailoring opened the show, but softened: relaxed suits, sheer organza shirts with ties, and wide-leg trousers in light layers that moved easily on the runway. Accessories were kept minimal - and hats were left out entirely, a notable change for a house long associated with Giorgio Armani’s love of headwear.

Technology

Friendly humanoid

Meet Sprout: The robot ready to enter homes

NEW YORK, Jan 28, (AP): As the new robot called Sprout walks around a Manhattan office, nodding its rectangular head, lifting its windshield wiper-like “eyebrows” and offering to shake your hand with its grippers, it looks nothing like the sleek and intimidating humanoids built by companies like Tesla.

Sprout’s charm is the point. A 5-year-old child could comfortably talk at eye level with this humanoid, which stands 3.5 feet (1 meter) tall and wears a soft, padded exterior of sage-green foam.

Forged by stealth startup Fauna Robotics over two years of secret research and development, Sprout’s public debut on Tuesday aims to jumpstart a whole new industry of building “approachable” robots for homes, schools and social spaces.

The robot is in many ways the first of its kind, at least in the United States, even as rapid advances in artificial intelligence and robot engineering have finally made it possible to start building such machines. If its emotive expressions and blinking lights seem vaguely familiar, it might be from generations of Star Wars droids and other endearingly clunky robotic sidekicks dreamed up in animation studios and children’s literature.

“Most people in this industry take inspiration from the science fiction that we grew up with,” said Fauna Robotics co-founder and CEO Rob Cochran. “I think some do so from ‘Westworld’ and ‘Terminator.’ We do from WALL-E and Baymax and Rosie Jetson.”

The usual hypothesis for the commercialization of humanoid robots is that they will get their first jobs in warehouses or factories long before they are ready for homes. That’s the path proposed for two of today’s best-known prototypes: Tesla’s Optimus, which CEO Elon Musk sees as the carmaker’s future, and Boston Dynamics’ Atlas, which parent company Hyundai plans to deploy in car manufacturing by 2028.

Fauna looks to skip that step for an entirely different clientele: other robot tinkerers. Much as early personal computers and, later, smartphones sparked a culture of developers designing new games and applications, Sprout is a software developer platform more than just a robot. It’s also a mechanically complex one that will cost buyers \$50,000.

Spending

That’s a price some university research labs and technology entrepreneurs are already spending on China’s Unitree, which sells a lightweight humanoid often seen at robotics conferences and competitions. Others have avoided Chinese hardware due to tariffs and broader security concerns.

Cochran believes Fauna is “the first American company to be actively shipping robots as a developer platform” and has been hand-delivering the first models. Early customers include Disney and Boston Dynamics.

“You take it out of the box and you can start walking it around immediately,” said Marc Theermann, chief strategy officer at Boston Dynamics, in a recent interview. “Seeing their robot for the first time really lets you see the future a little bit. And if you squint, you can see how a robot like that would be welcomed into people’s homes.”

Sprout can’t lift heavy objects, but it can dance the Twist or the Floss, grab a toy block or teddy bear, or hoist itself from a chair to take a long stroll along the wood floors of Fauna’s headquarters in New York City’s Flatiron District.

Cochran and co-founder Josh Merel, the company’s chief technology officer, demonstrated the robot to The Associated Press in mid-January ahead of its public launch. Fauna employees and an AP reporter piloted the robot, using a video game controller, a phone application and a virtual-reality headset. Sprout also knows the office layout enough to be sent on a planned mission, such as to check out the inventory of the break room refrigerator.

It walks slowly but steadily on uneven ground. Only once it came close to tripping, taking a sharp turn to avoid a person and instead hitting its foot on a protruding table wheel too low to the ground to be seen by Sprout’s camera eyes. But the robot, built to handle what engineers call perturbation, quickly recovered its balance and kept walking, much like a clumsy person might.

“If you step in front of it, it won’t crash into you, it’ll plan a new path around you,” said Ana Pervan, a Fauna research scientist who works on the robot’s mapping and navigation. Among the first batch of Fauna’s 50 employees, and a fan of science fiction writer Isaac Asimov, she previously worked on self-driving cars but was excited about joining a startup building something that might one day serve as a robot butler.

“It’s cute, and it’s not too humanoid, and I think that actually makes it a lot more fun,” Pervan said. “It’s not verging on creepy or trying to be too human. It’s like your buddy, your pal, that’s a different thing than you.”

Starting a robot company can be unforgiving, especially one designing personal robots. One of the few successes, Roomba vacuum maker iRobot, had a decades-long run before filing for bankruptcy protection last month.

Most others didn’t last that long, like Anki, maker of the playful toy robot Cozmo, or Jibo, which went out of business less than a year after its dynamic talking speaker made the cover of Time Magazine’s 2017 “best inventions” edition.

“There were a lot of really brilliant attempts. I think the technology wasn’t quite there,” Cochran said. “I do think we’re right on the precipice now where you could build a companion that is present, engaging, delightful to be around, and can also move around a space in a way that nothing ever has before.”



Fauna Robotics' new robot, called Sprout, gets up from the prone position to demonstrate its maneuverability in New York, Wednesday, Jan. 14. (AP)

NEW YORK, Jan 28, (AP): Some people see the glass as half full and some as half empty. Marc Shaiman is something else entirely.

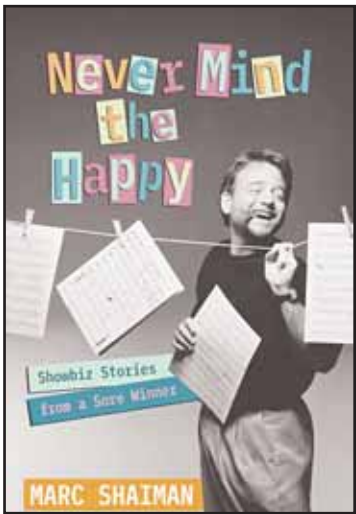
“I’m not even happy with the glass,” he says with a laugh.

The award-winning Hollywood and Broadway composer and lyricist cheerfully likes to call himself an “Eeyore” and “a card-carrying pessimist” despite many of his biggest dreams coming true.

“Just as soon as something good happens, something bad’s going to happen,” he tells The Associated Press. “I am always waiting for that other shoe to drop, and it inevitably drops.”

His career and personal ups and downs are on full display this winter with Tuesday’s publication of his memoir, “Never Mind the Happy: Showbiz Stories from a Sore Winner,” which is filled with funny stories from a man who has helped fuel popular movies and musicals for decades.

“I’ve been lucky enough to do a lot



This cover image released by Regalo Press shows ‘Never Mind the Happy: Showbiz Stories from a Sore Winner,’ a memoir by Marc Shaiman. (AP)

and I’ve been lucky enough to have an outrageous longevity. I thought, ‘Let me write it down, finally.’” he says.

The memoir charts the New Jersey-born musical prodigy’s rise from Bette Midler’s musical director in his teens to scoring such films as “Sleepless in Seattle” and “Mary Poppins Returns” and Broadway shows like “Hairspray” and “Catch Me If You Can.”

He’s worked with Billy Crystal, Martin Short, Luther Vandross, Raquel Welch and Rob Reiner, sparred with producer Scott Rudin and had a spat with Nora Ephron (“I’m certain she’s in heaven, telling all the angels she doesn’t like harps,” he writes). He also played at the White House and was a force in the early days of “Saturday Night Live.”

There was the time in 1999 that he got legendary composer Stephen Sondheim so high on pot at a party in his apartment that the iconic composer collapsed three times. “I’ve killed Stephen Sondheim,” he thought to himself. (Sondheim asked him to tell the

story only after he died.)

He tells the story of hearing Meryl Streep repeatedly working on a song for “Mary Poppins Returns.” Moved, he and his writing partner, Scott Williams, knocked on her door to say how impressed they were by her dedication to rehearse. “Well, guys, fear can be a powerful motivator,” she told them.

“I’m mostly just trying to show how human everyone is - even these bold-faced names,” Shaiman, a two-time Grammy winner and two-time Emmy winner, says in the interview.

Shaiman isn’t above mocking himself, as he does for becoming an inveterate pothead and cocaine user. “I should go into the Guinness Book of World Records for being the only person who put on weight while being a cocaine addict,” he writes.

There are stories about how a misunderstanding over an unpaid bill with Barbra Streisand left him shaken for days and the time he insulted Harry Connick Jr. (Both would later reconcile.)



Over 18 million live with RA which remains incurable

Researchers edge closer to preventing rheumatoid arthritis

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

□ □ □

By Kevin Deane

University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

More than 18 million people worldwide suffer from rheumatoid arthritis, including nearly 1.5 million Americans.

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is an autoimmune, inflammatory form of arthritis, meaning a person's immune system attacks their joints, causing substantial inflammation. This inflammation can cause pain, stiffness and swelling in the joints, and in many cases, patients report fatigue and a flu-like feeling.

If left untreated, rheumatoid arthritis can lead to damage of the joints. But even when treated, this condition can lead to significant disability. In highly active disease or advanced stages, patient may have difficulty performing daily tasks, such as preparing food, caring for children and getting dressed.

Up to now, this condition has been treated once patients have already developed symptoms. But a growing body of evidence suggests this disease can be identified earlier - and maybe even ultimately prevented.

I'm a physician specializing in rheumatoid arthritis and a researcher who has conducted a clinical trial on treatments for this condition. I believe this research is moving us toward being able to identify people who are at risk for rheumatoid arthritis before the disease fully develops, and to finding treatments that will delay or prevent it altogether. My hope is that this could lead to changes in how we manage rheumatoid arthritis in the next several years.

Currently, when someone visits their health care provider because they are experiencing joint pain or other symptoms

of an immune attack, health care providers can make a diagnosis by examining the joints for swelling. The health care provider will also run tests to find blood markers called autoantibodies, which help in confirming the diagnosis. While not all people with rheumatoid arthritis will have abnormal blood markers, the two autoantibodies that are seen in up to 80% of people with rheumatoid arthritis are rheumatoid factor and anti-cyclic citrullinated peptide.

But multiple studies have now confirmed that rheumatoid arthritis has a preclinical stage of development. This is a time about three to five years or longer, prior to the onset of swollen joints when markers like rheumatoid factor and anti-cyclic citrullinated peptide are detectable in the blood. The presence of these markers indicates that autoimmunity is occurring, yet the body and organs are still functioning well, and a person who is at risk of getting rheumatoid arthritis does not yet feel sick yet.

Now that researchers have identified this preclinical stage, health care providers can use markers such as autoantibodies and symptoms like prolonged early morning joint stiffness to identify people who are at risk for rheumatoid arthritis but do not yet have joint inflammation.

At this point, predicting future rheumatoid arthritis is still in the research stage, although the field is working toward established ways to test for risk for rheumatoid arthritis as a routine part of health care. This is akin to how cardiovascular disease risk is assessed through measuring cholesterol levels.

Because of advances in the ability to predict who may get rheumatoid arthritis in the future, researchers are now working on identifying treatments that can delay or prevent the full-blown condition from developing.

In particular, trials have been performed in people who tested positive for anti-cyclic citrullinated peptide, or who have other risk factors for rheumatoid arthritis. These risk factors include joint pain and subclinical joint inflammation, which is when an imaging study, like magnetic resonance

imaging, sees joint inflammation that can't be seen by a clinician examining the joints.

To date, almost all of these trials have used immune drugs that are commonly used to treat full-blown rheumatoid arthritis, such as methotrexate, hydroxychloroquine and rituximab. Researchers have been testing whether a short course of any of these drugs could lead to a lasting reset of the immune system and prevent rheumatoid arthritis from developing.

While there is not yet an approved drug for rheumatoid arthritis prevention, these studies offer hope that researchers are on track to find the right drug - as well as the right dosage and duration of that drug.

Some challenges remain to be addressed before preventive treatments become the norm in clinical care.

First, researchers need to better understand the biology of the preclinical stage of disease. Until recently, most studies have focused on patients with full-blown arthritis and generally ignored people at risk for developing the disease.

But now, researchers can use blood markers like anti-cyclic citrullinated peptide antibodies to identify those who are at risk much more easily. And a growing number of studies of people with this marker are informing how scientists understand the biology of rheumatoid arthritis development.

In particular, it is now apparent that the preclinical stage is marked by multiple circulating immune system abnormalities in cells, autoantibodies and inflammation. The hope is that researchers will find interventions that effectively target the immune system abnormalities driving the development of rheumatoid arthritis before the patient's joints begin to swell.

Researchers are also finding that the abnormalities in the immune system during the preclinical stage may be coming from sites in the body other than the joints. An emerging idea called the mucosal origins hypothesis posits that the early autoimmunity of rheumatoid arthritis is caused by inflammation at mucosal surfaces of the body, such as the gums,

the lungs and the gut. According to this theory, the joints are involved only later as the disease progresses.

More research is needed, but the mucosal origins hypothesis may help explain why periodontal disease, emphysema or other forms of lung disease and exposure to tobacco or forest fire smoke are risk factors for rheumatoid arthritis. It would also explain why certain bacteria have been associated with the disease. Future trials targeting interventions to a mucosal process could help researchers better understand the nature of this disease.

But while biomarkers like the anti-cyclic citrullinated peptide antibodies are strongly predictive for future rheumatoid arthritis, one difficulty remains: Some people who test positive for them never develop the full-blown disease.

Studies have shown that about 20% to 30% of people who are positive for anti-cyclic citrullinated peptide antibodies develop rheumatoid arthritis within two to five years, although the presence of combinations of risk factors can identify people who have a greater than 50% risk for developing the condition within one year.

This makes it difficult to find participants for clinical trials for rheumatoid arthritis prevention. If you can't predict who will get the disease, it's hard to know whether you're preventing it.

So far, researchers have tried to recruit people who have already come to their health care provider with early joint symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis but still no swollen joints. That has worked well, but there are likely far more people at risk for rheumatoid arthritis who have not yet sought care.

Since health care providers are not yet testing everyone for blood markers for rheumatoid arthritis, researchers will need larger, international networks that can test for risk factors like autoantibodies to identify candidates for participation in prevention trials.

More needs to be done, but it's exciting to see the field advancing toward the point where prevention may be part of routine clinical care for rheumatoid arthritis. (AP)



People take part in a group aquatic therapy session in the ocean in Dakar, Senegal, Saturday, Dec. 13, 2025. (AP)

New hope for pain relief

Aquagym brings healing to those with limited mobility

DAKAR, Senegal, Jan 28, (AP): The sun has not yet risen in Senegal's capital, Dakar, but about 100 people in swimsuits and life jackets already crowd a section of beach, ready for aquagym class.

In the chilly Atlantic, 63-year-old Aminata Sall is soon kicking in rhythm with others, foam noodles tucked under her arms. On the beach, people with limited mobility are buried knee-deep in the sand and gently rotate their torsos in a therapy session meant to ease pain.

Sall's doctor once warned her she could lose the ability to walk within five years because of rheumatoid arthritis, an autoimmune disease that causes pain, stiffness and swelling in the lining of joints and can cause severe damage if left untreated.

"The shock was enormous," she said. "I stayed at home for almost a year, doing nothing." Then one morning she wandered down to a beach in Dakar's Ngor neighborhood and saw people exercising in the water.

"I asked what they were doing, and they told me to try," she said. "I'm still walking."

Senegal's first aquagym program with its low-impact exercises has drawn praise from health professionals for helping people with reduced mobility caused by chronic illnesses such as heart disease, stroke and arthritis.

As life expectancy rises sharply across Africa, these diseases have become more common, often leaving older adults with pain and limited mobility. But prevention, diagnosis and rehabilitation services have not kept pace on a largely youthful continent whose public health systems prioritize infectious diseases, maternal care and children.

Many older people have little access to geriatricians or other doctors and tend to forego diagnostics or treatment to cut costs.

The aquagym emerged little over a decade ago as a rare, low-cost option to relieve pain and improve mobility.

After Sall was diagnosed with her autoimmune condition, she said her doctor told her she would need surgery at a cost of about \$10,000, which she could not afford. She was prescribed an anti-inflammatory drug, but it was later taken off the market due to complications.

"That's when I started losing hope," she said. "Some mornings, a blocked vertebra or swollen ankles would leave me unable to move all day."

In Senegal, most medical care is paid out of pocket. Public insurance coverage is limited, and private plans remain unaffordable for many. Costly procedures like surgery are often not covered.

"A lot of people don't come to us until things get really bad, and by then it's much harder and more expensive to treat them," said Dr. Seydina Ousmane Ba, director of the National Orthopedic Prosthetics and Rehabilitation Center in Dakar.

Khadija Wade, 76, has spinal stenosis, a degenerative condition that can compress and irritate the nerves in the spinal cord. She was diagnosed three years ago and her condition worsened after her husband died earlier this year.

"I became very sedentary. I could spend an entire month at home without walking," Wade said.

Many suggested she see a specialist in Italy or France, but visas are hard to obtain for many Senegalese and treatment abroad is costly.

Last month, Wade began aquagym classes on her doctor's recommendation. She said she is already seeing results.

"I came to my first session with a cane, but now I can walk without it," she said.

People with reduced mobility in West Africa face especially steep hurdles, said Clément Philit, director of Handicap International in Senegal. Public spaces and transport are often inaccessible, and specialized health care and rehab services are scarce, he said.

Cambodia bans 3 infant milk powder brands over 'toxins'

PHNOM PENH, Jan. 28, (Xinhua): Cambodia prohibited the sales and distribution of three kinds of Babybio Optima 1 infant milk powder over concerns it may be contaminated with the toxin cereulide.

Cereulide is a bacterial toxin that can cause nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain.

The Directorate-General of Consumer Protection, Competition and Fraud Repression (CCF) said in a statement that the three banned French products are Babybio Optima 1 800g infant formula with Lot No: 894408, Babybio Optima 1 800g infant formula with Lot No: 900035, and Babybio Optima 1 400g with Lot No: 900932.

The CCF urged traders and vendors to cooperate with its officials in the recall of the above-mentioned products.

"Parents and consumers must avoid purchasing the three types of the above-mentioned infant formula products and/or stop using them immediately," the statement said. "The move aims to ensure safety and health for infants and children."

The statement came after Comptoir Perfect Pharméd Co., Ltd., which is the exclusive distributor of Babybio products in Cambodia, notified on Monday that there may be the toxin cereulide in three types of Babybio Optima 1 baby milk products currently circulating in the Cambodian market.

Philippines and Vietnam urge vigilance

India says it has contained Nipah as Asian countries ramp up checks

NEW DELHI, Jan 28, (Agencies): Indian authorities said they had contained a Nipah virus outbreak after confirming two cases in the eastern state of West Bengal, as several Asian countries tightened health screenings and airport surveillance for travelers arriving from India.

India's Health Ministry said Tuesday that two Nipah cases had been detected since December and that all identified contacts had been quarantined and tested. The ministry did not release details about the patients but said 196 contacts had been traced and all tested negative.

"The situation is under constant monitoring, and all necessary public health measures are in place," the ministry said.

Nipah, a zoonotic virus first identified during a 1990s outbreak in Malaysia, spreads through fruit bats, pigs and human-to-human contact. There is no vaccine for the virus, which can cause raging fevers, convulsions and vomiting. The only treatment is supportive care to control complications and keep patients comfortable.

The virus has an estimated fatality rate of between 40% and 75%, according to the WHO, making it far more deadly than the coronavirus.

There were no reported cases of the virus outside India, but several Asian countries introduced or reinforced screening measures at airports as a precaution.

Indonesia and Thailand increased screening at major airports, with health declarations, temperature checks and visual monitoring for arriving passengers. Thailand's Department of Disease Control said thermal scanners had been installed at arrival gates for direct flights from West Bengal at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport.

Myanmar's Health Ministry advised against nonessential travel to West Bengal and urged travelers to seek immediate medical care if symptoms develop within 14 days of travel. It said fever surveillance introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic at airports has been intensified for passengers arriving from India, with laboratory testing capacity and medical supplies



In this photograph provided by the public relations department of the Suvarnabhumi International Airport, quarantine doctors watch thermal scanning of travelers from West Bengal, India at the Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Samut Prakarn, Thailand, on Sunday, Jan. 25. (AP)

readied.

Vietnam's Health Ministry on Tuesday urged strict food safety practices and directed local authorities to increase monitoring at border crossings, health facilities and communities, according to state media.

China said it was strengthening disease prevention measures in border areas. State media reported that health authorities had begun risk assessments and enhanced training for medical staff, while increasing monitoring and testing capabilities.

Earlier Nipah outbreaks were reported in West Bengal in 2001 and 2007, while recent cases have largely been detected in southern Kerala state. A major outbreak in 2018 killed at least 17 people in Kerala.

Meanwhile, the Philippines' Department of Health (DOH) on Wednesday urged Filipinos to remain vigilant amid reports of the spread of the Nipah virus abroad, even as it assured the public that the country is prepared to prevent its entry and transmission.

The DOH said the recent detection of confirmed human cases of Nipah Virus in West Bengal, India, is being

closely monitored globally.

It noted, however, that there are no international recommendations for travel restrictions at this time.

While the Philippines' borders remain open, the DOH said proactive border screening measures continue to be enforced to protect the public from the entry of infectious diseases. These include online health declarations before travel, on-arrival thermal scanning, and trained observation of travelers at ports of entry.

The DOH stressed that the Nipah virus is not new to the Philippines. It was detected as early as 2014 in the southern Philippines, where 17 cases were recorded.

Following the 2014 incident, no further Nipah virus cases were detected in the country, said the DOH.

Vietnam's Ministry of Health has urged local authorities to strengthen surveillance and promptly detect suspected cases of Nipah virus infection at border gates, medical facilities and in communities to prevent potential spread, especially during the Lunar New Year holiday and the upcoming festival season, local daily Suc Khoe & Doi Song reported on Wednesday.

Human judgment matters most in weather forecast

Weather apps can fall short during extreme weather

NEW YORK, Jan 28, (AP): Smartphone weather apps that summarize their forecasts with eye-popping numbers and bright icons may be handy during mild weather, but meteorologists say it's better to listen to human expertise during multi-faceted, dangerous winter storms like the one blowing through the US.

The multistate storm's combination of heavy snow, treacherous ice and subzero temperatures shows why it's best to seek out forecasters who can explain its nuances via local TV or radio newscasts, online livestreams or detailed websites, said meteorologists interviewed by The Associated Press. The data is changing rapidly before and during the storm, and the distance of a few miles can mean the difference between snow, sleet or dangerous freezing rain.

"Weather apps are really bad at storms that have multiple types of precipitation and it really makes messaging hard," said University of Georgia meteorology professor Marshall Shepherd, a past president of the American Meteorological Society. "Apps don't understand the details of why snow, sleet or freezing rain happens."

University of Oklahoma meteorology professor Jason Furtado and other experts said humans are important in these cases, especially those with local expertise.

"For extreme weather events, it is especially important to know there are human forecasters interpreting the data



This photo shows various weather apps arranged on a smartphone in Glenside, Pa., Thursday, Jan. 22. (AP)

and making the best localized forecasts for your area," Furtado said. "Unfortunately, many of the weather forecast apps use AI methods to either make the forecast or 'interpolate' from larger grids to your hometown, introducing the potential for significant errors."

But some apps can be useful, especially those that pair National Weather Service data with meteorologists' expertise, forecasters said. And they are definitely getting used right about now.

The Weather Channel app, which is seeing booming traffic this week, uses numerous models, data sources,

weather observers and staff, said James Belanger, vice president of its parent company, which also owns the Weather Channel and weather.com. That level of proficiency matters, he said.

"It's an all-hands-on-deck kind of approach that we take," Belanger said, adding that "not all weather apps are created equal."

Apps get much of their information from the National Weather Service and some companies augment it with proprietary information and the well-regarded European forecast models.

Resurgence

Measles cases rise across US

NEW YORK, Jan 28, (AP): The South Carolina measles outbreak has surpassed the recorded case count in Texas' 2025 outbreak, as health officials have logged almost 600 new cases in just over a month.

The outbreak centered in northwestern Spartanburg County is showing little sign of slowing down, with health officials saying Tuesday that 789 cases have been confirmed since September. Last year in Texas, 762 cases were reported, although experts believe that was likely an undercount.

A large outbreak on the Utah-Arizona border is also ongoing, and the United States' measles elimination status is at risk.

As of Thursday, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had confirmed 416 measles cases nationwide this year, nearly 20% of the 2025 case total. The other states with confirmed cases in 2026 are: California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia and Washington.

Last year was the nation's worst year for measles spread since 1991, according to the CDC. The US confirmed 2,255 cases and nearly 50 different outbreaks. Three people died, all of them unvaccinated, including two children in Texas.

Measles is caused by a highly contagious virus that's airborne and spreads easily when an infected person breathes, sneezes or coughs. A vaccine can prevent it.

Measles first infects the respiratory tract, then spreads throughout the body, causing a high fever, runny nose, cough, red, watery eyes and a rash. Most people recover, but infection can lead to dangerous complications such as pneumonia, blindness, brain swelling and death.

The CDC defines an outbreak as three or more related cases.



# OKC avoids first three-game skid of season

Pistons hold off Nuggets

**OKLAHOMA CITY, Jan 28, (AP):** Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 29 points and the short-handed Oklahoma City Thunder beat the New Orleans Pelicans 104-95 to avoid their first three-game skid of the season.

Chet Holmgren had 20 points, 14 rebounds and five blocks for NBA-best Oklahoma City (38-10), which had lost back-to-back home games for the first time this season. Isaiah Joe added 17 points.

The Thunder were missing starters Jalen Williams, Isaiah Hartenstein and Cason Wallace and key reserve Alex Caruso with injuries.

Gilgeous-Alexander shot 8 of 22 from the field but went 13 of 14 from the foul line. He scored at least 20 points for the 118th consecutive game, the second-longest streak in NBA history.

Zion Williamson led New Orleans with 21 points on 8-of-11 shooting and 11 rebounds. Saddiq Bey added 16 points and 13 rebounds for the Pelicans, who had won two straight.

Tempers flared in the closing minutes. First, Bey and Jaylin Williams got tangled up and were assessed technical fouls. With 9 seconds left, Jeremiah Fears, who played in college at Oklahoma, and Lu Dort grabbed each other's jerseys before being separated. Fears then ran after Dort and players from both teams had to be separated.

**Pistons 109, Nuggets 107**

In Denver, Tobias Harris scored 22 points, including two free throws with 2 seconds left, and the Detroit Pistons held off a late Denver rally to beat the travel-weary Nuggets.

Cade Cunningham had with 22 points and 11 assists for Detroit, which has won nine of 11 and leads the Eastern Conference by 5 1/2 games over Boston.

Jamal Murray had 24 points and 10 assists but missed two free throws in the final seconds. With the Nuggets down 107-104, Murray was fouled on a 3-point attempt with 4 seconds left and missed the first foul shot. Harris was fouled and made both free throws. Murray went to the line again with 0.7 seconds remaining but missed the second foul shot.

Jonas Valanciunas returned from a one-game absence to finish with 16 points and 16 rebounds for Denver, which had been scheduled to play at the Memphis Grizzlies on Sunday. The game was postponed because of the winter storm that hit most of the country, and the Nuggets were stranded in Memphis until Monday morning.

**Clippers 111, Jazz 99**

In Salt Lake City, Kawhi Leonard scored 21 points, James Harden had 16 points and 10 assists, and the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Utah Jazz for their ninth win in 10 games.

Kris Dunn added 14 points and a season-best five steals for the Clippers (22-24), who have the best record in the NBA since Christmas. They have won 16 of their last 19 games - immediately after going 3-16 in their previous 19.

The Clippers took control during a 10-2 run in the third quarter powered by Dunn's two steals and layups, along with a 3-pointer that made it 73-61. Los Angeles led by double figures the rest of the way.

Utah's Lauri Markkanen returned after missing seven games due to illness to score 19 points on 5-for-15 shooting.

Ace Bailey scored 20 points and Brice Sensabaugh added 13 but the Jazz (15-32) have dropped seven of their last eight games. It was just the second time in the last 30 games that Utah failed to reach 100 points.

**Knicks 103, Kings 87**

In New York, Jalen Brunson scored 28 points and the New York Knicks dominated the fourth quarter to beat the Sacramento Kings 103-87 on Tuesday night for their third straight victory.

Mikal Bridges added 18 points and Karl-Anthony Towns had 17 points and 11 rebounds for the Knicks, who outscored the Kings 31-15 in the final period after the game was tied at 72 after three.

DeMar DeRozan scored 34 points for the Kings, who lost their sixth straight. Russell Westbrook added 14 points, but he and DeRozan combined to go 3 for 16 from 3-point range on a night when Sacramento finished 5 for 30 (16.7%).

Mike Brown earned his first victory as Knicks coach against the team that fired him last season, two years after he was NBA Coach of the Year after leading Sacramento to the 2023 playoffs.

**'No flag or anthem'**

## Only 20 athletes from Russia and Belarus cleared for Winter Games

LAUSANNE, 28, (AP): A total of 13 Russian athletes are now set to compete as neutral individuals at the Milan Cortina Olympics after invitations from the IOC were confirmed for Alpine skiers and lugers.

Four years ago, the Russian team was more than 200 athletes at the 2022 Beijing Winter Games, which closed four days before Russia's full military invasion of Ukraine which led to its exclusion from much of international sports.

Seven Belarusian athletes have now been invited to the Winter Games that open next week on Feb. 6. The Russians and Belarusians will not have their national identity of team colors, flag or anthem and cannot take part in the opening ceremony athlete parades.

Neutral status can be approved by the International Olympic Committee for athletes in individual sports who were judged to have not actively supported their countries' war on Ukraine, and who are not contracted to the military or state security agencies.

Two Russian athletes and one Belarusian have been invited to compete in Alpine skiing at the Olympics though none is a realistic medal contender.

Yulia Pleshkova has started three World Cup three races this season - with a best result of 40th in a downhill - and is due to compete later this week in Crans-Montana, Switzerland.

Simon Efimov and Maria Shkanova of Belarus compete in slalom though neither has qualified for a second run in a World Cup race this month.



President of the Milan Cortina 2026 foundation, Giovanni Malagò, arrives at the hotel of the Olympic Family ahead of the opening ceremony for the 2026 Milan Cortina winter Olympics, in Milan, Italy. (AP)

They could try to qualify for the Olympics after a Dec. 2 ruling at the Court of Arbitration for Sport overturned a blanket ban by the International Ski and Snowboard Federation imposed within days of the war in Ukraine intensifying in February 2022.

In luge, the IOC said it invited Russians Daria Olesik and Pavel Repilov to compete at the sliding track in Cortina.

Olesik was the first Russian to start a luge World Cup race in almost four years when she competed last month at Lake Placid, New York.

Repilov was a silver medalist in

boy's singles at the 2020 Lausanne Winter Youth Olympics.

The best Russian medal prospects at the Olympics are figure skaters Adelii Petrosian and Petr Gumennik.

Russia is still excluded, as it was at the 2024 Paris Summer Games, from team sports like ice hockey.

At the 2022 Beijing Olympics, Russian athletes won 32 medals including five gold competing at ROC - the acronym for Russian Olympic Committee, which was a neutral title as punishment in the long-running scandal of state doping.



Oklahoma City Thunder forward Jaylin Williams (6) shoots against New Orleans Pelicans center Derik Queen (22) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Oklahoma City. (AP)

**Suns 106, Nets 102**

In Phoenix, Mark Williams scored 27 points, Dillon Brooks had 26 and the short-handed Suns beat the Brooklyn Nets in a game that featured a scuffle late in the fourth quarter.

After Brooks put the Suns ahead 104-102 on two free throws with 1:23 remaining, a steal by the Suns' Royce O'Neale led to a scramble for the ball in the paint. Brooks tried to wrestle the ball away from Ziaire Williams after the whistle, and the Nets' Egor Demin pushed Brooks.

Several players started jawing at each other and assistant coaches from both sides gathered on the floor as officials tried to restore order. Demin, Mann and Michael Porter Jr. received technical fouls for the Nets, and the Suns' Grayson Allen and O'Neale also got technicals. Brooks did not receive a technical after getting one earlier in the game.

Allen added 18 points for the short-handed Suns, who ended a two-game skid. Devin Booker missed his second straight game after rolling his right ankle in a loss at Atlanta on Friday night, and Jalen Green also sat with a nagging right hamstring injury.

Porter finished with a season-high 36 points for the Nets, who have lost six straight and 14 of 16. Demin added 15 points, but Brooklyn struggled to find secondary scoring.

In Philadelphia, Paul George scored 32 points, Joel Embiid had 18 of his 29 points in the first quarter and the Philadelphia 76ers rolled to a 139-122 victory over the short-handed Milwaukee Bucks.

**76ers 139, Bucks 122**

Tyrese Maxey added 22 points for the 76ers, who were blown out a night earlier at Charlotte with Embiid and George sidelined.

Myles Turner scored 31 points for Milwaukee, which lost its third straight and sixth of seven. Two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo sat out with a right calf strain that the team said will sideline him indefinitely.

George hit back-to-back 3-pointers early in the fourth quarter to help the 76ers extend their 11-point lead to start the period to 18 points. In their 130-93 loss to the Hornets, the Sixers trailed by 50 points entering the fourth.

The game at Charlotte was rescheduled to 3 p.m. EDT because of winter weather, but the Sixers still didn't make it back to Philadelphia until after 1 a.m. Tuesday.

**Wizards 115, Portland 111**

In Washington, Alex Sarr had 29 points, 12 rebounds and six blocked shots, and the Washington Wizards snapped a nine-game losing streak with a 115-111 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers.

It was Washington's first home victory over Portland since Jan. 16, 2017.

The Wizards led 112-106 when Shaedon Sharpe cut the lead in half with a 3-pointer. After Bub Carrington tossed up an air ball for Washington, Sharpe's dunk with 20.5 seconds left cut the lead to one.

Kyshawn George made one of two free throws with 15.5 seconds to play, putting the Wizards up 113-111. After a timeout, Sharpe's contested jumper missed, and Khris Middleton's free throws made it a four-point game.

Sharpe scored 31 points for Portland, which lost despite a 69-46 advantage in rebounds.

**Three Players score their first international goals**

## US women extend shutout streak to 5 with convincing victory over Chile

SANTA BARBARA, Calif., Jan 28, (AP): Croix Bethune, Jameese Joseph and Emily Sams all scored their first international goals and the United States went on to beat Chile 5-0.

Emma Sears and Trinity Rodman also scored for the United States, which hasn't conceded a goal in five matches.

Coach Emma Hayes went with a completely different starting lineup in the match at UC Santa Barbara than the one she used on Saturday for the team's 6-0 victory over Paraguay in Carson, California. Players on the roster averaged 5.2 national team appearances, fewest for a lineup since 2001.

"I think in both games, the team, regardless of its inexperience as a collective, regardless of the connections that are there because they haven't played together before, I think they showed an awful lot of maturity in the performance, and that's all I can ask from them," Hayes said. "They always do me proud. But I'm impressed by everybody's approach."

Bethune, who plays for the Washington Spirit, opened the scoring in the 18th minute. Chile goalkeeper Ryann Torrero came out to stop Bethune, who was rushing at the goal alone, but the strike got past her.

Joseph, who plays for the Chicago Stars, earned her first start for the United States and scored in the 26th minute. Sams, serving as captain, made it 3-0 in the 33rd minute with a goal off a cross from Sears.

The United States made it 4-0 just 28 seconds into the second half with a goal



Croix Bethune

from Sears that went to the far post and into the upper corner. Rodman scored in her second straight match in the 68th minute, just five minutes after she came on.

Afterward, Rodman ran to the bench and danced, urging Hayes to join her, and the coach reluctantly obliged with a laugh. Rodman then urged the crowd to cheer.

"I'm proud of myself. I told you guys I was going to do it and I did it. I'm just really happy and happy that Emma was confident enough to do it with me," Rodman said.

Midfielder Riley Jackson and defender Ayo Oke both appeared in their first international match. Three players - forwards Reilyn Turner and Maddie

Dahlen and midfielder Sally Menti - made their U.S. debuts against Paraguay.

The roster did not include U.S. players based in Europe because they are in the middle of their seasons. It also did not include Gotham FC players, who are in London for the semifinals of the first FIFA Women's Champions Cup.

The match against Chile concludes the U.S. team's January training camp, as Hayes looks to solidify her player pool for the upcoming SheBelieves Cup, starting in March, and Women's World Cup qualifying at the end of the year.

"I don't think you can really look at this camp as like 'They didn't do their job, they're not as good as we think they should be,' because after all we're coming off an offseason of a lot of players not playing, some players playing, a bunch of new faces," Rodman said. "I stayed fit and ready in the offseason because of the injuries I've dealt with, and I felt really good out there."

The last meeting between the United States and Chile was a 3-0 U.S. victory at the 2019 World Cup. Chile, ranked No. 47 in the world, has made just one World Cup appearance.

The United States previously held a training camp at UC Santa Barbara's Harder Stadium ahead of the 1991 World Cup, which included scrimmages against the Gauchos and a West Coast all-star team. That U.S. team, including Mia Hamm and Michelle Akers, went on to win the World Cup.

## UConn improves to 10-0 in Big East after topping Providence

STORRS, Conn., Jan 28, (AP): Tarris Reed Jr. scored seven of his 19 points in the final five minutes as second-ranked UConn beat Providence 87-8 to become the first team to open 10-0 in Big East play in seven years.

Solo Ball had 17 points, Silas Demary Jr. added 15 points and six assists, and Eric Reibe had 14 points and eight rebounds for UConn. The Huskies opened a season 20-1 for the sixth time, but the first since 1998-99. Villanova in 2018-19 was the last team to start 10-0 in the Big East.

Malachi Smith, 1 for 8 from 3-point range in his previous 13 games, made his first four and had 12 points and seven assists as the Huskies won their 16th straight game.

Jamier Jones had 20 points and Jaylin Sellers added 18 for Providence (9-12, 2-8).

Providence trailed by 10 points in the first half but cut it to 67-66 before a runner by Alex Karaban and a 3-pointer by Ball made it a six-point UConn lead. With Providence trailing by three, Reed scored UConn's next five points.

UConn led 41-37 at halftime.

UConn played without freshman guard Braylon Mullins, who suffered a concussion in the win over Villanova.

va. Providence's leading scorer, Jason Edwards, missed his fifth consecutive game with a foot injury.

Eian Elmer scored a career-high 30 points and No. 24 Miami (Ohio) improved to 21-0, rallying in the second half and then holding on for an 86-84 victory over UMass.

Miami is one of two unbeaten teams in Division I after fifth-ranked Nebraska lost 75-72 at No. 3 Michigan earlier Tuesday night. Top-ranked Arizona is 21-0 following an 86-83 win over No. 13 BYU on Monday night.

The victory also tied the RedHawks with the 2001-02 Kent State squad for the longest in-season winning streak in Mid-American Conference history.

Elmer was 9 of 14 from the field, including 6 for 11 on 3-pointers. The junior shooting guard, who also grabbed seven rebounds, had 18 points in the first half.

Peter Suder added 13 points and nine assists. Freshman guard Justin Kirby also scored 13 as Miami improved to 9-0 in conference play.

Leonardo Bettiol had 22 points and 16 rebounds for UMass (13-9, 4-6), which had won four of five. Marcus Banks Jr. scored 18 and Daniel Hankins-Sanford added 16.

Miami extended its lead to 82-75 with 2:07 remain-

ing before the Minutemen made one final charge. K'Jei Parker sank three free throws with 8.8 seconds remaining after getting fouled by Kirby at the top of the key.

Suder was fouled with 4.4 seconds left. He hit the first free throw, but missed the second. Bettiol grabbed the rebound and passed to Isaiah Placide, whose desperation shot from halfcourt went off the glass, allowing the RedHawks to earn another close win after prevailing in overtime in their previous two games.



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A file photo of players challenging for the ball.

# Kuwait Club wraps up Türkiye training camp

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

ISTANBUL, Jan 28: Kuwait Club concludes its overseas training camp in Türkiye today with its fourth friendly match against Istanbul Municipality, ahead of the team's return home next Saturday. During the camp, the team played three previous friendly matches against Bursa Sport, Gebze, and IBB, using the opportunities to refine tactics and team coordination. Kuwait Club is now preparing to host the 4th West Asian Clubs Volleyball Championship from February 4 to 14. The host team was drawn into Group B alongside Lebanese club Shabab Al-Batroun, Qatar's Al-Wakra, and Bahrain's Al-Ahli. Kuwait's second representative, Burgan, was placed in

Group C with Saudi Arabia's Al-Itihad, Oman's Al-Seeb, and Bahrain's Dar Klib. Group A consists of Qatar's Al-Rayyan, Oman's Ma-jees, and Iraq's Ghaz Al-Janoub. Assistant coach Dr. Abdullah Talib praised the camp's smooth execution, saying it followed the plan set by the club's management and technical staff. He noted that players closely followed Brazilian coach Carlos Schwanke's instructions to maximize the benefits of the camp and friendly matches, ahead of competing for the West Asian title at home in front of their loyal fans. The team features two foreign professionals, Estonian Vino and Canadian Hogue, with Brazilian Costa joining from Kazma. Additionally, Abdelaziz Al-Anzi returns from his loan at Al-Nasr to reinforce the squad.



Al-Mulla stable representatives receive recognition.

# Al-Nawader's Mukafih wins the prestigious Al-Mulla Cup

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Mukafih of Al-Nawader Stable emerged victorious in the late Mohammed Safah Al-Mulla Local Production Cup after a highly competitive race over 1,400 meters, clocking a winning time of 1:29.45. The race was part of the 13th horse-racing meeting held at the Hunting and Equestrian Club. The cup was handed over to the winners by jockey Abdulkarim Mohammed Safah Al-Mulla, while Sheikh Sabah Fahad Al-Nasser, Chairman of the Higher Authority for Horse Racing and Secretary-General of the Hunting and Equestrian Club, presented a commemorative shield to the leaders of Al-Mulla Stable. Speaking after the race, Abdulkarim Al-Mulla said his deep passion for equestrian sport stems from his grandfather, the honorary president and head of Al-Mulla Stable, Safah Abdulkarim Nasser Al-Mulla. He recalled accompanying his grandfather and father at the historic Al-Mulla Stable during the Iraqi invasion, stressing that the stable is among Kuwait's oldest and played a key role in establishing the country's equestrian heritage. He added that horse racing remains a cherished family pursuit, describing equestrian sport as both enjoyable and inspiring. Al-Mulla noted that he represents the third generation at the stable, following his grandfather and father, and that the family continues to pass its love for horses from one generation to the next, supported by his uncles, retired Major General Abdullah Safah Al-Mulla and Mahmoud Al-Mulla.

# Sheikh Mubarak hails Sheikh Al-Nasser role

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Deputy President of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah, has congratulated Kuwait Olympic Committee President Sheikh Fahd Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on his appointment as Vice President of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) for the West Asia region, following a decision by the OCA Executive Board. In a press statement, Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah described the appointment as well deserved, saying it reflects the high level of confidence placed in Kuwaiti sports leadership across the Asian continent. He noted that the new role will further strengthen Kuwait's presence on the Asian sports stage and reinforce its active role in Olympic decision-making. He added that the selection of Sheikh Fahd Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah is recognition of his efforts and contributions to the development of the Olympic movement, wishing him continued success in his new responsibilities in service of both Kuwaiti and Asian sport. Meanwhile, President of the Sports Media Coordinators Association, Manawar Al-Mutairi, congratulated Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al-Thani, President of



Deputy President of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah

the Qatar Olympic Committee, on his official election by acclamation as President of the Olympic Council of Asia. He also extended his congratulations to Sheikh Fahd Nasser Al-Sabah on his appointment as Vice President of the Council for the Asia region.

# Abraham completes Villa return from Besiktas

# Traoré joins West Ham and says movie taught him about passion of club's fans

LONDON, Jan 28, (Agencies): Spain winger Adama Traoré switched London clubs on Wednesday by joining West Ham from Fulham - and said a movie about his new team taught him about the passion of its fans. "I've been seeing West Ham for a long time," the 30-year-old Traoré said. "It's a massive club, a massive fanbase. I've been watching since I was young, when I watched a film about West Ham. I know about the fans and how much passion they have." Traoré was likely talking about "Green Street," a fictional 2005 movie that explored the culture of hooliganism in English soccer through a fan group linked to West Ham. Green Street was the name of a road leading up to West Ham's old stadium, Upton Park. The club now plays at the Olympic Stadium, where Traoré will be united again with West Ham manager Nuno Espírito Santo. They previously worked together at Wolverhampton. The powerful right winger came through Barcelona's academy and has already played for four English teams - Aston Villa, Middlesbrough, Wolves and Fulham. "He will give us a different option in attacking areas," Nuno said.



Aston Villa's Tammy Abraham runs during a training session in Tamworth, England, Wednesday Jan. 28, 2026, one day ahead of their Europa League soccer match against Salzburg. (AP)

million euros to secure his transfer. Aston Villa manager Unai Emery has been searching for additional striking options to support Ollie Watkins and has maintained a long-standing interest in Abraham. The forward previously spent the 2018-19 season on loan at Villa, playing a key role in their promotion from the Championship with 26 goals in 40 appearances. "Some clubs play a big part in your journey and stay with you," Abraham said. "I've scored goals, faced challenges, and grown as a player and as a man. I'm back at Aston Villa, ready to work and give everything," he added. As part of the deal, teenage Villa midfielder Yasin Ozcan, who has been on loan at Anderlecht this season, will join Besiktas.

# Pre-Olympics GS glory for Meillard as Braathen misses second victory



Switzerland's Loic Meillard, centre, winner of alpine ski, men's World Cup giant slalom, poses with second placed Brazil's Lucas Pinheiro Braathen, left, and third placed France's Alban Elezi Cannafarina, in Schladming, Austria. (AP)

# Unheralded Elezi Cannafarina improves from eighth position to third

SCHLADMING, Austria, Jan 28, (AP): Loic Meillard has won the last men's World Cup giant slalom before the Olympics, denying Lucas Pinheiro Braathen what would have been his second victory for Brazil. Pinheiro Braathen narrowly led Meillard after Tuesday's opening run but couldn't hold on to his advantage after the Swiss skier posted the second-fastest time in the final run. Last November, Pinheiro Braathen won a slalom in Finland to give Brazil its maiden victory in a top-level ski race. Meillard won the race under the floodlights on the icy Planai course by 0.73 seconds for his second World Cup victory of the season and ninth overall. "It's always been a slope that I liked. And good memories from the first victory in GS and

to win again here is amazing," said Meillard, who also won the event three years ago. "I know the form is getting better and better, I would say, in the last few weeks," said the Swiss skier, whose best Olympic result is fifth from the 2022 slalom. Pinheiro Braathen was fastest in the opening run to prove again he is an Olympic medal contender for Brazil not just in slalom. Pinheiro Braathen has two GS wins from the time he was competing for Norway but is chasing his first victory in the discipline since his switch to the Brazilian ski federation in 2024. "I really had the feeling that the victory would be mine today, I had such a good feeling," said Pinheiro Braathen, who has racked up five podium results in GS - all second places - since his nation switch, including three in the current season. "But it is OK, I didn't find the speed in the second run. I'm impressed with Loic." Pinheiro Braathen stepped away from the sport in October 2023 following a dispute with

the Norwegian ski federation over his personal marketing rights, but returned a year later to represent Brazil, his mother's native country. Unheralded Alban Elezi Cannafarina clocked the fastest second-run and the Frenchman improved from eighth position to third, 0.90 behind Meillard, for his first career podium. Elezi Cannafarina was the 2023 junior world champion and had an 11th place from a GS in Norway last March as his best World Cup result so far. His stunning final run bumped Olympic GS champion Marco Odermatt off the podium and into fourth, 0.36 behind the Frenchman. Odermatt lost time early in his second run when he struggled for balance and nearly skied out with his right leg in the air, though the Swiss star ultimately managed to stay in the course. Odermatt remained in the lead of the GS standings with 450 points, 103 clear of Pinheiro Braathen, with two more races scheduled after the Olympics.

# 10-man Hoffenheim maintains perfect 2026 start

BERLIN, Jan 28, (Xinhua): Werder Bremen's slump deepened as Hoffenheim preserved its unbeaten start to the new year with a composed 2-0 away victory, even after being reduced to 10 men in a rescheduled Bundesliga matchday 16 fixture at the Weserstadion. The contest brought together two sides moving in opposite directions, with Bremen entering the night as one of the league's most out-of-form sides and Hoffenheim arriving unbeaten in 2026. The hosts, forced into several defensive changes, began with early intent and nearly struck inside the opening minute when Justin Njinmah broke clear, only to squander a promising opportunity. Hoffenheim gradually imposed control but initially struggled to stretch a compact Bremen back line. Clear chances were scarce, aside from an early headed effort from Andrej Kramaric. Just as the half appeared set to end scoreless, Alexander Prass produced a decisive moment of quality, drilling a long-range effort into the top corner for his first Bundesliga goal in the 44th minute. The visitors' task became significantly harder shortly after the restart when Wouter Burger was



Hoffenheim's Andrej Kramaric, right, and Bremen's Karim Coulibaly fight for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between Werder Bremen and TSG 1899 in Bremen, Germany. (AP)

sent off following a VAR review for a reckless challenge in midfield. Bremen briefly sensed momentum, but Hoffenheim responded with ruthless efficiency. From a partially cleared delivery, Gris-

cha Promel struck a controlled volley to double the lead, a goal that stood after another VAR check. Christian Ilzer immediately reshaped his side into a compact defensive unit, and Hoffenheim defended in numbers. Bremen thought it had pulled one back just past the hour mark, only for Romano Schmid's close-range finish to be ruled out for offside. Despite sustained pressure and territorial dominance, the hosts lacked conviction in front of goal, with late chances falling to Keke Topp but failing to change the scoreline. Hoffenheim saw out the closing stages with composure to claim a fourth straight league win of the calendar year. The result leaves Hoffenheim third with 39 points in the Bundesliga standings, strengthening its push for direct UEFA Champions League qualification, while Bremen remains 15th, only three points above the relegation play-off zone after extending its winless run to nine matches. In the other rescheduled match from the 16th round, relegation-threatened St Pauli held fourth-placed RB Leipzig to a 1-1 draw.

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Corinthian's players celebrate in front of their supporters after winning the Women's Champions Cup semifinal soccer match between Gotham FC and Corinthians in London. Brazil's Corinthians defeated Gotham FC 1-0 in Women's Champions Cup semifinal. (AP)

# Sports

Kuwait clashes with Japan for bronze at Asian Handball Championship

## Qatar and Bahrain battle for continental glory

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The 22nd Asian Men's Handball Championship, serving as the 2024 World Cup qualifiers in Germany, concludes today at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex. Kuwait will face Japan at 4:00 p.m. in the bronze medal match, ahead of the final at 6:00 p.m. between defending champion Qatar and Bahrain. Earlier, China will meet Hong Kong at 2:00 p.m. to decide ninth and tenth place.

In the tournament standings so far, South Korea finished fifth, Saudi Arabia sixth, Iraq seventh, and the UAE eighth.

Bahrain booked spot in the final with a 35-25 semifinal win over Japan and aims to claim its first Asian Championship title. Qatar advanced to the final after a thrilling 27-26 extra-time victory over Kuwait, seeking its seventh continental crown.



A Kuwaiti player makes a goal attempt during the semifinals match between Kuwait and Qatar.

Kuwait's bronze medal showdown with Japan carries its own significance. The "Azraq" has secured

third place four times in the history of the championship—in 1979, 1983, 1987, and 1989.

South Korea holds the record for the most Asian titles with nine, followed by Qatar with six, Kuwait with four, and Japan with two.

The Asian representatives for the 2027 World Cup in Germany will be Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and Japan.

This marks the fourth time Kuwait has hosted the Asian Championship, following editions in 1977, 1995, and 2020. Kuwait's national team has lifted the Asian title four times: in 1995, 2002, 2004, and 2006.

Mishal Al-Qabandi, Assistant Treasurer of the Kuwait Handball Federation and Head of the Media Committee for the championship, praised the event's success, highlighting both the extensive media coverage from Gulf, Arab, and Asian outlets and the tournament's smooth organization.

Al-Qabandi emphasized that such success was made possible thanks to strong government support and the dedication of the federation's staff and committees.

## Kuwait aims to bounce back against Thailand at the AFC Futsal Asian Cup



Kuwaitis celebrate during the opening match against Vietnam.

JAKARTA, Jan 28: Kuwait looks to recover from its opening loss when it takes on Thailand at 1:00 p.m. today in its second Group B match at the AFC Futsal Asian Cup finals in Jakarta, Indonesia.

In the group's other fixture, Vietnam will face Lebanon. In the opening round, Kuwait narrowly lost to Vietnam 5-4, while Thailand secured a 2-0 win over Lebanon.

The clash with Thailand offers Kuwait a crucial chance to regain momentum and strengthen its bid to advance from the group stage.

## Djokovic survives quarterfinal drama to meet Sinner in semis



Jannik Sinner of Italy plays a forehand return to Ben Shelton of the U.S. during their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

### World No.2 Swiatek flames out

MELBOURNE, Jan 28, (Xinhua): World number two Jannik Sinner's next step towards a third straight Australian Open title will go through a fortunate Novak Djokovic, while world No.2 Iga Swiatek crashed out after a quarterfinal capitulation against Elena Rybakina on Wednesday.

Quarterfinal action wrapped up in much cooler conditions compared to the heatwave that had scorched Melbourne on Tuesday.

Sinner, a four-time Grand Slam champion, defeated American eighth seed Ben Shelton 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 to record his 19th straight victory at Melbourne Park.

Sinner hit 33 winners and his consistency ensured Shelton made more than double the number of unforced errors.

After two hours and 23 minutes, Sinner held his arms aloft in steely celebration as he locked in a fifth Grand Slam semifinal against 38-year-old Djokovic.

"We are still lucky to have Novak here playing incredible tennis at his age. Hopefully, it will be a great battle," Sinner said.

Another salivating semifinal at Rod Laver Arena awaits, after the Italian had usurped 10-time tournament winner Djokovic in 2024.

Fourth seed Djokovic was extremely lucky to move forward after fifth-seeded Lorenzo Musetti retired hurt when leading by two sets.

The Italian was headed for the biggest win of his career after rolling to a 6-4, 6-3 lead before severely struggling with an injury to his upper right leg.

He battled on but was severely limited with his movement before pulling the pin at 1-3 in the third set.



Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan waves after defeating Iga Swiatek of Poland in their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

Just before the dramatic turn of events, Djokovic needed a medical timeout after the second set and had his right foot strapped up due to a blister.

"I feel really sorry for him. He was a far better player, I was on my way home," said Djokovic, who also had a walkover in the fourth round after 16th seed Jakub Mensik pulled out injured.

"These things happen in sport. It's so unfortunate. He should have been a winner today." The 23-year-old Italian became the first player in the professional era to retire in a major quarterfinal after winning the first two sets.

"I felt it at the beginning of the second set. I felt there was something strange in my right leg," he said.

"I continued to play because I was playing really, really, really well, but I was feeling the pain

increasing, and the problem was not going away.

"To be forced to retire, it is something that, of course. It's really painful." In the women's draw, six-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek will have to wait longer for an elusive Australian Open title after falling well short against Rybakina.

The 2022 Wimbledon champion was all over her slumping opponent and thoroughly deserved her 7-5, 6-1 victory in one hour and 35 minutes.

While Swiatek could never get going in Melbourne, Rybakina has been near flawless and will enter the semifinals having not dropped a set.

"Really pleased with the win. We know each other pretty well and I was trying to stay aggressive," Kazakhstan's Rybakina said.

Rybakina will face a similarly in-form Jessica Pegula, who strolled to a comfortable 6-2, 7-6 (1) win over Amanda Anisimova in an all-American quarterfinal.

The 2024 US Open finalist remains on track for an elusive grand slam triumph after whacking 20 winners and she has also not dropped a set in the tournament.

It was the end of the road for fourth-seeded Anisimova, who was unable to reach a third straight grand slam final.

She could not rediscover the clean ball striking that was a feature of her fourth round victory over China's Wang Xinyu.

"It's awesome. I've been able to go deep in the US Open, but I feel like I play well here and I like the conditions," Pegula said.

Women's semifinal action will be held on Thursday, with top seed Aryna Sabalenka squaring off against 12th seed Elina Svitolina before the late night match between Rybakina and Pegula at Rod Laver Arena.

China's Zhang Shuai and Elise Mertens of Belgium, the fourth seeds, feature in the women's doubles semifinals.

### Malaysian soccer faces turmoil

## FAM executive committee resigns over player scandal

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, Jan 28, (AP): The entire executive committee of the Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) resigned Wednesday after a scandal involving the naturalization of seven foreign-born players led to FIFA sanctions, a court appeal and intensified scrutiny of the country's soccer governance.

All committee members, elected 11 months ago for the 2025-2029 term, stepped down with immediate effect in a unanimous and voluntary decision in order to protect the association's credibility.

The mass resignation followed FIFA's decision last September to fine the association about \$450,000 and suspending the seven players for a year after determining that fake documents had been filed to support their naturalization. The players - Facundo Garcés, Rodrigo Holgado, Imanol Machuca, João Figueiredo, Gabriel Palmero, Jon Irazabal and Héctor Hevel- were also fined individually.

The seven, who originate from Argentina, Brazil, the Netherlands and Spain, went on to play for Malaysia, including in a qualifying match for the 2027 Asian Cup that Malaysia won against Vietnam.

Malaysian officials had maintained that all seven players were eligible under FIFA rules because each had a grandparent born in Malaysia. FIFA, however, said its investigators obtained original documents from the players' countries of origin that contradicted those claims.

In a statement Wednesday, FAM said the committee had been elected for a four-year mandate covering the 2025-2029 term and the decision to resign after just 11 months demonstrated that service to Malaysian soccer takes precedence over holding office.

The mass resignation was intended to safeguard the association's reputation and mitigate further consequences for Malaysian football, it said. It would allow FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation to review governance, administrative and procedural matters within FAM, and ensure any reforms can be undertaken without distraction or perceived conflicts of interest, it said.

"The executive committee recognizes the importance of collective responsibility and the need to act in a manner that protects the integrity and standing of the association," the statement said.

FAM said the move was aimed at restoring confidence among supporters, stakeholders and the wider football community, emphasizing that institutional credibility is essential to the stability and future development of the sport in Malaysia. The outgoing leadership will fully cooperate with FIFA, the AFC and other stakeholders. No timeline was announced for interim leadership or new elections.

Acting FAM president Mohamad Yusoff Mahadi told local media that committee secretary-general Noor Azman Rahman will continue overseeing day-to-day operations of the governing body, which is expected to convene a congress to appoint a new executive committee.

After FIFA rejected FAM's appeal 1, it took the case to sports highest court based in Switzerland. FAM said Tuesday that the Court of Arbitration for Sport had temporarily halted the FIFA-imposed ban on the players, allowing them to compete while an appeal is reviewed. It didn't say when a final ruling is expected.



In this file photo, Malaysia's Rodrigo Holgado, left, vies for the ball with Vietnam's Do Duy Manh during the AFC Asian Cup qualifier Group F soccer match between Malaysia and Vietnam at the National Stadium Bukit Jalil in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. (AP)