

Kuwait's Amir, Swiss President discuss key issues of common concern Page 2

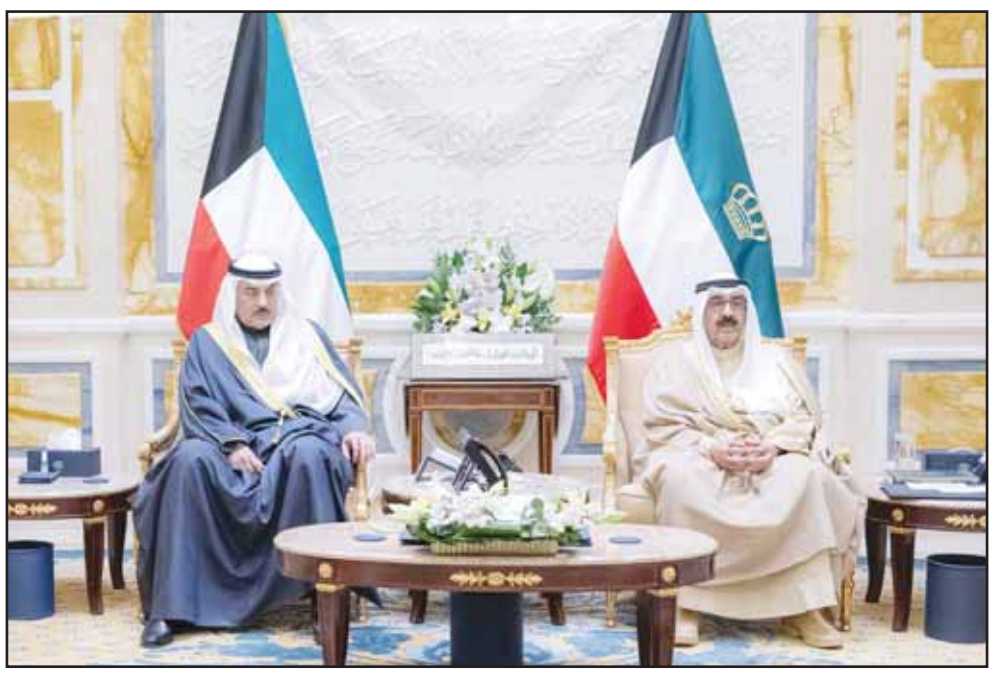
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Amiri Diwan photos

HH the Amir, in attendance of HH the Crown Prince, receive HH the Prime Minister, who presented their Highnesses with the newly-appointed ministers.



Osama Khaled Boodai, Minister of Commerce and Industry



Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs



Dr. Reem Ghazi Al-Fulaij, State Minister for Development and Sustainability Affairs

New ministers take oath before Amir at Bayan Palace

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, in attendance of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, received at Bayan Palace on Monday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who presented their Highnesses with the newly-appointed ministers.

The ministers took the constitutional oath on occasion of their appointments; Osama Khaled Boodai swore in as Minister of Commerce and Industry, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Dr. Reem Ghazi Al-Fulaij as Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Affairs.

As for Dr. Tareq Hamad Al-Jalahma he took the oath to become Minister of State for Youth and Sport Affairs, Abdulaziz Nasser Al-Marzouq swore in as Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, and Dr. Yaqoub Al-Sayed Yousef Al-Refaei as Minister of Finance.

Attending the ceremony were First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Sabah, and top Amiri Diwan officials.

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Dr. Tareq Hamad Al-Jalahma, Minister of State for Youth and Sports



Abdulaziz Nasser Al-Marzouq, State Minister for Economic Affairs and Investment



Dr. Yaqoub Al-Sayed Yousef Al-Refaei, Minister of Finance

Opinion



Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Perhaps the next Cabinet will be better

THE selection of ministers in all countries involves a rigorous mechanism, moving far beyond simply 'picking' names. Before being appointed, candidates undergo a thorough vetting process. This scrutiny covers their security, political and social backgrounds, as well as their overall conduct, to ascertain their suitability for such a sensitive role.

The position of minister is not just a corporate or private sector role, it is an important and sensitive responsibility, encompassing political and technical aspects.

Given that a ministry manages State interests in multiple sectors, any failure or mistake within it has expansive negative repercussions.

Consequently, many countries employ systematic approaches for selection. For instance, the United States requires congressional hearings for Cabinet nominees, which are preceded by an exhaustive review of their records, even extending back to their teenage years.

Similarly, in Norway, the main criterion for ministerial selection is the ability to work effectively and guarantee efficient operations.

Ministers must embody a high standard of professional conduct, mirroring examples like the British Code emphasizing integrity and accountability. The ministerial role is a serious responsibility, not just a title to be held briefly.

Unlike the undesirable circumstances in the past, ministers today must move beyond simply seeking the title of 'former minister'. The main expectation is that ministers have comprehensive knowledge of their respective ministerial portfolio. They serve as key advisors to the government, particularly when certain policy measures under their institution's purview are requested. It is crucial that they fully understand the repercussions of decisions and legislation. This foresight is necessary to preempt loopholes, safeguard societal well-being, and mitigate negative consequences.

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AI to monitor public transport, deliveries

Kuwait introduces digital traffic oversight

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: Assistant Director General for Coordination and Education at the General Traffic Department Brigadier General Khaled Al-Adwani announced that the electronic monitoring system for taxis, ride-hailing services, car rentals and public transportation will be implemented soon.

Al-Adwani made the announcement at a press conference held Monday regarding the National Forum for Transportation and Smart Services, which was organized in cooperation with the General Traffic Department,

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KUNA photo

Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior receives the Secretary-General of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers.

Arab security 'coordination' gains momentum in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2, (KUNA): Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah emphasized the crucial role of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers in unifying visions and strengthening joint Arab security efforts.

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Other Voices

When leaving becomes a duty: The testimony of an investor who loved Lebanon to the very end

By Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor

UAE Businessman

I never imagined that I would write this article. Nor did I expect to reach the moment when I would say: a final farewell, Lebanon. Not because I no longer love this country, but because I loved it more than it could withstand failure, more than denial would allow, and more than a state that refuses to confront the causes of its own collapse can accept.



Al Habtoor

Lebanon was never, to me, a conventional investment. It was a relationship, a commitment, and a moral choice before it was ever an economic venture. I stayed when many others left. I opened my hotels and launched my investments during times of war, and I kept them operating through the harshest conditions – not because the numbers made sense, but because I believed that people must not be abandoned, that employees should not be sacrificed, and that dignity does not shut its doors at the first sign of crisis. My investments in Lebanon were not limited to the hospitality sector, although it was the largest; they extended to other sectors and activities, driven by my belief in integrated investment as a means of supporting both the economy and society.

Over many years, I invested more than USD 1.7 billion of my own capital in Lebanon. I did not take a single loan from any Lebanese bank. I never relied on the banking system, never burdened the state with debt, and never participated in financial engineering schemes. I chose to invest my own money because I wanted to build, not borrow, because I believed in Lebanon more than Lebanon believed in itself.

It is therefore both ironic and regrettable that claims are now being circulated suggesting that I benefited from the financial collapse or the banking crisis, or that I repaid loans at the old exchange rate of 1,500 Lebanese pounds. The truth is simple and unequivocal: I never took a single loan from any Lebanese bank. I derived no benefit from the banking system. Everything I invested was my own capital, and every loss was borne by me alone.

What followed, however, was not merely a financial crisis. It was the collapse of the state. The collapse of the rule of law. The collapse of institutions. The collapse of the judiciary. And the collapse of the most basic sense of responsibility.

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9 'The Investment Conference 2026' brought together thought leaders, industry experts and investors to discuss insights and strategies shaping opportunities

Kuwait court punishes 'Ya Hala' cheats

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Nasser Al-Badr, with Judges Abdulaziz Al-Mu'adhadi and Abdulhadi Al-Hajri as members, and Yaqoub Al-Balam as secretary, sentenced 19 men and women to 10 years in prison with hard labor in the 'Ya Hala' raffle draw case.

In the same case, the court sentenced 28 other defendants (men and women) to four years in prison with hard labor after convicting them of the charges filed against them.

The case involved manipulation and forgery related to the 'Ya Hala' raffle draw, which required the relevant authorities to conduct investigations and submit reports.

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Storm front to hit Kuwait Tuesday, cooler weather follows Wednesday

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department revealed that the country will witness scattered thunderstorms of varying intensity starting Tuesday afternoon and will continue until the evening.

Acting Director of the department Dhirar Al-Ali told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that weather maps, pressure distributions, and numerical models indicated that the country was affected by an extension of a surface low-pressure system Monday evening, along with an upperlevel low-pressure system with warm and humid air mass. He said this led to an increase in low and medium-level clouds.

Continued on Page 5

KD 100 mln scam crashes down

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2, (KUNA): Kuwaiti security forces have arrested a criminal gang comprised of Arab nationals found to have been complicit in an array of banking fraud activities, which include forgery and money laundering, the interior ministry said on Monday.

The arrest, supervised by First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, is part of ministry efforts to clamp down on cybercrime and digital fraud, it said in a statement, citing that the criminals created an online platform to make fraudulent phone calls to steal money from victims, using the funds for the purchase and resale of phones to launder the proceeds.

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Prayer Timings

Fajr	05:16	Asr	15:05
Sunrise	06:37	Maghrib	17:27
Zohr	12:02	Isha	18:46

Local

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Rather hot and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind changing to northwesterly wind later on, with speeds of 15-45 km/h causing rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.
By Night: Rather cold and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind changing to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait Airport	26	10
Abdaly	27	10
Bubyan	18	06
Jahra	26	13
Failaka Island	20	09

Kuwait's Amir, Swiss President discuss key issues of common concern

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, received on Monday at Bayan Palace the President of the Swiss Confederation, Guy Parmelin, on his official visit to Kuwait.

The meeting was attended by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Official reception ceremonies were held in honor of the Swiss President, beginning with the playing of the national anthems of both countries.

His Highness the Amir then greeted members of the official delegation accompanying President Parmelin, while the Swiss President shook hands with senior Kuwaiti officials.

Subsequently, official talks were held between the State of Kuwait and the Swiss Confederation. The Kuwaiti side was chaired by His Highness the Amir, while the Swiss side was chaired by President Parmelin, in the presence of the Crown Prince, the Prime Minister, and senior officials from both countries.

Minister of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah stated that the talks touched on the bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and peoples, and ways to support and develop them across various fields.

The discussions also focused on expanding frameworks of cooperation between Kuwait and Switzerland to broader horizons in a manner that serves their mutual interests.

He added that the talks addressed key issues of common concern, as well as the latest regional and international developments, with an exchange of views on these matters.

In honor of President Parmelin and the accompanying official delegation, a luncheon banquet was held on his official visit, attended by His Highness the Crown Prince, His Highness the Prime Minister, and senior state officials.

Earlier, President of the friendly Swiss Confederation Guy Parmelin and his accompanying delegation arrived in Kuwait on Sunday evening on an official visit.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah welcomed the Swiss President upon his arrival at the airport.

President Parmelin was also received by the Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, the Head of the Diwan of the Crown Prince His Highness Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Advisor at the Prime Minister's Diwan and Head of the Honorary Mission accompanying the president Sheikh Dr. Basel Hamoud Al-Malek Al-Sabah, Minister of Public Works and Head of the Honorary Mission accompanying the spouse of the President of the Swiss Confederation Dr. Noura Mohammed Al-Meshaan and Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Sadiq Mohammed Marafi.

Accompanying the President are Assistant Foreign Minister for the Middle East and North Africa Monika Schmutz, Member of the Council of States Andrea Caroni, Member of the National Council Roman Hug, and the Diplomatic Advisor to the President Simon Pidoux, as well as a number of senior officials from the friendly Swiss Confederation.



Amiri Diwan photo
His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, receives the President of the Swiss Confederation, Guy Parmelin, on his official visit to Kuwait.



Amiri Diwan photo
President of the Swiss Confederation, Guy Parmelin, received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at the Swiss President's residence at Bayan Palace.

Swiss President meets Sheikh Nasser

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2, (KUNA): President of the Swiss Confederation, Guy Parmelin, received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at the Swiss President's residence at Bayan Palace.

The meeting was attended by Adviser at the Amiri Diwan and Head of the Official Accompanying Delegation Sheikh Dr. Basel Hamoud Al-Malek Al-Sabah, and Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadiq Muhammad Ma'arafi.

Working woman can sponsor kids if spouse expires

MoI sheds light on transfer, cancellation of 'iqama'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: The Residency Affairs General Department at the Interior Ministry stated regulations for transferring and canceling residency permits in several cases, including the death of a sponsor holding a residency permit under Article 17 or 18, deportation of a sponsor, death of a Kuwaiti citizen with non-Kuwaiti children, issuance of court rulings against expatriates, and expiration of a sponsor's residency permit while he is outside the country, reports Al-Anba daily quoting a reliable source from the department.

The source told the daily that in case the sponsor dies, the sponsored individual should contact his respective governorate. The status of the wife and children will then be reviewed, and their residency permits will be transferred to the wife if she obtains employment or if she is already employed.

If the husband is deported, the residency permits of the wife and children are canceled if the wife is unemployed. If the children are students, they are given a notice to leave the country until their studies are completed.

The source added that if the residency permit of the husband expires while he is abroad, the dependents' affairs are processed in the respective governorate according to the regulations. If the mother is employed, the case is reviewed, and the children are transferred to her sponsorship, provided they are enrolled in school. The same applies to an imprisoned husband.

Regarding the children of a female citizen married to a non-Kuwaiti, those under sponsorship are given the opportunity to look for work or transfer to Article 24 (self-sponsorship), provided that the mother's nationality is established.

The widow and divorcee of a deceased citizen, who has no children, are allowed to transfer their residency in the respective governorate after studying the case.

A widow who has no children, but has pension, is allowed to transfer her residency.

If the expatriate husband is in the Central Prison and the wife does not work, her residency is not renewed. If she works, the case is studied with the possibility of transferring the children to her sponsorship.

For sponsors with mental disabilities, the cases of those under sponsorship are studied by the residency departments, each according to their governorate, with the possibility of transferring the children's residency to the mother if she is aware of it.

Human capital, knowledge economy priority: minister

Harnessing AI real challenge: Sheikha Intisar



Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, Sheikha Intisar Al-Sabah and other prominent personalities at the opening of the exhibition.



Photos by Samer Shaqair
Education Minister Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, the accompanying delegation visit a stall displaying mechanical instruments.

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: The Fourth Kuwait Award for Educational Technology Conference and Exhibition (Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Award) commenced Monday at the Scientific Center, under the patronage and in the presence of Education Minister Jalal Al-Tabtabaei.

The two-day event witnessed the broad participation of educational and academic officials, experts, and educational and technological institutions, underscoring the strategic priority of education in Kuwait's development journey.

This year's conference, themed "Artificial Intelligence … A Cornerstone for Educational Development and Building the Future," reflects the national focus on leveraging modern technologies and artificial intelligence to develop the educational system, improve the quality of educational outputs, and cultivate generations capable of meeting the demands of the modern era.

Affirmed

In his speech at the opening ceremony, Al-Tabtabaei affirmed that the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Award is a shining national model in supporting excellence and stimulating creativity, in line with Kuwait's New Vision 2035, which puts human capital and the knowledge economy at the heart of its priorities.

He stressed the importance of building a modern, flexible educational system capable of keeping pace with the changing times, indicating that the theme of the conference embodies a profound awareness that the future of education can only be built on innovation and conscious investment in people and knowledge.

He added that the ministry has given considerable attention to integrating the concepts of technology, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity into the new curricula in a systematic manner, starting at the early educational stages. He said this aims to promote responsible technology use and solidify awareness on its educational and ethical dimensions. He stressed that technology remains a supportive tool, not a replacement for the role of the teacher and the authentic educational values.

He revealed that the ministry launched several AI-powered educational applications and services, most notably the 'With Hamad Chat' service and the interactive 'Salem and Abeer' application, which were developed by specialized Kuwaiti professionals. He asserted that these initiatives aim to support academic achievement and enrich the learning experience within a clear framework of educational standards and guidelines.

He underscored the importance of the conference and the award in celebrating pioneering educational initiatives and projects, and in motivating innovators to continue their contributions and development, thereby, fostering a culture of creativity and strengthening the partnership between the educational and technological fields.

On the other hand, Jamal Jassim Al-Nasrallah, President of the Public Relations Association and Chairman of the Higher Organizing Committee for the conference, stated that organizing this event is based on the belief that educational development is no longer an option but a national necessity imposed by rapid digital transformations.

He pointed out that the conference serves as a comprehensive national platform for dialogue, the exchange of expertise, and highlighting the latest educational technologies.

He added that the award conveys a message of appreciation for all those who strived, innovated and excelled in the fields of education and technology. He explained that naming the award after Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah is a tribute to his national legacy and his pioneering contributions to building the Kuwaiti people.

Sheikha Intisar Al-Sabah, a member of the Supreme Committee for the conference and head of the Executive Council of the Bright Educational Initiative, pointed out that artificial intelligence in education should not be limited to enhancing academic performance as it should be designed to restore the balance between knowledge and humanity.

challenge

She stated that the real challenge today lies not in introducing artificial intelligence into education, but on how to design and harness it to better serve humanity.

She emphasized the importance of building smart educational systems that consider psychological well-being, and develop social and emotional skills alongside cognitive abilities.

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, representing Dar Suad Al-Sabah, confirmed that Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah (may Allah have mercy on him) believed from the very beginning of the State's establishment that education is the foundation for building societies and guaranteeing the future.

He pointed out that linking education with artificial intelligence today is considered foresight, praising Dr. Suad Al-Sabah's role in supporting education and culture as a sustainable national project and emphasizing that the award embodies Kuwait's established approach of investing in people and knowledge.

Meanwhile, head of the judging committee, Dr. Hussein Fulad, announced the winners of the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Award for Educational Technology as follows:

- Educational Robotics Category Award: PLOTOIT
- Smart Government School Award: Imam Malik Secondary School
- Smart Private School Award: Rawdh Al-Saleheen School
- Smart University/College Award: Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST)
- Best Educational Application or Platform Award: ALEF EDUCATION Platform
- Best Digital Idea Award, First Category: Zahraa Abel – ICAREER.PATH Project
- Second Place Best Digital Idea Award: 'Qadar' Project, Fatima Al-Mutairi and Fatima Al-Hamad

Other Voices

Dangerous & suspicious road to donations drain

By Ahmad alsarraf

Kuwait has dozens of charitable organizations, many of which are superfluous due to overlapping mandates, failure to deliver tangible results, or repeated violations that are not met with decisive action by the competent authorities.

So, what motivated or encouraged individuals and religious or sectarian groups to establish such a large number of charitable organizations?



alsarraf

While a limited number of these organizations pursue commendable objectives, their sheer proliferation ensures their continued presence, even if the government were to revoke the licenses of some of them.

Moreover, those in charge of collecting and distributing donations – the administrators – are fully aware of the vast sums of money that can be accumulated by exploiting the naïveté of donors.

I previously stated that the total donations collected have exceeded tens of billions, and I possess evidence to support this claim. Their approaches have included exploiting sectarian sentiments, issuing warnings about threats to religion, or appealing to the promise of divine reward.

The most recent attempt to collect funds without limits or oversight involved a charity that preyed on the emotions of donors seeking spiritual merit. Within just three or four days, it raised $13 million following an appeal by a Palestinian activist in Gaza, who called for $10 million to rebuild a children's hospital destroyed by Israeli airstrikes.

I intervened, and the relevant authorities cooperated with me. The campaign was suspended because it was impossible for donations to reach Gaza at a time its residents were being killed by the hundreds every day and were deprived of water, shelter, food and medicine. Under such circumstances, how could a hospital possibly be constructed?

After the ceasefire, the young Palestinian man who led the fundraising campaign was killed in internal fighting.

I hope the funds remain with the Ministry of Social Affairs, as the donations could easily have disappeared while moving from one intermediary to another.

From this incident, and from tens of thousands of similar cases, it becomes clear that donating abroad has been, and continues to be, the most advantageous option for charities engaged in international activities.

I repeatedly warned about the massive abuses committed by these charities, warnings that prompted the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to take the necessary steps to halt this decades-long drain on resources.

The ban on funding foreign charitable activities remained in effect for a period, during which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reduced the number of recognized charities abroad from 1,000 to approximately 400 – a figure that remains alarmingly high.

Subsequently, a decision was issued lifting the ban, on the condition that all transfers be conducted through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Recently, this measure was rescinded to avoid involving a government entity in the transfer of donations overseas. Charities were then permitted to send donations abroad through banks and money exchange companies, provided they obtained approval from the Ministry of Social Affairs.

In the end, the drain will persist as though nothing has changed.

What many donors – particularly those contributing to charitable projects – do not realize is that more than one-third of their donations end up in the pockets of those running these charities. Even then, there is no assurance that the remaining 70 percent will be spent efficiently or honestly on the intended charitable purpose.

The best among you is the one who directs his charity to those most in need nearby.

❑ ❑ ❑

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Swiss President leaves after one-day official Kuwait visit

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2, (KUNA): Swiss Confederation President Guy Parmelin and his accompanying official delegation departed Kuwait on Monday following an official visit during which he held formal talks with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

President Parmelin was seen off at Kuwait International Airport by Advisor at the Amiri Diwan and Head of the Honorary Mission Sheikh Dr. Basel Hamoud Al-Malik Al-Sabah, Minister of Public Works and Head of the Honorary Mission accompanying the Swiss President's spouse Dr. Noura Mohammad Al-Meshaan, and Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadiq Mohammad Ma'arafi.

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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Shining future ahead for Kuwait, China relations

"SINCE the establishment of diplomatic relations between the State of Kuwait and the People's Republic of China on March 22, 1971, the two nations have built a highly developed framework of cooperation founded on mutual respect and a long-term strategic outlook," **Bassam Al-Qassas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"This framework is marked by political prudence and shared development-oriented interests, in spite of the geographical distance between the two countries and their different cultural backgrounds.



Bassam Al-Qassas

"Over the course of more than five decades, relations between Kuwait and China have progressed from a conventional diplomatic relationship into broad, comprehensive and multidimensional cooperation that covers political, economic, energy, infrastructure, technological and cultural fields.

"This evolving cooperation has positioned China as one of Kuwait's most significant strategic partners on the international stage.

"Kuwaiti-Chinese relations benefit from direct support at the highest leadership level in both countries. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has repeatedly affirmed Kuwait's determination to strengthen its strategic partnership with the People's Republic of China and to expand areas of cooperation in a manner that serves shared interests and fulfills the requirements of development and regional stability.

"On the other hand, Chinese President Xi Jinping regards Kuwait as a trustworthy and important partner for China in the Arabian Gulf region. He has affirmed his country's keenness to deepen cooperation with Kuwait in the energy, infrastructure and technology sectors, as well as to support Kuwait's central role in the Belt and Road Initiative.

"This alignment of perspectives between the political leaderships of the two countries reflects a strong and solid foundation for the future of bilateral relations, providing them with additional momentum to move beyond traditional cooperation toward a more comprehensive and sustainable partnership.

"Accordingly, political relations between the two states have been marked by stability and mutual understanding. Kuwait has consistently upheld the 'One China' principle, while Beijing has reaffirmed its full support for Kuwait's security, sovereignty and territorial integrity in various international forums.

"This political harmony played a major role in building deep mutual trust which, in turn, had a positive impact on all dimensions of bilateral cooperation.

"On the economic front, China remains Kuwait's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade reaching around $22 billion in 2023. This exchange is largely driven by Kuwaiti oil exports to the Chinese market, alongside expanding investments and joint ventures.

"Chinese companies are participating in a number of strategic projects in Kuwait, including major infrastructure, road construction, housing and telecommunications initiatives. They are also contributing to the rollout and advancement of 5G networks, reinforcing Kuwait's status as a regional leader in digital transformation.

"The Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project stands as a prominent example of the future-oriented partnership between the two countries, serving as a strategic link between the Arabian Gulf and China's Belt and Road Initiative.

"Once completed, the project is expected to turn Kuwait into a vital logistics and trade hub, in line with the objectives of Kuwait Vision 2035.

"Cooperation between Kuwait and China has expanded to include advanced technology, the digital economy, renewable energy, environmental initiatives and artificial intelligence, in addition to growing cultural and educational exchange programs. These efforts have contributed to strengthening ties between the two peoples and reinforcing the civilizational dimension of the bilateral relationship.

"With the arrival of the new Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait, Yang Xin, relations between the two countries are entering a new phase marked by greater momentum and openness to wider horizons of cooperation. This phase is supported by the convergence between Kuwait Vision 2035 and China's development strategies, creating promising opportunities for partnership and joint investment.

"Kuwaiti-Chinese relations are not limited to figures and agreements alone, rather, they embody a long-standing history of trust, respect and strategic integration.

"More than 50 years after its establishment, this relationship continues to consolidate its status as a successful model of cooperation between the Middle East and Asia, and as a solid basis for building a shared future that serves the interests of both countries and their friendly peoples."

Also:

"In a region that is perpetually restless and steeped in upheaval, crises in the Middle East are no longer isolated incidents, as they have become a recurring reality, compelling states to shift from reactive to proactive approach," **Yousef Rashed Al-Hajri** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"With escalating regional tensions and rising concerns about potential confrontations between influential international and regional powers, crisis management emerges as a cornerstone of national security and institutional stability in the modern State.

"Crisis management is not an administrative luxury or a slogan to be invoked in times of crisis. Rather, it is a comprehensive system that begins with proactive planning, progresses through risk analysis, and extends beyond containing the event to include evaluation and learning from it.

"The states that weather the storms are not necessarily the strongest militarily, but rather the most prepared and flexible in their decision-making. Given the volatile regional situation, any potential escalation in the region, regardless of its scope or the parties involved, could have political, economic and security repercussions that extend to all countries in the region, directly or indirectly.

"This underscores the importance of having specialized national crisis management agencies that operate with high-level coordination among relevant institutions and rely on clear plans and well-considered scenarios. Crises in our time are no longer just military, as they can be economic through disruptions in energy markets and supply chains, media-related through disinformation campaigns and the spread of rumors or social due to public anxiety and declining trust.

"Without the conscious management of these interconnected paths, a crisis could transform from an external challenge into an internal pressure that overwhelms State institutions. Effective crisis management requires clarity of vision, quick decision-making, and the ability to balance national interests with regional variables, avoiding confusion or haste. History shows that the most dangerous that countries face during crises is not the magnitude of the threat, but misjudging the situation or unpreparedness.

"The legal and institutional frameworks are equally important in this context. The existence of appropriate legislation, approved emergency plans, and clear decision-making mechanisms empowers the State to act with confidence and composure, while strengthening public trust in its institutions.

"In conclusion, the escalating tensions in the region entail that states must reinforce the concept of crisis management as a proactive tool, not a temporary measure. This approach must be based on planning and preparedness, not improvisation and reactive responses. Having a vision, ensuring readiness, and integrating institutional roles are the elements that create stability in times of turmoil, and enable the State to protect its achievements amidst rapid changes. This distinguishes those who are caught off guard by events from those who make decisions in the midst of the storm."

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"For years, we have spoken in hushed tones and, at times, quite openly about parliamentary deviations, repeatedly cautioning against the legislative authority's excesses, which peaked when some MPs encroached upon the executive authority during the grim period from 2013 to 2020," **Khaled Ahmad Al-Tarrah** wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"During that dark parliamentary era, which ended with the dissolution of the 2020 parliament, the authoritarian conduct of certain MPs became apparent, as did their intimidation of ministers and their attempts to pressure and blackmail them, taking advantage of the fragility of successive governments.



Dr. Khaled Al-Tarrah

"The boundaries between the legislative and executive authorities became confused, and the one-man-one-vote electoral system was adopted – a move that effectively dealt a severe blow to the foundations of democracy.

"Disputes and rivalries among various segments of society intensified, while political movements and independent figures chose to withdraw from elections and political life altogether in protest against the electoral system.

"Since 2013, the National Assembly has increasingly resembled a spoils arena for a large number of MPs and political and parliamentary opportunists. This reality encouraged them to divide parliamentary gains among themselves, allocating roles in cooperation with weak governments and ministers who yielded to compromises and made concessions at the expense of public interest.

"Throughout the 2013-2020 parliamentary term, certain parliamentary and ministerial figures became firmly embedded in public awareness, with their images – both favorable and unfavorable – widely in the press and across official and private media outlets. This resulted from the dominance of influential figures who controlled the mechanisms of media power, steering them to serve MPs' interests, intimidate ministers, and even exert pressure on the entire government."

— Compiled by Saeed Mahmoud Saleh



Farwaniya Governorate photo

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Gaber Abu Al-Wafa.

Egyptian community's role in various sectors praised

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah on Monday met with Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Gaber Abu Al-Wafa. The visit took place within the framework of strengthening bilateral relations and joint cooperation between the two brotherly countries.

During the meeting, several issues of mutual interest were discussed, along with ways to strengthen cooperation, as well as an exchange of views on matters related to the Egyptian community in Farwaniya Governorate. The Governor affirmed the commitment to strengthen communication and cooperation with diplomatic missions in a manner that serves shared interests and reinforces social cohesion.

He also praised the positive role played by the Egyptian community in various sectors in the State of Kuwait. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Ambassador expressed his sincere thanks and appreciation to the Governor for the warm welcome and unwavering commitment to support efforts to boost cooperation and communication.

The Ambassador also commended the efforts of the governorate in serving expatriate communities and promoting brotherhood among peoples.

KFF conducts fire drill at KPC's HQ premises

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) recently conducted a fire drill at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) as part of its ongoing collaboration with government entities.

The drill, which involved the Capital and Shuwaikh Industrial Area fire stations, simulated a fire scenario requiring the evacuation and rescue of injured individuals, as well as fire control efforts.



Al-Gharib

This drill aims to strengthen coordination between State institutions and ascertain the readiness of firefighting teams to respond to emergencies as per the highest occupational safety standards.

Director of Public Relations and Media at KFF Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Gharib confirmed that the drill is in line with the commitment of KFF to keep on raising its preparedness level for any emergency.

In a statement to the newspaper, he affirmed the value of such exercises, because they "strengthen cooperation between government institutions in protecting lives and properties." He added the firefighting teams are keen on developing their skills and ensuring readiness to efficiently deal with emergency situations.

Decree endorses transfer of two Public Prosecutors

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: Amiri Decree No. 10/2026 on judicial transfers was published in the official gazette (Kuwait Al-Youm) on Sunday, stipulating the transfer of two Public Prosecution members to the Court of Appeals.

This decree takes effect from the date of its issuance.

Article One of the Decree states that First Attorney General Counselor Tariq Nisf Al-Nisf and Attorney General Counselor Dr. Omar Abdullah Al-Masoud will now work at the Court of Appeals.

The Supreme Judicial Council approved this decision in its Session No. 31/2025 held on Nov 27, 2025, based on the proposal of the Justice Minister and with the approval of the Council of Ministers.

Article Two mandates the Minister of Justice to execute the decree and ensure its publication in the official gazette.

Meanwhile , in a move underscoring the Public Prosecution's unwavering commitment to Kuwaitization and the empowerment of national competence, Attorney General Saad Abdulkarim Al-Safaran issued a decision to transfer several district attorneys to various prosecution offices , reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This decision is in compliance with the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and part of a carefully considered plan consistent with a comprehensive institutional vision aimed at developing judicial performance and enhancing operational efficiency within the prosecution.

The prosecution affirmed that the transfer is an advanced career path based on merit and efficiency.

The decision falls within the framework of developing the technical structure of the prosecution and raising the professional level of its members by transferring expertise and localizing it, thereby, contributing to the achievement of swift justice and the consolidation of the rule of law.

The decision stipulated the transfer of the following individuals:

Mohammad Salah Abdullah Al-Ali – Director of the Capital Governorate Prosecution Office, which handles human trafficking, migrant smuggling and financial market cases

Ibrahim Jamal Nasser Al-Manea – Director of the Commercial Affairs Prosecution Office

Dhari Saleh Ibrahim Al-Muajjal – Director of the Criminal Execution Prosecution Office

Court acquits blogger of spreading rumors

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: The Court of Cassation, presided over by Judge Abdullah Jassim, upheld the ruling of the Court of Appeals, which acquitted activist Abdullah Al-Mufarraj of disseminating false news through his account on the 'X' platform, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The court rejected the appeal of the Public Prosecution on the grounds of invalidity, affirming the reasoning of the Court of Appeals, which concluded that Al-Mufarraj's statements fall within the scope of freedom of opinion and expression and do not constitute false news as per Article 15 of the State Security Law.

Al-Mufarraj was represented before the court by lawyers Adnan Abel and Dr. Hussein Al-Abdullah, who argued that the legal elements of the offense attributed to their client were not fulfilled, stressing that his statements were merely an expression of opinion regarding certain events, in accordance with the law and in affirmation of his right to freedom of expression.

'Report lost bank card'

Over KD 500 stolen from Syrian woman's account

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: A Syrian woman, born in 1997, filed a report at Jahra Police Station, stating that more than KD500 was stolen from her bank account, reports Al-Anba daily.

In her report, the woman disclosed that the perpetrator made two withdrawals from her bank account ... the first was KD5 and the second KD500, indicating she received two withdrawal notifications at 3:00 pm on the day of the incident.

According to a security source, the Public Prosecutor for Commercial Affairs issued a directive to record the incident as forgery of bank documents. It then instructed the Criminal Investigation Department to apprehend the suspect.

The source added that the case file was referred to the Jahra Criminal Investigation Department to identify the perpetrator. He noted that in such cases, coordination is maintained with the victim's bank to obtain recordings and images that can help identify and apprehend the perpetrator, using modern technologies, including biometric fingerprinting. The source urged anyone who loses his bank card to immediately contact the bank to deactivate the card to prevent illegal withdrawals.

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Checks against dead account: The Deputy Public Prosecutor ordered the inclusion of an expatriate on the wanted list for involvement in a bank fraud case, as he issued five checks totaling KD13,000 against a closed account, reports Al-Anba daily. A lawyer, acting on behalf of a Kuwaiti woman who owns a general trading company, filed a report at the Hawally Police Station, indicating that the expatriate issued five checks drawn on a local bank with a total value of KD13,000, but the account is already closed.

According to the complainant, the bank confirmed upon review that the account is closed, and that the authorized signatory and the person who signed the checks is the accused.

Consequently, the Deputy Public Prosecutor issued a directive to register the case as a misdemeanor (bank fraud), ordering the arrest and immediate presentation of the accused to the investigation authorities. An arrest warrant was issued and circulated to all police stations and borders for legal action.

Death upheld for Mousawi's killer

From gallows to 10 years

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: The Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Abdullah Al-Othman, upheld the death sentence imposed on the murderer of Hani Al-Mousawi, who was shot dead in his home while in his mother's arms.

Earlier, the Public Prosecution, represented by Jahra Prosecution Director Fahd Nayef Al-Mutairi, urged the Criminal Court to impose the maximum penalty on the accused, emphasizing that justice is a sacred duty and that just retribution is the only way to bring justice to the victim and deter anyone who might consider taking innocent lives. The prosecution stressed that society cannot tolerate more murderers and that only justice can bring people's hearts back to peace.

Attorney Hassan Al-Mousawi, lawyer for the heirs of the victims, stated that the ruling of the Court of Appeals is correct, legally sound, and based on facts.

Both the lower and appellate courts confirmed that the killer committed his crime with premeditation and malice, murdering the victim in his home while he was in his mother's arms. This is one of Kuwait's most heinous crimes.

Al-Mousawi went on to say that witness testimony, forensic evidence, coroner and mental health reports all confirmed that the mental and intellectual faculties of the accused were healthy when he committed the crime, and that his responsibility for his actions disproved any flimsy justifications used by the killer to evade punishment.

He pointed out that the words of Allah Almighty, "They plot, Allah plots and Allah is the best among plotters," serve as an example and a lesson.

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From gallows to 10 years: The Court of Appeals commuted the death sentence issued by a lower court in a murder case to 10-year imprisonment after reclassifying the offense as manslaughter.

Attorney Ayad Mahdi Al-Rashidi, lawyer for the defendant, confirmed that the court accepted his argument, concluding that the defendant lacked the specific criminal intent necessary for murder, which is the intent to take the victim's life.



KAPP opens consultancy tender for Umm Al-Hayman expansion

Bid submission deadline set April 1

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: The Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) on Sunday announced a tender for conducting consultancy studies related to the subscription and transfer of ownership of shares allocated to Kuwaiti citizens in Umm Al-Hayman Wastewater Treatment Company. The deadline for submitting bids is April 1.

KAPP disclosed that the bidding phase will be followed by the opening and reviewing of bids submitted by competing companies, prior to awarding the contract to the company that meets the technical requirements. This winning company will be responsible for conducting the necessary consultancy studies.

The Board of Directors of the CAPT approved the request of KAPP to issue this tender. As the concerned entity, KAPP will work according to the general practice, based on the relevant legal article, after CAPT reviews the letter of KAPP regarding the proposed amendments.

The Umm Al-Hayman project is one of the most vital infrastructure projects in the State of Kuwait and it was launched in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Works in accordance with Law No. 116/2014 on public-private partnerships. The project aims to treat wastewater and it is included in the development plan as one of the most important projects in the sanitation sector, given its role in mitigating the negative environmental impact of increased raw wastewater production.

The current station has a capacity of about 28,000 cubic meters, while the Umm Al-Hayman station will have a capacity of 500,000 cubic meters in its first phase, with the option to expand to 700,000 cubic meters in the future. The Umm Al-Hayman station will serve the southern part of the country -- Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate, Ahmadi Governorate and Sabah Al-Ahmad City, which currently suffer from inadequate wastewater treatment infrastructure.

The project is expected to improve environmental conditions and transform these areas into sustainable environments according to international standards. The treated water produced by the project will be used for various environmental purposes, including landscaping and other uses that benefit the residents of the covered areas.

A portion of the treated water will be allocated to the oil sector for its various operations.



Ministry of Education photo
Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaie greets students during the flag-raising ceremony marking Kuwait's National Day and Liberation Day celebrations.

Al-Tabtabaie honors Kuwait's milestones

Minister of Education commences start of National Day celebrations

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaie extended his warmest congratulations and best wishes to the wise political leadership, represented by 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 His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as well as the loyal people of Kuwait, during the launching of the National Day and Liberation Day celebrations.

In a press statement on the sidelines of the flag-raising ceremony organized by the Ministry of Education on Sunday morning, Al-Tabtabaie asserted that these celebrations embody the meanings of sovereignty and national dignity, as well as the journey of a nation forged through willpower and unity.

The ceremony marked the beginning of the national celebrations for the 65th National Day and 35th Liberation Day, with the officials of various sectors and departments in attendance.

Al-Tabtabaie affirmed that raising the Kuwaiti Flag during these cherished days is a renewed national occasion to remember the sacrifices of the forefathers and the martyrs of Kuwait who gave their lives for the homeland in defense of its sovereignty and security.

He confirmed as well the deep-rooted loyalty and strong sense of belonging of the Kuwaiti people to their nation and leadership, emphasizing that the national holidays are not merely occasions to celebrate, but comprehensive lessons that reinforce the values of identity, unity and responsibility.

He said the ministry is keen on investing in these national occasions within the educational environment to instill values and principles, consolidate the concept of good citizenship, and strengthen genuine belonging to Kuwait.

He pointed out that this is achieved through national curricula based on educational standards, purposeful school activities, and educational practices that translate love of the homeland into daily behavior and responsible action, thereby, contributing to the formation of a generation that is aware of its history, proud of its flag, and capable of participating in shaping its future.

He emphasized that Kuwait, under its wise leadership and with its aware people, is steadily moving toward a brighter future, relying on a strong national educational system that elevates the values of belonging and embodies the spirit of independence and liberation on its path toward sustainable human development.

He stressed that this will ensure that Kuwait remains a proud nation, steadfast in its values, and confidently looking ahead to the future.

He went on to say that the ministry, through the new curricula, remains committed to strengthen national identity and link students to the history of the country and its glorious milestones.

He revealed that national occasions will be transformed into vibrant educational experiences, which help instill the values of sacrifice, teamwork and pride in national belonging. He confirmed that love for Kuwait is a daily practice and a conscious effort that begins in schools and extends to the wider community. He added that this approach goes hand in hand with improving school activities and educational programs, which serve as a practical extension of the curricula.

He said these programs contribute to instilling values of loyalty and belonging among students, fostering respect for national symbols, and strengthening pride in Kuwaiti identity through interactive educational practices that embody national values in the daily school environment and connect theoretical knowledge with practical application.

He stressed that these deeply rooted values, upon which the people of Kuwait were raised, will remain a fundamental pillar in building future generations. He believes this will be realized through conscious national education that reinforces pride in the flag, preserves national memory, and prepares students to assume their responsibilities toward their nation and its future, in line with the aspirations of the State for sustainable human development based on belonging and responsibility.

He then implored Almighty Allah to protect the State of Kuwait and its wise leadership, to sustain its blessings of security and stability, and to guide its people toward whatever serves the interests of the nation and guarantees its progress.

The flag-raising ceremony, which was held at the Flag Square, started with the playing of the national anthem, performed by students of Hamoud Al-Saadoun Intermediate School for Boys.

The celebrations continued in the ministry's lobby, where Al-Fan Al-Aseel Folk Arts Troupe presented a selection of distinctive patriotic songs, followed by a folk dance performed by students of Abdullah Khalaf Al-Dahyan Primary School for Boys. Students Hussein Behzad and Saud Haji from Sheikhan Al-Farsi Primary School for Boys recited poems expressing their love for the homeland.

This was followed by a folk dance performed by students of Al-Khansaa Primary School for Girls, and a Nabati poetry recital by student Mohammed Jahil Nasser Al-Fadhli from Abdulmohsen Al-Badr Primary School for Boys. The ceremony concluded with the folk performance by students of Khazna Boursli Primary School for Girls.

'Kuwait in its Home' event debuts in Dubai



KUNA photo
Visitors leave messages on a display celebrating UAE-Kuwait friendship during the 'UAE-Kuwait: Brothers Forever' cultural week in Dubai.

DUBAI, Feb 2, (KUNA): An event kicked off in Dubai under the rubric "Kuwait in its Home" as part of the week marking fraternal relations between the UAE and the State of Kuwait, reflecting a vibrant image of sincere people-to-people fraternity.

During the event, the open space by Jumeirah Beach in Dubai with a sea view turned into a cultural and human scene that bespeaks the depth of historical ties and mutual feelings between the two countries.

The occasion signals a comprehensive cultural and artistic experience that combined live music, food, artistic performances, and contemporary paintings highlighting the Emirati and Kuwaiti culture in a modern creative style.

The event came in the context of the "UAE-Kuwait:Brothers Forever", which kicked off on Thursday and lasts until February 4, mainly purposed to highlight deep UAE-Kuwait bonds.





KUNA photo
Namaa Charity distributes 120 food baskets to families in Tanzania.

Kuwait's Namaa Charity distributes food baskets to families in Tanzania

KHARTOUM, Feb 2, (KUNA): Namaa Charity, affiliated with the Social Reform Society, distributed 120 food baskets to the vulnerable families in the Kizimkazi area in Tanzania.

The distribution was carried out during a field visit aimed at assessing humanitarian conditions and identifying the actual needs of local communities, as part of the charity's efforts to enhance food security and ease living burdens.

Head of relief and development at the society Khaled Al-Shammari said in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that "this visit may be a simple step for us, but it has a significant impact on beneficiaries and helps alleviate their daily suffering."

He added that the field visit provided first-hand insight into the living conditions of beneficiary families, noting that Namaa relies on on-site assessments prior to implementing its projects to ensure aid reaches those who deserve it and achieves a sustainable impact.

PAAET opens online enrollment changes

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: The Deanship of Student Affairs at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) announced the launch of online applications for suspension of enrollment and complete withdrawal from courses for the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year through the electronic system, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Deanship said the application window will remain open until April 5, 2026, stressing that all requests must be submitted electronically in line with the regulations and procedures.

It called on students wishing to apply for suspension of enrollment or complete withdrawal to comply with the specified deadlines and meet all conditions, underscoring the need to review the published guidelines and instructions to ensure timely processing of applications and to avoid rejection or delay.

Civil society organizations praised

Minister Al-Huwailah highlights NGOs' role in national progress

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah underscored the vital role played by civil society organizations as partners of the State in serving citizens and the nation, describing them as indicators of progress at both the national and international levels.



Dr. Al-Huwailah

Al-Huwailah made the statement in a seminar organized by the Ministry of Social Affairs, with representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in attendance.

The theme of the seminar is: "The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Preparing and Submitting Voluntary Parallel Reports to the United Nations."

Al-Huwailah stressed that the partnership between government entities and NGOs is founded on integration and the unification of efforts.

She affirmed that each organization, in line with its area of specialization, is an added value that supports society and contributes to achieving optimal results.

She pointed out that cooperation with civil society is an extension of the development efforts of the State and solidifies its presence in international forums.

She reaffirmed that the doors of her ministry are always open to NGOs, and that it will continue to provide support and assistance.

She emphasized that this relationship is built on genuine partnership and the exchange of expertise.

She said the ministry considers civil society organizations an integral part of the national action framework, stressing that the shared objective is to serve the best interests of the nation and its citizens.

KU gears up for new semester

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: Kuwait University (KU) will welcome new and continuing students on Sunday, in its 15 colleges in various literature and science disciplines, along with faculty, teaching assistants and administrative staff, for the start of the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The University confirmed its full readiness to provide all necessary services to ensure the smooth running of the educational process. This includes the readiness of buildings, laboratories, classrooms and facilities on campus, as well as the mobilization of administrative and technical resources to contribute to an optimal university environment.

The University administration affirmed its commitment to exerting even greater effort and dedication as the second semester begins, maintaining public order in campus, enhancing security, and ensuring public safety, in line with its academic and educational mission.

Kuwait, UAE sign media MoU

Partnership to boost joint TV and cultural content

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Ministry of Information (Kuwait TV) and Dubai Media Incorporated (Dubai TV) inked a Memorandum of Understanding aiming to strengthen media cooperation and enhance joint production.

The document was signed by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information Dr. Nasser Muhaisen and CEO of Dubai Media Incorporated Mohammad Al-Mulla on Sunday evening during a visit by UAE media delegation to Kuwait.

Kuwait's Minister of Health and Acting Minister of Information and Culture Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab Al-Awadhi attended the signing ceremony during the Kuwaiti-UAE media celebration which was organized by Dubai Press Club.

Also attending was Mona Ghanem Al-Marri, Vice Chairperson and Managing Director of the Dubai Media Council and President of the Dubai Press Club

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Al-Awadhi said the MoU reflects the deep-rooted historical ties between the two sisterly countries and the shared desire to use media as a link of rapprochement between both peoples.



KUNA photo

Ceremony of signing the memorandum of understanding between Kuwait TV and Dubai Media Incorporated (Dubai TV).

The document highlights the close alignment in vision and future outlook between Kuwait and the UAE and marks a major step forward in advancing integrated media collaboration.

It will help expand opportunities for joint content development, strengthen professional capabilities, and support the creation of programming that reflects the cultural identity and values of both nations, he pointed out.

He added that Kuwait's Ministry of Information sees the partnership as an important platform for innovation and digital advancement, while enhancing the visibility and competitiveness of Gulf media at both regional and international levels through closer coordination between media organizations in the two countries.

On her part, Mona Al-Marri said the agreement reflects the strong, historic bonds between the UAE and Kuwait and the shared commitment of both countries to expanding media cooperation in ways that serve the aspirations of audiences across the Gulf and the broader Arab world.

The next phase of media industry growth requires deeper partnerships built on exchanging expertise and developing high-quality content that reflects community priorities while preserving Gulf cultural heritage and identity, WAM news agency quoted her as saying.

Cooperation in program production, sports and heritage content, and news and coverage exchange creates significant opportunities to deliver more impactful content that is closer to audiences and reflects shared Gulf values and identity, Al-Marri added.

Mohammad Al-Mulla said the MoU represents a strategic step towards expanding media cooperation pathways, enhancing the exchange of expertise and media content, and supporting the production of diverse programming that meets audience expectations across the region.

The MoU paves the way for joint TV production, seasonal programs, and sports and heritage content, while enhancing cultural identity of the Gulf region, he added.

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Ministerial work is a high-stakes environment where trial and error is unacceptable due to the direct impact on people's lives. Therefore, the fundamental responsibility of ministers and their team includes careful consideration and planning for all the potential effects of their actions.

The selection of ministers requires precise criteria to ensure that high standards are followed. The criteria include competence, integrity, relevant experience, specialization, academic qualifications, and the capacity for strategic decision-making.

Furthermore, the selected minister must present a clear vision for development and the ability to foster effective teamwork within the ministerial group. To achieve this, the selection process must include thorough personal interviews. It should be totally free from political favoritism and pressure.

Kuwait is home to many highly qualified individuals who possess these necessary attributes. The Kuwaiti society's foundation, built over four centuries, rests on a sophisticated relationship between the ruler and the ruled, traditionally characterized by open councils for both officials and the general public. This custom is instrumental in identifying the most qualified individual for any given task. Nevertheless, the paramount requirement remains a thorough review of all relevant files.

We are hopeful that the current Cabinet, now expanded to 21 ministers, is capable of addressing all pending issues, avoiding past errors, and correcting deficiencies. Given this, we anticipate a better future with this council. It is facing a multitude of responsibilities, and more importantly, it holds both the legislative and executive roles – a challenging dual mandate.

When leaving

The country became an open arena: no protection for investors, no dignity for individuals, and no meaningful standards of accountability. Slander replaced truth. Defamation became a tool. Official indifference and silence became policy.

We reached a point where anyone attempting to persevere, to help, or even to defend themselves became the target of organised campaigns of abuse and distortion – without evidence, without deterrence, and without any intervention from the state. At that moment, the question was no longer: Are we losing money? It became: Are we willing to become accomplices in this collapse?

The decision to suspend our operations, close our hotels, and lay off employees was not a cold administrative move, nor a hasty reaction. It was the most painful decision of my professional life. Yet keeping institutions open in a state that neither protects nor holds offenders accountable, and does not enforce the law, ceased to be an act of resilience. It became a gamble with people's dignity and their future.

In this context, turning to local and international courts was not an act of escalation, nor a desire for confrontation. It was the last remaining refuge in a country where the judiciary is meant to be the final arbiter. After years of patience, attempts at resolution and amicable settlement, correspondence, and both public and discreet appeals, it became unacceptable for rights to remain unprotected, for abuse to be met with silence, and for falsehoods to be normalised.

Legal action was the result of a long accumulation of violations, defamation, abuse, and attacks on reputation and institutions, amid the absence of any official response capable of stopping this unchecked deterioration. When the state withdraws, the courts become the only remaining path to defend rights and dignity. Resorting to international legal proceedings is not an escape from Lebanon; it is a final attempt to hold on to what remains of the idea of a state, and a clear message that those who seek justice should never be condemned for doing so.

Against this backdrop, today's official rhetoric about "the return of investors", "investment conferences", or "promising opportunities" is entirely detached from reality, and fundamentally misleading. No investor returns to a country that cannot protect itself. No capital enters a state that does not apply or respect the law. No economy is built on illusion and disorder.

The problem is not the Lebanese people, whom I respect and hold in deep regard. The problem lies with successive political systems that have exhausted the country, then turned against those who remained, questioned their intentions, and incited against them; rather than asking the only question that matters: Why did they leave? I say this fully aware that I have many friends in Lebanon whom I consider family and loved ones, bound to me by deep human relationships that cannot be measured by investment and cannot be erased by decisions.

I did not leave Lebanon with satisfaction, nor because I could not endure loss. I left because I could no longer accept being a silent witness to the collapse of a state, nor an indirect partner in a system that rejects reform and punishes those who speak the truth. Yet even this painful decision was never a withdrawal from the Lebanese people. I stood by Lebanon in its darkest moments, offered support and assistance, and chose to remain when leaving would have been easier, because standing with people is a moral obligation that transcends circumstances and calculations.

This article is not a declaration of hostility toward Lebanon. It is a final testimony of love and loyalty. A testimony that says: I tried. I endured. I stayed. But the state did not hold on to that loyalty.

A final farewell, Lebanon is not an emotional impulse. It is the conclusion of a long and painful experience. And the truth that must be stated clearly is this: Lebanon is not failing because it lacks money. It is failing because it lacks a state, because it lacks accountability, and because it lacks the genuine will to reverse this decline. I say this today as someone who loved this country deeply: nations do not rise through speeches or slogans. Investments do not return through empty declarations. They return through trust, and trust is built on the rule of law, or it is not built at all.

New ministers

Following are brief profiles of the new ministers:

Osama Khaled Boodai, Minister of Commerce and Industry.

■ Boodai held position of CEO at Kuwaiti Al-Mawashi trading and transport company (2014-24).
■ Served as advisor to Al-Mawashi company chief of board of directors (2024-25).
■ Boodai has a Bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering from Kuwait University.

Abdulaziz Nasser Al-Marzouq, State Minister for Economic Affairs and Investment.

■ Al-Marzouq joined KFH Capital in 2004, formerly known as Al-Muthanna Investment Company, and progressed through several leadership positions before being appointed Chief Executive Officer in 2006.
■ Al-Marzouq holds a Bachelor's degree in Finance from San Jose State University in the United States and a Master's degree from London Business School.

Dr. Reem Ghazi Al-Fulaij, State Minister for Development and Sustainability Affairs.

■ Dr. Al-Fulaij holds a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery from Kuwait University, a Master's degree in Health Services and Hospital Management from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI).
■ She also holds a Master's degree in Genetic Haematology from University College London (UCL).
■ Al-Fulaij has served as Chairperson and Director General of the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition since 2023.
■ In 2025, she was awarded the GCC Medal for Civil Service and Administrative Development.

Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs

■ He served as Deputy Foreign Minister following his appointment in June 2023, and as Ambassador at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headquarters in May 2023.
■ He holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics from DePaul University in the United States (2004) and has extensive diplomatic experience, having served in several overseas missions and progressed through diplomatic ranks from Attache to Deputy Minister.

Dr. Yaqoub Al-Sayed Yousef Al-Refaei, Minister of Finance.

■ Dr. Al-Refaei has served as Secretary General of the Kuwait Banking Association on March 1, 2024.
■ He held position of Advisor to the Chairman of the Institute of Banking Studies, until February 2024.
■ Director General of the Institute (2010-22).
■ Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (2006-10).
■ Dr. Al-Refaie holds a PhD in Public Administration, a Master's degree in Public Administration, a Master's degree in Business Administration from the United States, and a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Kuwait University.

Dr. Tareq Hamad Al-Jalahma, Minister of State for Youth and Sports

■ Dr. Al-Jalahma holds a PhD in Sports Training and has extensive experience in both athletic performance and sports analysis.
■ Dr. Al-Jalahma previously served as a sports advisor for Nottingham Forest Football Club in England and worked as a technical analyst for beIN Sports channels.
■ He is an Asian-level lecturer and has contributed to the development of sports training and education across the region.
■ Dr. Al-Jalahma is also a former professional football player, having represented Al-Qadsia Sporting Club and the Kuwait national football team.

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with representatives of the private sector in attendance.

He revealed that the system will monitor traffic behavior on the roads, detect violations, and issue citations automatically, indicating that it will use artificial intelligence. He said the system will electronically record traffic violations immediately upon commission, contributing to enhanced traffic discipline and improved road safety. He added that the system will involve citizens in consumer goods delivery applications, including food and other items.

He stated that the new system for monitoring taxis, consumer orders, trucks, public transportation and daily rental vehicles will be a comprehensive monitoring and control system aimed at protecting society from negative phenomena and serving as a tool to assist in prosecuting offenders.

Moreover, Al-Adwani disclosed that the forum aims to enhance traffic safety and support the development of the transportation and smart services system in line with Kuwait's 2035 vision.

He pointed out that the forum is a national platform for dialogue among government agencies, delivery and ride-sharing companies, technology providers and experts to discuss shared challenges, regulate the light transport and delivery services sector and present plausible recommendations.

He asserted that traffic safety is a shared responsibility that is not achieved by law or technology alone, but through the integration of roles, driver awareness, commitment of institutions, and the role of the media as a major partner in promoting traffic discipline.

Arab security

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef made the remarks during a meeting on Monday with the Secretary-General of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers, Mohamad Kouman, who delivered an official invitation to Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef to attend the Council's upcoming meeting scheduled in Tunis in March.

Kouman expressed his sincere thanks and appreciation for the warm reception, commending Kuwait's leading role in supporting joint Arab security work and reaffirming the Secretariat's commitment to enhancing cooperation and coordination among Arab countries.

During the meeting, both sides discussed several topics of common interest and ways to strengthen joint Arab security coordination, contributing to efforts to enhance security and stability across the Arab region.

KD 100 mln

According to initial investigations, the suspects had managed to launder some KD six million in a month through banking fraud and forgery activities, while they have amassed a total of KD 100 million through the use of "shell companies" since 2023, added the statement.

Police have seized KD 108,000 found to be in the possession of one of the suspects, while nine mobile phones the gang had purchased through online scams were confiscated, according to the statement.

The interior ministry is working in conjunction with Kuwait's central bank to retrieve the stolen funds that had been deposited in the bank accounts used by the suspects, which were found to be in violation of existential banking laws and regulations, it said.

Storm front

Al-Ali also revealed that the winds will be southeasterly, shifting to northwesterly, reaching speeds of up to 45 kilometers per hour and causing waves to rise to more than six feet.

He affirmed that weather conditions will begin to improve, with cloud cover and the chance of rain gradually decreasing after midnight.

He disclosed that the maximum temperature will be between 28 and 30 degrees Celsius, while the lowest will be between 10 and 12 degrees Celsius.

He also predicted a drop in temperatures with scattered thunderstorms of varying intensity on Wednesday, with the expected maximum temperature ranging from 21 to 23 degrees Celsius and the lowest between nine and 11 degrees Celsius.

Kuwait court

The investigations unveiled the defendants' involvement in serious violations that compromised the integrity of raffle draws and harmed the victims, necessitating their referral to the Criminal Court.

The court also imposed a fine on the defendants sentenced to 10 years in prison, jointly and severally, amounting to KD 3,052,935.280 -- double the amount involved in the money laundering offense.

In addition, the court acquitted a number of defendants of all charges filed against them, while it refrained from sentencing others, on the condition that they submit a pledge accompanied by a financial guarantee of KD500 each to maintain good conduct for a period of one year.

The court ordered the confiscation of the funds involved in the money laundering crime and their proceeds, including revenues, profits and commissions, as well as the confiscation of forged documents, while protecting the rights of the real victims.

It also ruled that the non-Kuwaiti convicts should be deported after serving their prison terms, and referred the civil claims to the competent court.

In its reasoning, the court stated that the acts committed by the defendants, particularly the first defendant (M.A.), in his capacity as a public employee and Head of the Free Offers Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, are considered a grave violation of public office duties. The court found that he abused his position to obtain unlawful personal benefits, thereby, undermining the principles of justice and equal opportunity.

The court stressed that "public office is a trust and not a means to serve private interests. Manipulation of raffle draws erodes public confidence in regulatory authorities, compromises the integrity of commercial transactions, and harms the financial reputation of the State. Such acts constitute a serious breach that warrants deterrent penalties in order to guarantee public order."

The case is based on reports of manipulation and fraud in the 'Ya Hala' raffle draw. Investigations revealed the involvement of the defendants in an organized scheme that undermined the integrity of raffle draws and harmed participants, leading to their referral to the Criminal Court, which issued the aforementioned rulings.

Attorney Ali Al-Ali, lawyer for one of the acquitted defendants, stated that his client's acquittal reflects the soundness of her legal position and the accuracy of the legal and factual defenses presented before the court.

Al-Ali explained that the court was convinced of the absence of evidence supporting the charges against his client and the lack of conclusive proof linking her to the events in question.

He pointed out that the defense focused on challenging the investigations, unveiling their shortcomings, and establishing the absence of criminal intent, which led to the court's decision to acquit his client.

He added that the ruling underscores the fairness of the Kuwaiti judiciary and its commitment to distinguish defendants based on the evidence presented against each of them, rather than resorting to generalization or presumption. He praised the court's approach in applying the law correctly, while safeguarding rights and freedoms.

CONDOLENCES

The Owners,
Management and Staff of

Al-Rashed International Shipping Co. K.S.C.C

Extend their Heartfelt condolences to

Mr. Saju Thomas
Assistant Manager Business Development
and his Family
On the sudden demise of his Father

T.M.Thomas
who passed away in
Thavattackal House, Elanthoor
Pathanamthitta, Kerala, India
on 02nd February 2026.

May his soul Rest in Peace



Federal agents lobbed tear gas and flash bangs at protesters in front of the ICE building on Jan 31 in Portland, Ore. (AP)

Mayor of Portland, Oregon, demands ICE leave city after agents gas protesters

PORTLAND, Ore., Feb 2, (AP): The mayor of Portland, Oregon, demanded U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement leave his city after federal agents launched tear gas at a crowd of demonstrators - including young children - outside an ICE facility during a weekend protest that he characterized as peaceful.

Witnesses said agents deployed tear gas, pepper balls and rubber bullets as thousands of marchers arrived at the South Waterfront facility on Saturday. Erin Hoover Barnett, a former OregonLive reporter who joined the protest, said she was about 100 yards (90 meters) from the building when "what looked like two guys with rocket launchers" started dousing the crowd with gas.

"To be among parents frantically trying to tend to little children in strollers, people using motorized carts trying to navigate as the rest of us staggered in retreat, unsure of how to get to safety, was terrifying," Barnett wrote in an email to OregonLive.

Messages were sent Sunday to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which oversees ICE, seeking to confirm details of the incident, including that federal agents deployed tear gas against demonstrators.

Portland Mayor Keith Wilson said the daytime demonstration was peaceful, "where the vast majority of those present violated no laws, made no threat and posed no danger" to federal agents.

"To those who continue to work for ICE: Resign. To those who control this facility: Leave," Wilson wrote in a statement Saturday night. "Through your use of violence and the trampling of the Constitution, you have lost all legitimacy and replaced it with shame."

The Portland Fire Bureau sent paramedics to treat people at the scene, police said. Police officers monitored the crowd but made no arrests Saturday.

The ICE facility in Portland is a field office that includes a processing center where federal officers detain and interview people to determine their legal status as US residents, according to a city website.

Saturday's Portland protest was one of many similar demonstrations nationwide against President Donald Trump administration's immigration crackdown in cities like Minneapolis, where in recent weeks federal agents killed two residents, Alex Pretti and Renee Good.

Federal agents in Eugene, Oregon, deployed tear gas on Friday when protesters broke windows and tried to get inside the Federal Building near downtown. City police declared a riot and ordered the crowd to disperse.

Trump posted Saturday on social media that it was up to local law enforcement agencies to police protests in their cities. However, Trump said he has instructed Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem to have federal agents be vigilant in guarding US government facilities.

Debate over ICE deepens

US House Speaker Johnson faces tough choices as partial govt shutdown drags

WASHINGTON, Feb 2, (AP): US House Speaker Mike Johnson faces tough days ahead trying to muscle a federal funding package to passage and prevent a prolonged partial government shutdown as debate intensifies over the Trump administration's sweeping immigration enforcement operations.

Johnson signaled he is relying on help from President Donald Trump to ensure passage. Trump struck a deal with senators to separate funding for the Department of Homeland Security from a broader package after public outrage over two shooting deaths during protests in Minneapolis against Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Under the plan approved by the Senate, DHS would be funded temporarily to Feb. 13, setting up a deadline for Congress to try to find consensus on new restrictions on ICE operations.

"The president is leading this," Johnson, R-La, told "Fox News Sunday."

"It's his play call to do it this way," the speaker said, adding that the Republican president has "already conceded that he wants to turn down the volume" on federal immigration sweeps and raids.

A first test will come Monday afternoon during a committee meeting when Johnson will need his own GOP majority to advance the package after Democrats refused to provide the votes for speedy consideration. Johnson said he is hopeful work can wrap up for a full House vote, at least by Tuesday.

Democrats are demanding restraints on ICE that go beyond $20 million for body cameras that already is in the bill and want to require that federal immigration agents unmask and identify themselves and are pressing for an end to roving patrols, amid other changes.

"What is clear is that the Department of Homeland Security needs to be dramatically reformed," said House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York on ABC's "This Week."

Jeffries said the administration needs to begin negotiations now, not over the next two weeks, on changes to immigration enforcement operations.

"Masks should come off," he said. "Judicial warrants should absolutely be required consistent with the Constitution, in our view, before DHS agents or ICE agents are breaking into the homes of the American people or ripping people out of their cars."

At the same time, House Republicans, with some allies in the Senate, are making their own demands, as they work to support Trump's clamp down on immigrants in the U.S.



US House Speaker Mike Johnson leaves 10 Downing Street after meeting Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer in London on Jan 19. (AP)

The House Freedom Caucus has insisted on fuller funding for Homeland Security while certain Republicans are pushing to include other measures, including the SAVE Act, a longshot Trump priority that would require proof of citizenship before Americans are eligible to participate in elections and vote.

Johnson said he would be talking to lawmakers over the day ahead to see what it will take to win over support.

Meanwhile, a number of federal agencies are snared in the funding standoff as the government went into a partial shutdown over the weekend.

Defense, health, transportation and housing are among those that were given shutdown guidance by the administration, though many operations are deemed essential and services are not necessarily interrupted. Workers could go without pay if the impasse drags on. Some could be furloughed.

Lawmakers from both parties are increasingly concerned the closure will disrupt the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which they rely on to help constituents in the states after storms and other disasters.

This is the second time in a matter of months that federal government operations have been disrupted as Congress is using the annual funding process as leverage to extract policy changes. Last fall, Democrats sparked what became the longest federal shutdown in history, 43 days, as they protested the expiration of health insurance tax breaks.

That shutdown ended with a promise to vote on proposals to extend the Affordable Care Act tax credits. But with GOP opposition, Democrats were unable to achieve their goal of keeping the subsidies in place. Insurance premiums spiked in the new year for millions of people.

This time, the administration has signaled its interest in more quickly resolving the shutdown.

Johnson said he was in the Oval Office last week when Trump, along with border czar Tom Homan, spoke with Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York to work out a deal on immigration enforcement changes.

"I think we're on the path to get agreement," Johnson said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Body cameras, which are already provided for in the package, and an end to the roving patrols by immigration agents are areas of potential agreement, Johnson said.

But he said taking the masks off and putting names on agents' uniforms could lead to problems for law enforcement officers as they are being targeted by the protesters and their personal information is posted online.

"I don't think the president would approve it - and he shouldn't," Johnson said on Fox.

Democrats, however, said the immigration operations are out of control, and must end in Minneapolis and other cities.

Growing numbers of lawmakers are calling for Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem to be fired or impeached.

"What is happening in Minnesota right now is a dystopia," said Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., who led efforts to hold the line for more changes.

"ICE is making this country less safe, not more safe today," Murphy said on "Fox News Sunday."

"Our focus over the next two weeks has to be reining in a lawless and immoral immigration agency."

Talks resuming this week: Kremlin official

Russian drones kill 12 in Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine, Feb 2, (AP): A Russian drone strike on the Ukrainian city of Dnipro hit a bus carrying mineworkers and killed at least a dozen people, Ukrainian authorities said Sunday.

The strike injured several more people and sparked a fire that was subsequently put out, according to the emergency services.

DTEK, Ukraine's largest private energy company, said it owned the bus and accused Russia of carrying out "a large-scale terrorist attack on DTEK mines in the Dnipropetrovsk region," whose capital is Dnipro.

"The epicenter of one of the attacks was a company bus transporting miners from the enterprise after a shift in the Dnipropetrovsk region," the company said in a Telegram post.

The strike came days after US President Donald Trump said the Kremlin had agreed to temporarily halt the targeting of the Ukrainian capital and other cities, as the region suffers under freezing temperatures that have brought widespread hardship to Ukrainians.

Ukrainian Energy Minister Denys Shmyhal on Sunday called the strike in Dnipro "a cynical and targeted attack on energy sector workers," and said it occured near the Ternivska mine east of the city.

Hours earlier, Ukraine's emergency services reported that Russian attack drones injured six people at a maternity hospital in Zaporizhzhia, southern Ukraine, on Sunday morning.

On Saturday afternoon, top Russian envoy Kirill Dmitriev said he had held a "constructive meeting with the US peacemaking delegation" in Florida.



In this photo provided by Ukraine's 93rd Kholodnyi Yar Separate Mechanized Brigade press service, soldiers return from their mission in Donetsk region, Ukraine on Jan 3. (AP)

A new round of US-brokered talks on ending Russia's war on Ukraine is set to go ahead this week after a brief postponement, a senior Kremlin official said Monday, with negotiations taking place against a backdrop of continued front-line fighting and deadly long-range attacks on rear areas.

The trilateral talks will take place on Wednesday and Thursday in Abu Dhabi, where a previous meeting was held last month, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday that he would be sending a delegation to the meeting, which initially was to be held at the weekend but was delayed by what Peskov said were scheduling conflicts.

The Trump administration has over the past year pushed the two sides to find compromises. But breaking the deadlock on key issues appears no closer as the fourth anniversary of Russia's all-out invasion of its neighbor approaches later this month.

Peskov described the talks as "very complex."

"On some issues, we have certainly come closer because there have been discussions, conversations, and on some issues it is easier to find common ground," he told reporters. "There are issues where it's more difficult to find common ground."

Russian presidential envoy Kirill Dmitriev was in Miami, Florida, at the weekend for talks with American officials, but Peskov refused to provide any details of the meeting.

A key sticking point is whether Russia gets to keep the Ukrainian territory its army has occupied, especially in Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland. Moscow is also demanding possession of other Ukrainian land there that it hasn't been able to capture.

Russian drones and missiles have continued to bombard civilian areas , killing 12 miners in a bus on Sunday in the most recent mass aerial attack. The barrages have also wrecked the Ukrainian power grid, leaving people without heating, light and running water in bitter winter cold.



People gather in support of Czech President Petr Pavel at the Old Town Square in Prague, Czech Republic on Feb 1. (AP)

Tens of thousands of Czechs rally in support of Pavel over dispute with FM

Tens of thousands Czechs rallied Sunday in the capital and elsewhere to throw their weight behind President Petr Pavel in his dispute with the country's foreign minister.

The demonstrators packed the picturesque Old Town Square and some others had to gather at nearby Wenceslas Square where they watched the speeches on big screens.

Some waved Czech, Ukrainian and European Union flags, while others displayed posters with the popular president and banners that read: "Long Live Pavel."

Pavel's refusal to appoint a government minister representing the right-wing Motorists for Themselves Euro-skeptic party, which is led by Foreign Minister Petr Macinka, is at the core of the dispute.

Pavel said that Filip Turek was ineligible to become the environment minister after a daily published posts from his Facebook page found to be openly racist, homophobic and sexist.

Turek apologized for some posts, but denied that he posted some others.

Macinka accused the president of violating the country's Constitution and threatened him with facing consequences if he fails to appoint his controversial associate. (AP)

Europe

Son of Norway's crown princess arrested: The eldest son of Norway's crown princess has been arrested, just before his trial opens, police said Monday.



Høiby

Marius Borg Høiby was arrested on Sunday evening and is accused of assault, threats with a knife and violation of a restraining order, police said in a statement. They requested four week's detention on grounds of risk of reoffending.

On Tuesday, he's due to go on trial at the Oslo district court. The indictment includes 38 counts, including abuse in a close relationship against one former partner, acts of violence against another and transporting 3.5 kilograms (7.7 pounds) of marijuana. Other charges include making death threats and traffic violations.

Høiby has been under scrutiny since he was repeatedly arrested in 2024 on various allegations of wrongdoing. But he had been free pending trial until Sunday.

Høiby is the son of Mette-Marit from a previous relationship and stepson of the heir to the throne, Crown Prince Haakon. (AP)

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Swiss Alpine bar fire claims 41st victim: An 18-year-old Swiss national has died in a Zurich hospital from injuries sustained in a Swiss Alpine bar fire, bringing the death toll to 41 a month after the tragedy.

The victim died on Saturday, according to the Swiss public prosecutor. The prosecutor said in a statement Sunday it would provide no further information on the status of the investigation.

Investigators have said they believe sparkling candles atop Champagne bottles ignited the fire when they came too close to the ceiling at the packed Le Constellation bar in the ski resort of Crans-Montana, less than two hours after midnight on Jan 1.

Authorities are looking into whether soundproofing material on the ceiling conformed with regulations and whether the candles were permitted for use in the bar. Fire safety inspections hadn't been carried out since 2019. (AP)

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Man arrested in UK stabbing: A man was arrested after a woman was stabbed to death in northwest London, the Metropolitan Police said on Sunday.

The police were called on Saturday afternoon to reports of a stabbing incident. The victim, a 50-year-old woman, was found with stab wounds. Despite the efforts of emergency services, she was pronounced dead at the scene.

A 30-year-old man was arrested on Saturday evening on suspicion of murder. It is believed that the suspect and the victim were known to each other. (Xinhua)

Europe-wide army could be 'extremely dangerous': Kallas

BRUSSELS, Feb 2, (AP): European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas on Monday rejected calls for a Europe-wide army, warning that it could be "extremely dangerous" as the bloc considers ways to provide its own security after the United States warned that its priorities lie elsewhere.

Talk of a European army has resurfaced amid tensions within NATO over President Donald Trump's threats to annex Greenland, the semiautonomous territory of NATO-ally Denmark.

"Those who say that we need a European army, maybe those people haven't really thought this through practically," Kallas said. "If you are already part of NATO then you can't create a separate army."

Kallas told a security conference in Norway that the most important military asset during a crisis "is the chain of command - who gives orders to whom."



Norway's Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store, (left), and EU Foreign Affairs Chief Kaja Kallas talk during their meeting in Oslo on Feb 2. (AP)

Asia

Record snow prompts Japan's Aomori to seek GSDF assistance: Record-breaking snowfall has battered the northeastern Japanese prefecture of Aomori, prompting local authorities to request assistance from the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) to remove snow from the roofs amid growing fears of life-threatening accidents and infrastructure damage.

The city of Aomori recorded some 183 cm of snow on Feb. 1, about 2.7 times the average, leading the local government to ask for help from GSDF for the first time since 2005, Kyodo News reported on Monday.

Aomori Governor Soichiro Miyashita told an emergency news conference on Monday that the prefecture is facing imminent life-threatening risks, citing deaths caused by falling roof snow and the possibility of buildings collapsing under the weight of accumulated snow.

Over 90 people have been injured while some have died after apparently falling from roofs during snow removal, the prefectural government said.

With the general election scheduled for Sunday, many have expressed concern that ongoing snow and poor road conditions could affect access to voting sites. (Xinhua)

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19 people jailed for fatal fire in Beijing: A total of 19 people on Monday received jail terms ranging from six years and six months to two years for their roles in a fire that killed 29 and injured 42 at a Beijing hospital in 2023.

The Fengtai District People's Court in Beijing announced first-instance verdicts for Wang Wenjie and 18 others on charges of causing a major liability accident.

The court found that the fire in Beijing Changfeng Hospital was caused by sparks from a construction project that ignited volatiles produced by combustible paint on April 18, 2023.

Furthermore, the failure to effectively evacuate and relocate patients from upper floors contributed to the tragedy, which caused 29 deaths, 42 injuries, and severe economic losses. (Xinhua)

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Rescued passengers from M/V Trisha Kerstin 3, an inter-island cargo and passenger ferry that sank on a boat around waters of Isabela City, Basilan Province, Philippines on Jan 26. (AP)

6 arrested over 51 mln yen robbery in HK: Six people had been arrested for robbing 51 million yen (about 330,000 U.S. dollars) of cash at Hong Kong's Sheung Wan on Friday, the Hong Kong Police Force said on Saturday.

The suspects, five male and one female, aged between 23 and 52, had been detained on suspicion of robbery, the police said, adding that more arrests are likely.

The police said that on Friday morning, two employees of a Japanese precious metal company were carrying 190 million yen of cash for currency exchange around Des Voeux Road Central in Sheung Wan when two men snatched a backpack containing 51 million yen from them. The two men fled the scene in a getaway car.

Around six hours after the incident, the police arrested the two alleged robbers of Japanese nationality, along with a female accomplice, who were carrying 4.6 million yen of the stolen cash at the Hong Kong International Airport. Two male employees of a cryptocurrency exchange were arrested later on suspicion of assisting in the disposal of stolen cash.

The police also tracked down another 7 million yen at a money changer.

A 27-year-old Japanese man who reported the robbery was detained after police. (Xinhua)

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Death toll in Philippine ferry sinking rises to 40: The death toll from a ferry that sank off Basilan province in the southern Philippines rose to 40, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said Sunday.

Search and rescue teams recovered three more bodies, and one additional victim, a six-month-old baby who had initially been omitted from the official count, was added to the tally, according to Coast Guard District Southeastern Mindanao.

Search and rescue operations are continuing nearly a week after the ferry sank in waters northeast of Baluk-Baluk Island while en route from Zamboanga City to Jolo town in Sulu province.

At least 316 people were rescued, according to the PCG, although authorities are still working to determine the exact number of passengers on board.. (Xinhua)

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6 hospitalized after house fire in Australia: Six people have been hospitalized, including two children with life-threatening injuries, following a house fire in the Australian state of Queensland on Sunday morning.

Emergency services were called to the fire at a property in the city of Townsville, over 1,000 km northwest of the Queensland capital of Brisbane, shortly after 5:30 a.m. local time, and located multiple people within the home.

Two children, including a toddler, were rushed to a nearby hospital in critical conditions with life-threatening breathing issues.

Four more people, two adults and two teenagers, were also hospitalized in stable conditions with smoke inhalation injuries. (Xinhua)



President of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay Yamandu Orsi, who is on a seven-day state visit to China, arrives in Beijing, capital of China on Feb 1. (AP)

Uruguayan president arrives in Beijing for state visit

President of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay Yamandu Orsi arrived in Beijing on Sunday for a state visit to China from Feb 1 to 7.

This is President Orsi's first state visit to China. During the visit, Chinese President Xi Jinping will have talks with him for an in-depth exchange of views on deepening the China-Uruguay comprehensive strategic partnership, high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and international and regional issues of mutual interest.

The Chinese side hopes and believes that under the strategic guidance of the two presidents, the visit will play a positive role in further deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said earlier. (Xinhua)

S.Korea's former first lady appeals against 20-month prison sentence

SEOUL, Feb 2, (Xinhua): Kim Keon-Hee, wife of the impeached former South Korean President Yoon Suk-Yeol, filed an appeal against her 20-month prison sentence, Yonhap news agency said Monday.

The legal team of Kim, who was sentenced to 20 months in prison with a forfeiture of 12.81 million won (about 8,780 U.S. dollars) for corruption charges, submitted the notice of appeal to the Seoul court.

The court charged Kim with receiving valuables from Unification Church officials in return for favorable treatment of the religious group in 2022. Meanwhile, the court found her not guilty of the charges of violating the Capital Markets Act and the political funds act.

On Friday, the team of special counsel Min Joong-ki, who led the investigation into corruption allegations involving Yoon and his wife, filed an appeal against the court ruling, saying the court failed to properly recognize Kim's alleged role as a joint offender.

The special counsel demanded a 15-year jail term with a fine of 2 billion won and about 948 million won in forfeitures.

Kim was indicted under detention in August last year on charges of her participation in the stock price manipulation between October 2010 and December 2012.

She was also charged with conspiring with Yoon to receive illegal public opinion poll results worth about 270 million won free of charge from a political broker on 58 occasions from April 2021 to March 2022 ahead of the presidential election.

The court, however, ruled that there was no evidence to prove the presidential couple's order of the opinion polls.

Kim became the first wife of a former South Korean president to be tried under detention, as she has been held at a detention center since last August.



Supporters of former South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and his wife Kim Keon Hee gather outside Seoul Central District Court in Seoul, South Korea on Jan 28. (AP)

Also:

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia has arrested a total of 2,044 foreigners in its latest crackdown on online scams, said a spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior on Sunday.

The suspects, in eight nationalities, were apprehended during a raid on a casino with 22 buildings in southeastern **Svay Rieng** province's **Bavet City**, which shares border with Vietnam, on Saturday.

"This truly reflects that the Cambodian government will never loosen its crackdowns on online scam criminals," Ministry of Interior Spokesperson **Touch Sokhak** said in a news release.

He said that Cambodia is "not a safe haven, but a hell for criminals."

The Southeast Asian country has launched an unprecedented nationwide crackdown on cyber scam networks, aiming at maintaining and protecting security, public order and social safety.

Laura Fernandez claims victory in Costa Rica's presidential election

SAN JOSE, Feb 2, (Xinhua): Laura Fernandez, the candidate from the ruling Sovereign People Party, on Sunday celebrated her victory in the Costa Rican presidential election after securing 48.3 percent of the vote.

Fernandez marked the occasion with her supporters in downtown San Jose, declaring her commitment to continuing the transformative changes the country needs and leading a government focused on dialogue.

According to data from the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, with 93.8 percent of polling stations reporting, Fernandez defeated Alvaro Ramos of the National Liberation Party, who received 33.4 percent of the vote, and Claudia Dobles of the Citizen Agenda Coalition, who garnered 4.9 percent. In Costa Rica, a candidate must secure over 40 percent of the vote to win the presidency in the first round.

Fernandez has already received congratulatory calls from Costa Rican President Rodrigo Chaves and Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele. She stated that this electoral victory marks the beginning of a new chapter in Costa Rican history, which she has termed "the Third Republic."



Presidential candidate Laura Fernández addresses supporters after polls closed in San Jose, Costa Rica on Feb 1. (AP)

"Costa Rica has voted for the continuity of change -- a change aimed solely at rescuing and perfecting our democratic institutions and returning them to you, the sovereign people, to foster greater well-being and prosperity for our nation," Fernandez affirmed.

"The excitement is immense, and the sense of responsibility I feel in undertaking the task of finalizing these democratic transformations and executing this change is enormous," she added.

Fernandez emphasized that her government will prioritize national dialogue and called on the opposition to engage constructively. Her rivals acknowledged their defeat but pledged to defend Costa Rican democracy through their representatives in the Legislative Assembly.

Ramos expressed hope that the president-elect would govern wisely and assured that his party would support her when her decisions benefit the country.

Bangladesh's ex-leader Hasina and UK lawmaker niece sentenced in graft case

DHAKA, Bangladesh, Feb 2, (AP): A court in Bangladesh on Monday sentenced former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to 10 years in jail and her niece Tulip Siddiq, who is a British lawmaker, to four years in prison in two cases involving a government township project near the capital.

Judge Mohammed Rabiul Alam of the Special Judge's Court-4 also handed down seven-year prison sentences to another niece, Azmina Siddiq, and a nephew, Radwan Mujib Siddiq.

The country's official corruption watchdog filed the cases alleging that Hasina colluded with government officials to illegally secure six plots in the Purbachal New Town Project, near Dhaka, for herself and her family members despite their ineligibility under government regulations.

The verdicts came as the interim government, headed by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus, prepares for Feb. 12 elections. Hasina's former ruling Awami League party has been banned from taking part.

Both Hasina and Tulip Siddiq were sentenced earlier in similar cases and have denounced the verdict. Siddiq said she obtained no land from the government during her aunt's 15-year rule as she is not a Bangladeshi citizen. But the prosecution said she influenced her aunt to provide her mother and two siblings with land in the project, an allegation she rejected outright.



Policemen escort accused Khurshid Alam into the courtroom following a Dhaka special judge's court verdict that sentenced ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment in two corruption cases, in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Feb 2. (AP)

Hasina was previously convicted in four other cases over corruption in the project as she faced charges of misusing power. In those cases, the court sentenced her to a total of 26 years in prison, while her son, Sajeeb Wazed, and daughter, Saima Wazed, received five years each. Hasina's younger sister, Sheikh Rehana, was sentenced to seven years. All of them are currently abroad. Tulip Siddiq lives in the U.K.

Hasina has been in exile in India since Aug 5 in 2024 when she was ousted in a student-led mass uprising, ending her 15-year rule. She has been sentenced to death on charges of crimes against humanity involving the uprising when hundreds of people were killed. She denounced the trial process, terming a special tribunal as "a kangaroo court."

India has not responded to a request from Bangladesh to extradite Hasina.

Lat/Am

Mexico pledges to send aid to Cuba: Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum announced Sunday she plans to send humanitarian aid to Cuba this week, including food and other humanitarian aid.

Sheinbaum's comments came after US President Donald Trump said he asked the Mexican leader to suspend oil shipments to the Caribbean island.

Sheinbaum said at a public event in the northern state of Sonora that she did not discuss Cuban affairs in a phone conversation with Trump on Thursday. She added that her government seeks to " diplomatically solve everything related to the oil shipments (to Cuba) for humanitarian reasons." Earlier, Trump told reporters that he told the Mexican president not to send oil to Cuba. (AP)

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Venezuelan activist released from jail: Venezuelan human rights activist Javier Tarazona, an ally of opposition leader María Corina Machado, was released from prison after the government promised to free political prisoners in an amnesty bill, rights organizations and family members said Sunday.

Tarazona, the director of the Venezuelan nonprofit human rights group FundaRedes, was arrested in July 2021, after reporting to authorities that he had been harassed by national intelligence officials. Two other activists of the group were also detained at the time.

Venezuela's Foro Penal, a rights group that monitors the situations of political prisoners in the country, said Sunday that 317 people jailed for political reasons had been released as of noon local time Sunday, and 700 others were still waiting to be freed. (AP)

Africa

7 dead as cyclone hits Madagascar: The passage of tropical cyclone Fytia has left seven people dead and more than 28,000 affected in Madagascar, according to a latest report released by the National Office for Risk and Disaster Management (BNGRC) on Sunday.

The cyclone also caused five injuries, with more than 800 houses completely destroyed and over 6,000 houses flooded, the BNGRC said.

The hardest-hit areas include Soalala, Marovoay and Mahajanga, cities located in the northwest of the country, as well as the capital, Antananarivo.

Fytia made landfall on Saturday morning in the western part of the country, affecting 19 districts, before moving back out to sea on Sunday via Vatomandry, a city on the eastern coast. (Xinhua)

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'Boko Haram commander killed': The Nigerian army said Sunday it killed a top commander of Boko Haram and 10 members of the Islamic extremist group in a night raid in the northeastern part of the country.

Abu Khalid, a commander of Boko Haram in the Sambisa Forest in Borno state, was a key figure within "the terrorist hierarchy, coordinating operations and logistics in the Sambisa axis," army spokesman Sani Uba said in a statement.

The soldiers attacked the Boko Haram militants on Saturday night in the Kodunga area of Borno state, Uba said, adding that weapons, food items and medical supplies were recovered from the militants. (Xinhua)



Pakistani army soldiers and other security officials examine a site following militants attack with guns and grenades, in Quetta, Pakistan on Jan 31. (AP)

Pakistani forces kill 177 Baloch militants in 48 hours

QUETTA, Pakistan, Feb 2, (AP): Pakistani security forces killed about two dozen militants overnight in multiple raids in the insurgency-hit southwest bordering Afghanistan, raising the militant death toll to 177 in the past 48 hours, officials said Monday, following a wave of coordinated insurgent attacks that killed at least 33 people, mostly civilian.

Police, backed by the military, have been conducting these raids in several areas against members of the outlawed Baloch Liberation Army since early Saturday, after nearly 200 militants in small groups carried out simultaneous suicide bombings and gun attacks on police stations, civilian homes, and security facilities across the province.

Analysts say the scale of militant deaths in the past 48 hours is the highest in decades.

The weekend attacks claimed by BLA killed at least 18 civilians and 15 members of the security forces, drawing widespread condemnation from political leaders across Pakistan, including members of the party led by imprisoned former prime minister Imran Khan.

On Monday, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in a statement praised the security forces for killing an additional 22 insurgents. He described those killed as "Indian-backed terrorists." However, he offered no evidence, and there was no immediate response from New Delhi.

Business

OPEC+ delays production hike

VIENNA, Feb 2, (Xinhua): The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies, known as OPEC+, decided on Sunday to continue pausing oil output increases in March, OPEC said in a statement.

The decision came after a virtual meeting of OPEC+ member countries, including Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria and Oman, to review global market conditions and the economic outlook.

Zain success partner of 'Souq Al-Mubarakiya 3' in Manchester, UK

Bader Al-Kharafi: We believe in the potential of Kuwait's youth to make a real difference through knowledge, bold innovation, & responsible digital leadership

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: As the success partner of the third edition of Souq Al-Mubarakiya in Manchester, United Kingdom, Zain joins Kuwait's celebrations of the 65th National Day and 35th Liberation Day anniversaries. This partnership reflects the company's vision to strengthen its connection with the next generation that carries Kuwait with them at home and abroad.

The unique gathering, organized by Youthvent, kicked off with strong attendance from Kuwaiti students, their families, and Kuwaiti citizens residing in the UK. Zain ensured a prominent presence through the participation of its executive leadership, led by Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, and CEO of Zain Kuwait, Nawaf Al-Gharabally, reaffirming the importance of this national gathering and its role in strengthening belonging and connection among Kuwaitis abroad.

Also in attendance were Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Sport Bashar Abdullah, Head of the Organizing Committee of Souq Al-Mubarakiya Abdulqader Al-Abduljader, along with officials from the participating entities.

Bader Al-Kharafi said: "We are betting on the potential of Kuwait's youth to make a real difference, not only through knowledge, but through the ability to turn it into practical solutions and bold innovation that creates value for the economy and community. Our responsibility today is to give this generation the confidence, space, and opportunities to lead digital transformation with a conscious sense of responsibility that places people and the nation at the heart of progress."



Al-Abduljader honors Al-Kharafi in recognition of Zain's support.



Bader Al-Kharafi, Nawaf Al-Gharabally, Bashar Abdullah, and Abdulqader Al-Abduljader in Manchester.

He added: "Investing in our students abroad is not merely a participation or a seasonal event. It is an embrace of minds that carry Kuwait with them wherever they go. These students represent our nation through their knowledge, identity, and ambition that knows no boundaries. It is our duty to stay close to them, listen to their experiences, support their journey, and reinforce their connection to their roots as they shape their future."

Al-Kharafi concluded: "The skills our youth acquire today are our true national asset through which we will build a better future. This asset is the fuel that will propel Kuwait to the forefront of the digital world, through national talents who possess the tools of the era, understand its requirements, and are capable of competing, innovating, and creating opportunities in a rapidly changing world."

Bader Al-Kharafi:

- Investing in our students abroad is an enduring commitment to minds that represent Kuwait's identity and limitless ambition.
- The skills young people build today are one of our most valuable national assets, and the fuel that will drive the country to the forefront of the digital era.

As it does every year, Zain maintained a strong presence throughout theSouq Al-Mubarakiya activities. The program included interactive Zain competitions and prize giveaways, in addition to the participation of a number of distinguished Kuwaiti companies showcasing their products and services.

The event also featured live performances by local artists Ibrahim Dashti and Aboud Khawaja, as well as the "Stage Talk" segment hosted by media personality Khaled Al-Ansari, alongside various other interactive segments that enabled Zain to engage closely with students.

The third edition of Souq Al-Mubarakiya offered a range of heritage-inspired social and entertainment activities aimed at direct engagement with Kuwaiti students studying across the United Kingdom, as well as Kuwaiti citizens residing there. The event helped reinforce national belonging and brought a sense of Kuwaiti atmosphere closer to the audience.

Zain continues to support initiatives that bring Kuwaitis abroad together and open spaces for connection and interaction, reflecting Kuwait's bright image and strengthening a unified community spirit. Zain also believes that building digital capabilities and empowering youth are core pillars to enhancing Kuwait's readiness for the next phase.

Zain further emphasized that its ongoing engagement with Kuwaiti students abroad stems from a deep belief that young minds are Kuwait's true capital, and that every educational experience abroad is a building block toward a more innovative Kuwait that is more connected to the world.

Kuwait's real estate sees shift in investor behavior

Transaction volumes up, values flat in Jan

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: Amidst the transformations witnessed in the local real estate market, the performance in January 2026 reflected a clear shift in investor behavior and investment trends, with notable variations across sectors in terms of the number and value of transactions.

While the volume of transactions increased, the total value remained stable, indicating a repositioning within the market dynamics.

The local real estate market recorded 442 transactions in January 2026, with a total value of KD251.8 million, compared to 405 transactions valued at KD252.4 million in January 2025.

This increase in the number of transactions, along with stability in value, reflects a change in the nature of transactions and a trend among investors towards smaller, more diversified investment volumes.

Private real estate accounted for the largest share of total transactions, recording 307 deals worth KD133.9 million, compared to 282 deals worth KD105.9 million in January 2025 -- 8.8 percent increase in the number of deals and a 26.4 percent increase in value.

This performance confirms the continuous growth of demand for private housing, supported by genuine housing needs, improved transaction activity, and the implementation of the law against land speculation.

The number of investment transactions reached 114, valued at KD74.6 million, compared to 107 transactions worth KD119.2 million during the same period last year.

Despite the 6.5 percent increase in the number of transactions, the value recorded a significant decline of 37.4 percent, reflecting investors' shift towards lower-value or mid-sized properties amid the reassessment of returns and a changing risk profile.

The commercial sector witnessed a huge leap in January 2026, with eight transactions totaling KD27.3 million, compared to three transactions totaling KD5.2 million in January 2025 -- 166.6 percent increase in the number of transactions and 425 percent increase in value, indicating selective activity and high-quality opportunities in this sector.

The industrial real estate sector experienced a disparity between the number and value of transactions. Twelve transactions were recorded, totaling KD11.5 million, compared to 11 transactions totaling KD14.6 million last year.

This is a slight increase in the number of transactions (nine percent), but the value decreased (21.2 percent), suggesting a cautious equilibrium linked to industrial and service sector activity.

One transaction was recorded in the coastal strip, valued at KD4.5 million, compared to no transaction in January 2025. This entails the limited but notable presence of such type of property, which is often associated with selective, high-value deals.

In contrast, January 2025 witnessed two transactions for warehouses valued at KD7.3 million, while no similar transactions were recorded in January 2026, indicating a decline in activity for this type of property in the current period.

In line with its commitment to sustainability

Gulf Bank hosts 'From Farm to Table' workshop to promote local produce

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: As part of its ongoing commitment to community engagement, Gulf Bank organized an interactive workshop titled "From Farm to Table", as part of its sustainability workshop series aimed at raising environmental awareness and encouraging healthier and more mindful consumption habits.

The workshop was held at Al Bohaira Farm and in collaboration with chef Danna Al-Tourah. It welcomed a diverse group of Gulf Bank customers, including women, cooking enthusiasts, and individuals interested in agriculture. The session lasted approximately three hours and offered a hands-on learning experience that combined cooking with agricultural insights.

Participants learned about the value of using local and seasonal ingredients, and how supporting local farms helps reduce reliance on imported products while promoting more sustainable food choices in Kuwait. Under the guidance of Chef Danna, attendees prepared simple and fresh dishes using locally sourced ingredients, bringing the "From Farm to Table" concept to life.

The initiative aims to raise awareness of the environmental impact of food choices, encourage healthy and sustainable eating habits, support local agri-tourism, and promote everyday food practices that benefit individuals, local producers, and the wider community.

The workshop aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and Goal 13 (Climate Action).

Through this initiative, Gulf Bank continues to support practical sustainability initiatives that contribute to building a more aware and environmentally responsible community, while strengthening partnerships with local entities that share the Bank's vision for a more sustainable future.



Part of the workshop activities.



Great eagerness among the participants.

KPC plans 33 tenders across IT, construction

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) announced its plan to issue 33 tenders in the 2026/2027 fiscal year, including technical, construction and service projects.

These tenders are part of KPC's plans to develop its infrastructure and enhance the efficiency of its operational and administrative systems.

The tenders include projects for developing and upgrading information systems' malware protection, governance, risk and compliance management, systems penetration testing, brand protection, application control systems, supply, operation, development and maintenance of data storage devices, supply, installation, renewal and maintenance of software, development of internet and communication services, provision of specialized personnel in the field of information systems, supply computer hardware and peripherals, and renewal and maintenance of equipment and software for the Crisis Management Center, theater and Burgan meeting room, in addition to supplying, installing, operating and maintaining audiovisual equipment.

On the construction side, the tenders include mechanical work for the water feature and smoke ventilation system in the oil sector complex, replacement of water networks, pumps, filters and air conditioning unit (FCU) motors upgrading the central water filtration system, supplying and storing the glass facades for the oil sector complex buildings, inspection, maintenance and repair of the structural frameworks of the multi-storey car park canopies, civil restoration work for the reflecting lake in the corporation building, renovation of the lobbies on the 18th and 19th floors of the corporation tower, insulation work for sloping roofs in several buildings, construction of an additional floor in the oil sector complex warehouse, and construction of a canopy for the corporation building entrance.

The package also consists of tenders for engineering consultancy services, provision of staff for preparing and serving hot and cold refreshments, and supply of catering materials.

In a related development, Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) announced a public tender for the sale of spent catalysts at Zour Refinery. The tender will open on Feb 3 and close on March 3.

The Higher Procurement Committee for KPC tenders, at the request of the corporation, announced a public tender for the provision of hospitality and cleaning staff for the Petroleum Training Center. This tender opened on Feb 1st and will close on May 5.

Jazeera Airways inaugural flight lands at Amman City Airport

AMMAN, Feb 2: Amman City Airport (ADJ) welcomed on Sunday Kuwait's leading low-cost carrier Jazeera Airways, on its inaugural flight from Kuwait to ADJ. This flight marked a major milestone with Jazeera Airways becoming the first airline to operate direct scheduled commercial flights between the two airports.

Jazeera Airways has been serving Amman for nearly two decades, and this inaugural arrival at ADJ further strengthens air connectivity between Jordan and Kuwait while offering passengers a faster and more convenient gateway into the capital. Located just 10 kilometres from central Amman, Amman City Airport enables shorter transfer times and a more efficient airport experience.

Welcoming the first flight, Eng. Ahmed Azzam, CEO of Jordan Airport Company, said: "The arrival of Jazeera Airways' first flight to Amman City Airport marks a key milestone in the airport's reopening and operational activation. This step reflects Jordan Airports Company's commitment to strengthening air connectivity, expanding travel options, and supporting sustainable aviation growth in the region. We look forward to a successful and long-term partnership with Jazeera Airways that will contribute to economic activity and enhance Jordan's role as a regional aviation hub."

Amman is a key market for Jazeera Airways, supporting leisure, business, and visiting-friends-and-relatives travel. The airline continues to work closely with airport and ground handling partners to ensure a seamless experience for passengers as services ramp up at the airport.

The new operations further reinforce the airline's strategy of opening efficient, city-focused airports that enhance passenger experience.

Commenting on the milestone, Barathan Pasupathi, Chief Executive Officer of Jazeera Airways, said: "Today is a significant milestone for Jazeera Airways as we become the first airline from Kuwait to operate scheduled services into Amman City Airport. The launch of flights to ADJ reflects our commitment to improving regional connectivity through smarter and more convenient access points. Operating closer to the city allows us to deliver real value to passengers through reduced travel time, lower costs, and a smoother end-to-end journey."

Jazeera Airways currently serves more than 70 destinations and over 5 million passengers annually, operating from its dedicated Terminal 5 at Kuwait International Airport. As part of its next phase of growth, Jazeera Airways plans to expand its network to over 100 destinations and 50 aircraft serving 10 million passengers by 2030.



Jazeera lands in ADJ.



Hosted by Burgan Bank and Kamco Invest

'The Investment Conference 2026' brought together thought leaders, industry experts and investors to discuss insights and strategies shaping opportunities



A view of participants during the closing panel.



A view from the opening panel titled 'Middle East & GCC in a Shifting World: From Energy Powerhouse to Global Investment Hub'.



Tony Daher, Group Chief Executive Officer of Burgan Bank Group, delivering his speech at the conference.



Faisal Sarkhou, Chief Executive Officer of Kamco Invest and Vice Chairman of Burgan Bank, speaking during the conference.



Cathy Hepworth, Managing Director and Head of Emerging Market Debt at PGIM, speaking at the conference.



Strong attendance at the conference.



Participants in the third panel discussion titled 'Redefining Diversification: Asset Allocation in a High-Volatility, Multi-Polar World'.



Chairman of Burgan Bank Sheikh Abdullah Nasser Al-Sabah accompanied by Tony Daher and Faisal Sarkhou.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: Burgan Bank and Kamco Invest have successfully hosted the third edition of their Investment Conference under the theme "Insights & Strategies Shaping Opportunities." The conference brought together thought leaders and industry experts, alongside institutional and high-net-worth investors from Kuwait and the wider region, to discuss critical topics spanning the global economy, geopolitical developments, and opportunities across various asset classes. The conference,which aligns with and actively supports the vision of positioning Kuwait as a regional financial and trade hub, has evolved into an annual thought leadership platform for the investment community.

Sarkhou: Kamco Invest and Burgan Bank, share a unified vision: "Where banking and investment expertise create, grow, and preserve wealth"

In his capacity as the Chief Executive Officer of Kamco Invest and the Vice Chairman of Burgan Bank, Faisal Sarkhou opened the conference with a welcome address to attendees, underscoring the event's significance. He highlighted the conference's role in examining the key forces shaping global and regional economies, including geopolitical and regulatory developments, technological advancements, and emerging opportunities across various sectors.

Sarkhou also highlighted the longstanding history, strong relationships, and complementary areas of expertise shared by Burgan Bank and Kamco Invest, brought together under the unified vision: "Where banking and investment expertise create, grow, and preserve wealth." He emphasized the importance of partnerships and long-term relationships across asset management, banking, private markets, and advisory, reinforcing the belief that sustainable value is best created through collaboration and trusted partnerships.

He further welcomed the company's partners attending the conference as delegates and speakers, with reference to PGIM, with whom Kamco Invest signed a memorandum of understanding for a strategic partnership the day prior to the conference.

Daher: Burgan Bank's deeper integration with KAMCO Invest reflects a more thoughtful approach to private banking – one built on insight, structure, and long-term perspective.

On his side, Tony Daher, Group Chief Executive Officer of Burgan Bank Group, said: "We are meeting at a time when markets are shaped by uncertainty, rapid shifts, and competing narratives. In such an environment, value is not created by noise, but by clarity. And progress is driven not by speed alone, but by deliberate assessment, disciplined planning, and collaboration. This belief sits at the heart of why Burgan Bank and KAMCO Invest continue to invest in platforms and partnerships that are built around our clients' real needs, rather than standalone products."

Adding: "The deeper integration between Burgan Bank and KAMCO Invest reflects that approach. By combining Burgan Bank's financial strength and balance sheet capabilities with KAMCO Invest's investment expertise and advisory discipline, we have created a more thoughtful private banking and wealth management model – one that enables clients to access opportunities across asset classes, geographies, and market cycles. Conferences like this are essential to that responsibility, fostering informed dialogue, strengthening the financial ecosystem, and exposing clients to the insights and perspectives required to navigate an increasingly interconnected global market."

Cathy: Economic shifts, geopolitical realignment, and rapid technological advancement are interconnecting to create new rules, risks, and opportunities for investors.

Cathy Hepworth, Managing Director and Head of Emerging Market Debt at PGIM, provided insights into the macroeconomic and geopolitical landscape, highlighting that a profound transformation is reshaping the global landscape. Economic shifts, geopolitical realignment, and rapid technological advancement are interconnecting to create new rules, risks, and opportunities for investors.

Global growth engines are shifting. While the United States demonstrates economic resilience compared to peers like the Euro area and Japan, China remains an important player. Trade policies in the United States have meant that global trade patterns have shifted towards Asia, Africa and Europe. This reality challenges the narrative of de-globalization, suggesting a future of re-globalization, where trade patterns shift and create new opportunities for economies worldwide.

In parallel with these economic changes, a new era of acute economic competition is redefining global power dynamics. The world is moving away from an age of traditional international collaboration and into one where industrial policy and economic tools are primary instruments of national interest.

Trade tariffs and conflicts have underscored the need for nations to realign themselves, starting with economic strategies and extending to broader geopolitical relationships. Great powers are asserting their interests more formally, empowering other nations to pragmatically address their own futures and choose their alliances, creating new rules and opportunities.

Technology is accelerating these shifts. The current AI infrastructure build-out rivals historic capital booms like the railroad era. Beyond AI, advances in biotechnology, semiconductors, and quantum computing will fundamentally reshape economic potential. The race for technological leadership has become a central element of geopolitical strategy, forging alliances based on innovation advantage rather than just economics.

For investors, this complex and uncertain environment is also a landscape rich with opportunity. The macroeconomic context supports risk assets. Yields remain attractive, particularly in select emerging markets. Investors must not fear change but invest with it. Opportunities exist across public and private markets, from infrastructure and data centers to security. It will be evermore important to navigate this multifaceted world by allocating capital to the mix of assets that provides the best risk-adjusted returns. The path is not always linear and there will be fruitful opportunities along the way.

GCC's Path to Global Investment Hub Reinforced Amid Shifting Global Order

The opening panel, "Middle East & GCC in a Shifting World: From Energy Powerhouse to Global Investment Hub," examined how GCC economies are navigating an increasingly fragmented global landscape while reinforcing their role as stable, long-term investment destinations. The panel featured Abdoul Aziz Wane, Director of the IMF's Regional Office; Tarik M. Yousef, Senior Fellow at the Middle East Council on Global Affairs; and Anwar Almutlaq, Vice President and Country Chairman of Shell Kuwait, and was moderated by Lara Habib, Senior Business Presenter at AlArabiya News Channel. Discussions focused on geopolitical uncertainty, evolving trade dynamics, energy market volatility, and the region's growing role as a bridge between East and West.

The discussion highlighted the unexpected resilience of the global economy despite heightened uncertainty, trade disruptions, and policy volatility. Panelists noted that while growth and inflation have remained more stable than anticipated, this resilience may partly reflect temporary buffers that could fade over time. Against this backdrop, they emphasized the importance of sound fiscal management, credible policy frameworks, and sustained structural reforms, particularly those focused on workforce readiness, productivity, and the adoption of digital technologies and artificial intelligence.

Turning to the regional outlook, the panel underscored the relative strength of GCC economies in weathering recent global shocks. Strong domestic demand, resilient financial conditions, expanding tourism and trade flows, and limited exposure to global tariff pressures have supported economic performance. The panel also highlighted tangible progress in economic diversification, particularly in services and technology-enabled sectors, while stressing the need to deepen manufacturing capabilities, financial markets, and regional integration to support long-term growth.

Sovereign wealth funds were identified as central to the region's long-term transformation, with strategies increasingly shifting toward global, strategic, and technology-focused investments aligned with national priorities. Panelists also reaffirmed the continued relevance of GCC exchange rate regimes in maintaining financial stability and investor confidence, even as the region's monetary and financial systems evolve rapidly through digitalization, fintech innovation, and deeper access to international capital markets.

Structural Reforms and Market Deepening Position GCC Capital Markets for Sustained Growth

The second panel, titled "GCC Capital Markets: Insights and Strategies for a Dynamic Landscape," brought together senior market practitioners to discuss the evolving dynamics of GCC capital markets and the strategic implications for investors. The session featured Abdullah M. AlSharekh, Managing Director of Markets & Investment Banking at Kamco Invest and Board Member of Burgan Bank; Jassim AlJubran, Head of Sell-Side Research at AlJazira Capital; and Thomas K. Mathew, Head of Buy-Side Research at Kamco Invest, and was moderated by Sarah Dashti, Vice President – Equity & Fixed Income at Kamco Invest. Discussions centered on thematic investment opportunities, sectoral trends, market liquidity, regulatory developments, and how investors can navigate risk amid ongoing global and regional uncertainty.

Panelists noted that many of the factors shaping markets in recent years, including geopolitical tensions, trade dynamics, and commodity price volatility, continue to influence investor sentiment and capital flows. However, they highlighted that GCC economies are increasingly distinguished by structural transformation, driven by diversification initiatives beyond oil, large-scale infrastructure development, technology investment, and progressive regulatory reforms. These shifts are reshaping the region's investment landscape and creating new, long-term opportunities across multiple asset classes.

The discussion underscored the growing depth and breadth of investment opportunities across GCC public equities, spanning traditional sectors such as banking, real estate, and industrials, as well as emerging themes including technology infrastructure, data centers, and metals and minerals. Particular attention was given to reform-led infrastructure expansion in markets such as Kuwait, where project awards jumped 57% year-on-year in 2025 to USD 13.8 billion, with investments across ports, transport, real estate, and power expected to support earnings growth and attract incremental capital flows, potentially leading to increased index representation and new investment products. In 2026, investors should be cautious on petrochemicals, which face global oversupply, parts of the capital goods chain with weak order visibility, and highly competitive retail staples. Focus should remain on undervalued, growth-adjusted opportunities.

Looking ahead, panelists emphasized the rising relevance of GCC equity and debt markets within the broader emerging markets universe, supported by improving market access, deeper institutional participation, and competitive valuations. Saudi Arabia was highlighted as a key driver of this momentum, underpinned by economic resilience, a growing non-oil GDP base, landmark regulatory reforms, and increasing integration into global benchmarks. The consensus view was that the GCC's continued market deepening, coupled with strong risk-adjusted performance and execution on long-term reform agendas, positions the region as an increasingly integral component of global and emerging market portfolios.

Asset Allocation at a Turning Point: Rethinking Diversification Amid Volatility and Fragmentation

Leading global asset managers and allocators convened for a panel discussion titled "Redefining Diversification: Asset Allocation in a High-Volatility, Multi-Polar World," bringing together Salman Ahmed, Global Head of Macro and Strategic Asset Allocation at Fidelity International, Purnima Puri, Founding Partner and Head of Liquid Credit at HPS Investment Partners (a member of BlackRock), and Tomas Gorgulho, Chief Strategy Officer at AlTi Tiedemann Global, moderated by Faisal AlOthman, Director of Investment Advisory at Kamco Invest. The panel explored how investors should rethink portfolio construction as global markets adapt to heightened geopolitical uncertainty, shifting monetary policy regimes, and increased macroeconomic fragmentation.

Panelists observed that recent pressure on the U.S. dollar has been driven by widening fiscal deficits, persistent trade tensions, and evolving interest rate expectations. While some of the currency weakness may prove cyclical, the discussion highlighted structural forces that investors must increasingly incorporate into long-term allocation decisions. As currency volatility becomes a more material source of portfolio risk, panelists emphasized that currency exposure is transitioning from a tactical consideration to a strategic asset allocation decision, with diversification and selective hedging playing a more central role.

The discussion also focused on the growing concentration risks embedded in global portfolios. In addition to heavy allocations to U.S. assets, panelists highlighted elevated sector concentration in technology and tech-related industries, including artificial intelligence, which have been the primary drivers of equity market performance over the past five years. While these sectors have delivered exceptional returns, speakers cautioned that such concentration can amplify volatility and downside risk, reinforcing the need for broader geographic, sector, and style diversification without materially compromising return potential.

Fixed income emerged as a renewed cornerstone of diversified portfolios. After a prolonged period of underperformance, high-quality sovereign bonds are once again viewed as effective tools for income generation, capital preservation, and downside protection, particularly in an environment of slowing growth and heightened geopolitical risk. Panelists noted that elevated yields have restored the defensive characteristics of fixed income, reaffirming its role as a strategic allocation rather than a short-term tactical trade.

Turning to alternatives, the panel examined the rapid expansion of private credit and questioned whether parts of the asset class are becoming increasingly crowded. While attractive opportunities remain in select segments, speakers stressed the importance of disciplined underwriting, careful manager selection, and realistic return expectations. More broadly, alternatives were positioned as an important diversification tool that must be balanced against liquidity considerations, especially during periods of market stress when flexibility and access to capital are paramount.

The panel concluded that effective diversification in today's high-volatility, multi-polar world requires a more nuanced and forward-looking approach; one that actively manages concentration, currency, and liquidity risks while combining traditional assets with carefully selected alternative strategies to build resilient, long-term portfolios.

Tech Investing at an Inflection Point: AI, Liquidity Shifts, and the Next Wave of Value Creation

The closing panel examined the evolving dynamics shaping the global technology sector and the sustainability of investment flows across venture capital and private markets. The discussion brought together leading US-based technology investors, including Jake Zeller, Founder of Powerset, Patrick Yang, General Partner at Amity Ventures, and Omar Darwazah, Managing Director, General Partner & CFO at AAF Management Ltd. The session was moderated by Fahad AlSharekh, Vice Chairman of Kamco Invest – Saudi and Chief Executive Officer of TechInvest.

Looking ahead to 2026, panelists highlighted a potentially transformative phase for capital markets, driven by the anticipated public listings of major technology platforms such as SpaceX, Stripe, Anthropic, and OpenAI. These expected IPOs were described as a turning point for the innovation ecosystem, signaling a shift in how liquidity, valuations, and capital allocation may evolve across both public and private markets. The discussion emphasized that value creation is becoming increasingly concentrated around frontier technologies and mission-driven companies with scalable, defensible business models.

A central theme of the panel was the expanding role of artificial intelligence beyond productivity and creative use cases, particularly its growing influence on fund formation, deployment strategies, and investment decision-making. With AI-enabled tools now capable of analyzing vast datasets and identifying early market signals, panelists explored how investors must adapt their approaches to maintain a competitive edge. The conversation focused on the balance between human judgment and algorithmic intelligence, and how AI-driven insights are reshaping the future of venture investing.

From the perspective of The JEDI Fund, the discussion reflected on the fund's evolution following years of building an emerging manager ecosystem. The focus is now shifting toward selectively pursuing direct investment opportunities that demonstrate strong signal quality and strategic alignment. Panelists discussed the importance of constructing a high-conviction, curated investment pipeline that combines institutional rigor with entrepreneurial agility, in line with Kamco Invest's broader investment objectives.

The session concluded with reflections on lessons learned from the previous fund cycle, particularly the structural and operational challenges faced by fund managers. Panelists emphasized the need for next-generation funds to be more scalable, transparent, and efficient, leveraging data-driven processes to enhance execution speed and resilience. These insights were positioned as critical foundations for navigating an increasingly complex and fast-moving investment environment.

Burgan Bank and Kamco Invest expressed their appreciation to all speakers and attendees whose participation contributed to the conference's strong engagement and successful turnout. In a joint statement, the two institutions noted that The Investment Conference 2026 represents the third edition of their annual flagship event, held in support of Kuwait's vision to become a globally recognized financial hub. The conference also serves as a platform for the exchange of market insights, geopolitical perspectives, and in-depth discussions on investment opportunities across a broad range of asset classes.

On the sidelines of NBK's participation in the UAE–Kuwait Economic Forum

Al-Sager: Kuwait–UAE partnership strengthens the path of economic integration in the region

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) participated in the UAE–Kuwait Economic Forum, held as part of the "UAE and Kuwait: Brothers Forever" Week, with the aim of strengthening economic, trade, and investment ties and highlighting the depth of the historical relations that bind the two countries and their peoples.

The Bank was represented at the forum by Mr. Zaid Isam Al-Sager, Deputy CEO – International Banking Group, who took part in a session titled "National Bank of Kuwait and Emirates NBD: Kuwaiti–Emirati Banking Models." The session reviewed the banking evolution of two of the region's most established financial institutions, presenting them as leading examples of banking integration and cooperation between Kuwait and the UAE.

Within this framework, the session reviewed the key stages of transformation and growth, the development trajectories of both banks, and the role of regional partnerships in building strong financial institutions capable of competing at both regional and global levels, while highlighting the lessons learned from experiences of integration and expansion.

In his remarks, Al-Sager underscored the strategic importance of strengthening financial and banking cooperation between Kuwait and the UAE, noting that the fraternal relations between the two countries span decades and continue to expand across various economic, commercial, and financial spheres.

He explained that NBK's journey in the UAE represents a source of pride for the Bank. It began with the opening of its first branch in Dubai in 2008, followed by the Abu Dhabi branch in 2013, and most recently the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) branch in 2025. Over the years, the Bank has extended financing to entities operating in the UAE, contributing to the funding of major infrastructure projects, as well as oil and gas and other strategic projects aligned with national development agendas.



Zaid Al-Sager during his participation in the session.

- 1,800 Kuwaiti companies operate in the UAE, including 750 companies based in Dubai
- Over 44,000 Kuwaiti shareholders are actively invested in the UAE market
- Our client base has expanded to more than 110 clients, including government entities, key economic groups, and corporations
- We have executed 56 financing transactions for institutions in the UAE, seven of which were cross-border trade finance deals
- The strategic partnership between Kuwaiti and Emirati banks is central to meeting the financing needs of both economies and to driving sustainable growth across local and regional markets

Furthermore, he noted that trade volume between Kuwait and the UAE exceeded USD 13.5 billion in 2024, with more than half of this figure generated from non-oil trade. He emphasized that NBK, along with banks in both countries, plays a pivotal role in facilitating trade flows and enabling companies to expand regionally.

"Today, 1,800 Kuwaiti companies operate in the UAE, including 750 companies based in Dubai, alongside a base of 44,000 Kuwaiti shareholders across the UAE. This is complemented bya strong presence of Emirati companies in Kuwait, withbanks continuing to support these businesses in achieving their growth ambitions and expanding their regional footprint," Al-Sager said.

Al-Sager also highlighted the notable growth of NBK's operations in the UAE, pointing out that the Bank's client base has doubled over the past two years to exceed110 clients, including government entities, key economic groups, and corporations. He reaffirmed the Bank's commitment to supporting national development strategies in both countries and contributing to stronger economic growth across the region, pointing out that NBK has executed 56 financing transactions for institutions in the UAE, seven of which were cross-border trade finance deals.

Speaking about the future of banking cooperation, Al-Sager stressed the importance of developing an advanced banking partnership model between Kuwait and the UAE that keeps pace with global transformations in the financial sector. He identified several key areas for cooperation, including joint participation in syndicated financing for major transactions in both Kuwait and the UAE, as well as in larger cross-border deals, particularly mega infrastructure projects, oil and gas projects, renewable energy, and other initiatives aligned with national development priorities.

Finally, Al-Sager called for the establishment of a joint platform between the banking federations of both countries to identify partnership opportunities, exchange expertise, and support expansion into new markets. He emphasized that strengthening banking cooperation between Kuwait and the UAE will contribute to deepening economic integration and opening new horizons for sustainable and diversified growth across the region.

Al-Juaidan: GCC integration key to unified Gulf market

DUBAI, Feb 2, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Ministry of Commerce and Industry Undersecretary Marwa Al-Juaidan said on Monday that GCC states share firm economic integration principles that support the unified Gulf market and open wider opportunities for partnership and investment.

Speaking at the opening of the Emirati-Kuwaiti Economic Forum in Dubai, held within the "UAE and Kuwait Brothers Forever" week, she said sustained investment inflows reflect global confidence in the GCC as a stable and resilient economic bloc.

Al-Juaidan noted that the forum reflects the growing strength of Kuwaiti-UAE relations and the commitment of both leaderships to expand cooperation in support of mutual interests and sustainable development.

She said bilateral trade between Kuwait and the UAE reached about USD 13.6 billion by the end of 2024, highlighting the vitality of the economic partnership between the two countries.

Al-Juaidan added that tourism ties continue to grow, with more than 170 weekly flights between the two countries, underscoring strong social and human links between the two peoples.

She highlighted the signing of the double taxation avoidance agreement on income and capital on February 11, 2024, describing it as a milestone that enhances the business environment and boosts investor confidence.

Al-Juaidan said the forum provides a strategic platform to strengthen public-private partnerships and explore investment opportunities in industry, energy, technology, logistics and tourism.

She stressed Kuwait's commitment to continue this cooperation, in line with the directives of the leaderships of both countries, and in pursuit of a more prosperous future for the two peoples, the GCC and the Arab region.



Ahmed Al Nowaibet and Anwar Al Kandari receiving their awards at the ceremony held in Dubai.

stc wins two IFM Awards for digital excellence in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced that it has been named 'Best Digital Transformation Company – Kuwait 2025' and 'Best Digital Workplace and Employee Experience Company – Kuwait 2025' at the 13th annual International Finance Magazine (IFM) Awards 2025. The awards ceremony was held at the Jumeirah Emirates Tower Hotel in Dubai, and was attended by Ahmed Al Nowaibet, Director of Public Relations and Social Media at stc, alongside Anwar Al Kandari, Employee Experience Director at stc, who accepted the awards on behalf of the Company.

The two recognitions reflect stc's comprehensive and future-focused strategy, highlighting the role of the Company's leadership in devising a plan specifically focused on enabling digital transformation in Kuwait, while fostering a people-centric workplace culture that supports sustainable performance. The Company emerged as a winner following a rigorous evaluation process conducted by IFM's research and advisory teams, which assessed strategic execution, innovation, operational excellence, and long-term impact.

The 'Best Digital Transformation Company – Kuwait 2025' award recognizes stc's continued efforts to leverage its digital transformation strategy as a key driver of growth across the telecom and digital solutions sectors. Throughout 2025, stc strengthened its digital infrastructure while expanding its capabilities in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, cloud computing, and big data analytics, further reflecting its role as a pioneer in Kuwait's evolving digital economy.

In line with Kuwait Vision 2035, stc continued to invest in advanced technologies that support the nation's strategy, while delivering smart, scalable solutions for both individuals and corporates.

stc was also awarded 'Best Digital Workplace and Employee Experience Company – Kuwait 2025', recognizing the Company's commitment to upholding a people-first culture that is built on trust, wellbeing, inclusion, and meaningful engagement. The recognition reflects stc's strategic view on enhancing the overall employee experience, serving as a core business priority and a key contributor to long-term organizational success.

The Company also continued to invest in recognition, professional growth, and career clarity, ensuring that employees feel valued, supported, and empowered to develop their capabilities in line with stc's long-term vision. A key milestone during the year was the relocation to stc's new headquarters in Assima Tower in Kuwait City. The new headquarters was designed to enhance daily employee experience through modern facilities, inclusive spaces, and environments that support collaboration and engagement.

In a statement, stc highlighted that the two awards are a testiment to the Company's comprehensive strategy to both digital transformation in Kuwait and employee wellbeing. stc strongly believes that sustainable growth is driven by the integration of advanced digital capabilities with a strong organizational culture that places people at the center of transformation. As a pioneering, stc has successfully navigated numerous milestones in its commitment to digital transformation and internal work culture.

This focus has been pivotal in enhancing customer experiences and streamlining operational efficiency. Leveraging its advanced network infrastructure, stcofers a broad range of services, catering to the specific needs of both individual and enterprise customers.

The Company emphasized that such recognitions reaffirm the effectiveness of its strategic direction and align with its commitment to empower its workforce and support Kuwait's broader digital transformation agenda in line with Kuwait Vision 2035. Moving forward, stc remains focused on building future-ready capabilities, strengthening its digital leadership position, and continuing to invest in initiatives that support sustainable growth and national development.

In the presence of senior leaders from NBK & Kuwait University

Weyay Bank launches eco-friendly electric buses to serve students at Sabah Al-Salem University City

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: In a pioneering initiative reflecting its commitment to environmental sustainability and social responsibility, Weyay Bank, Kuwait's first digital bank, announced the launch of eco-friendly electric buses at Sabah Al-Salem University City.

The launching ceremony was attended by Mr. Salah Al-Fulaij, Chief Executive Officer at National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) - Kuwait, Mr. Mohammed Al-Othman, Chief Executive Officer, Consumer and Digital Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait, Mr. Emad Al-Ablani, Group Chief Human Resources Officer at National Bank of Kuwait, Mr. Hisham Al-Nusif, Chief, Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait, alongside Kuwait University officials, most notably Kuwait University Director, Professor Dr. Dina Al-Mailem, and Kuwait University Secretary General, Professor Dr. Noura Al-Suwaih. During the event, the new electric buses were unveiled as part of a sustainable and smart transportation solution designed to meet students' needs and support their academic journey within the university campus.

This initiative comes as a direct response to students' requests and daily mobility needs, reflecting Weyay Bank's commitment to placing youth voices at the heart of its priorities. The electric buses aim to enhance the daily transportation experience on campus by reducing waiting times and offering a comfortable, technologically advanced mode of transport, contributing to students' well-being and enabling them to focus on their academic pursuits.

A Clear Vision

In his speech, Mr. Salah Al-Fulaij, Chief Executive Officer at National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) - Kuwait, said: "We are happy to meet today in this grand event that presents a clear vision for a more sustainable and innovative future. This moment we are witnessing is not simply a mere celebration; rather, it's a milestone step that reflects our deep belief at NBK Group that institutional collaborations and their joint efforts are the onset of positive change, through which we can better serve the next generation."

"Weyay Bank", Al-Fulaij added, "NBK's digital arm, was established under the firm belief that youth is the real driver of development. Our role, we believe, lies in enabling the youth and empowering them so they can achieve their aspirations, and today, we are witnessing the realization of one of these initiatives, by providing eco-friendly electric buses for the students." Moreover, Al-Fulaij explained that this initiative is the essence of Weyay Bank, as it is not simply a digital bank, but also a partner in achieving development, making positive changes, and playing a significant role in supporting Kuwait Vision that aims to establish a more sustainable future, further noting that this collaboration carries a clear message stating that sustainability is not merely a dream but a shared responsibility.



Dr. Dina Al-Mailem presented Salah Al-Fulaij with a commemorative shield in the presence of Mohammed Al-Othman and Dr. Noura Al-Suwaih.

Al-Fulaij:

- This step reflects our belief that positive change starts when institutions collaborate and efforts merge to serve the next generation.
- This initiative is the essence of Weyay Bank, as it's not simply a digital bank, but also a partner in developing and making positive changes.
- Our partnership with Kuwait University carries a clear message: sustainability is not a dream; it's a joint responsibility.
- Launching electric buses is a transformation towards a more efficient use of energy, bringing more convenience to the students' experience.
- Every initiative we launch is a confirmation of our commitment to our vision that steers innovation towards youth empowerment.

Al-Othman:

- At NBK, Protecting the environment and enhancing the life of upcoming generations is not a choice but a deep-rooted commitment.
- Through this initiative, Weyay Bank strives to present a role model in transforming into clean energy.

Al-Mailem:

- At Kuwait University, we are proud of our continued partnership with NBK and Weyay Bank.
- This joint commitment aims at establishing a sustainable university environment that aligns with our vision to adopt innovation and green solutions.

Additionally, Al-Fulaij emphasized that Weyay Bank's launching of the eco-friendly electric buses at the Sabah Al-Salem University City is a pivotal transition to a more efficient use of clean energy and environmental footprint reduction, in addition to making the students' experience more convenient on campus.

Al-Fulaij continued: "This step confirms our efforts to redefine the role of institutions in serving society and the environment. With every initiative we launch, we reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that sustainability is a significant part of our vision, and that innovation is always directed towards empowering youth and enhancing their quality of life."

Addressing the students, Al-Fulaij stated: "This achievement is for you; your energy, creativity, and high aspirations are what drive us to innovate every day. You are the reason for the existence of Wayay, and you are the motivation behind every step we take towards the future." Finally, Al-Fulaij concluded his speech by thanking Kuwait University, its management, faculty members and students, for their partnership, trust and enthusiasm, stressing that their openness to new ideas inspires NBK and Weyay Bank to continue raising the bar of ambition.

Mr. Mohammed Al-Othman, Chief Executive Officer, Consumer and Digital Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait, said: "The launch of the eco-friendly electric buses in Sabah Al-Salem University City is not just a development of transportation, but rather an embodiment of our strategy of social responsibility towards the environment and education, and a clear translation of our vision to support national efforts aimed at adopting practical and sustainable solutions that serve society in all its categories."

"At NBK Group", Al-Othman added, "We believe that protecting the environment and improving the quality of life for future generations is not an option but a firm commitment," noting that through this initiative, the Bank seeks to provide a model to be emulated in the transition towards clean energy by adopting modern transportation technologies that contribute to reducing emissions and promoting sustainability within the university campus, in addition to providing a more advanced and efficient transportation environment for Kuwait University students, ensuring them a convenient daily experience that aligns with their aspirations and lives up to their ambitions.

A Shared Commitment

Meanwhile, the Director of Kuwait University, Professor Dr. Dina Al-Mailem, commended this strategic partnership, saying: "We are proud of our ongoing partnership with NBK and Weyay Bank, which has resulted today in the introduction of environmentally friendly electric buses, reflecting our shared commitment to creating a sustainable university environment, and contributes to making the lives of students easier, which aligns with the University's vision that supports innovation and green solutions."

The eco-friendly electric buses initiative for the Sabah Al-Salem University City consists of four Key Pillars:

A Strategic partnership, achieved by Strengthening the collaboration between Weyay Bank and Kuwait University to support educational infrastructure and environmental sustainability through reducing carbon emissions within the university campus and using clean electric energy, in addition to achieving student-well-being by providing a modern, fully equipped transportation experience tailored to the expectations of the digital generation. Finally, achieving community innovation by delivering smart solutions to everyday logistical challenges faced by students.

Weyay Bank reaffirmed that its role extends beyond delivering innovative banking services, positioning itself as a true partner in building a sustainable future for generations to come – remaining committed to listening to young people's ideas and transforming them into tangible initiatives that positively impact society.



A group photo of the NBK & Kuwait University leaders on the sidelines of the celebration of launching environmentally friendly electric buses in Sabah Al-Salem University City.

Main market slips

Boursa Kuwait gains as premier market surges

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Monday's trading session in positive territory, with its general index climbing 16.60 points, or 0.19 percent, to close at 8,673.51 points.

Trading activity saw about 169.6 million shares exchanged through 16,803 transactions, with a total value of KD 58.15 million (around USD 177.3 million).

The premier market index advanced 27.69 points, or 0.30 percent, to 9,253.21 points, supported by trades totaling 100.9 million shares worth KD 43.5 million (USD 132.6 million). In contrast, the main market index slipped 25.46 points, or 0.31 percent, to 8,065.60 points, with 68.6 million shares changing hands in 6,893 transactions valued at KD 14.5 million (USD 44.2 million). The Main 50 Index also edged down 28.13 points, or 0.33 percent, to 8,565.92 points, after KD 10.2 million (USD 33.1 million) worth of trades.

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Bruno Mars performs 'I Just Might.' (AP)


Spiritbox performs 'Soft Spine.' (AP)


Pharrell Williams performs 'So Far Ahead' during the 68th annual Grammy Awards on Sunday, Feb. 1, in Los Angeles. (AP)


Lady Gaga performs 'Abracadabra' during Grammy Awards. (AP)


Jon Batiste performs an in memoriam tribute at the Grammy Awards. (AP)

Grammy Awards

Billie Eilish scoops song of the year for 'Wildflower'

Bad Bunny wins album of the year at the 2026 Grammys, a first for a Spanish language album

LOS ANGELES, Feb 2, (AP): Bad Bunny won album of the year at the 2026 Grammy Awards for his critically-acclaimed "Debí Tirar Más Fotos," closing out a surprising and history-making night. It is the first time a Spanish-language album has taken home the top prize.

"Puerto Rico, believe me when I tell you that we are much bigger than 100 by 35," he said in his acceptance speech in Spanish, referring to a Puerto Rican colloquialism about the island's small size. "And there is nothing we can't achieve. Thank God, thank you to the Academy, thank you to all the people who have believed in me throughout my career.

"To all the people who worked on this album, thank you mami for giving birth to me in Puerto Rico, I love you," he continued.

Then he switched to English: "I want to dedicate this award to all the people who had to leave their homeland to follow their dreams."

Harry Styles presented the award - the English singer previously took home the top prize in 2023 for "Harry's House." He beat Bad Bunny that year, who was nominated for "Un Verano Sin Ti" -- the first Spanish-language album to be up in the category.

Billie Eilish won song of the year for "Wildflower" and used the moment to add her voice to the chorus of musicians criticizing immigration authorities Sunday.

"No one is illegal on stolen land," she said while accepting the award for the song from her 2024 album "Hit Me Hard and Soft." "(Expletive) ICE is all I want to say."

Immigration was a central theme of the night. The first time Bad Bunny was on stage - after winning the award for música urbana album - he used his speech to share an anti-ICE message, highlighting the humanity of all people.

Applause

"Before I say thanks to God, I'm going to say ICE out," he said, starting out his speech in English to huge applause. "We're not savage, we're not animals, we're not aliens. We are humans and we are Americans."

Before that, Olivia Dean was named best new artist.

"I never really imagined that I would be up here," she said, receiving her first Grammy while wiping away tears. "I'm up here as a granddaughter of an immigrant. I wouldn't be here … I am a product of bravery, and I think that those people deserve to be celebrated."

Those statements all aired live on the CBS telecast. Earlier in the day, at the Premiere Ceremony where 86 Grammys are handed out, artists were equally as pointed about ICE and immigration enforcement.

Shaboozey accepted the award for country duo/group performance with tears in his eyes. "I want to thank my mother, who as of today, has retired from her job of 30 years … working as a registered nurse in a psych ward … as an immigrant in this country. Thank you, mom.

"Immigrants built this country, literally, actually. So, this for them," he concluded. "Thank you for bring your culture, your music and your stories."

Kehlani, after winning her first Grammy, ended her acceptance speech with "Imma leave this and say, (expletive) ICE."

"I'm scared," Gloria Estefan said of the current political moment backstage at the Grammys. "There are hundreds of children in detention centers. … I don't recognize my country in this moment right now."

Kendrick Lamar and SZA won record of the year at an electric 2026 Grammy Awards Sunday night for "Luther."

Cher presented the award and mistakenly said it goes to "Luther Vandross" instead of Kendrick Lamar and SZA.

Speech

One of the song's producers, Sounwave, began the acceptance speech by saying, "Let's give a shoutout to the late and great Luther Vandross."

Lamar also won the first televised award of the night, rap album for "GNX," accepting the trophy from Queen Latifah and Doechii.

"It's an honor to be here," he said in his acceptance speech. "Hip-hop is always going to be right here … We're gonna be having the culture with us."

The victory means Lamar broke Jay-Z's record to become the rapper with the most career Grammys. Jay-Z has 25; after he took home rap album and record of the year, Lamar's total is 27.

Pop vocal album went to Lady Gaga for "Mayhem," while pop solo performance went to Lola Young for "Messy," whose speech playfully lived up to the song's spirit.

"I don't know what to say," she joked about "obviously" not having a speech prepared. "I'm very, very grateful for this."

The inaugural contemporary country album category went to Jelly Roll for "Beautifully Broken."

This year, the Grammys renamed country album to contemporary country album and added a traditional country album category, a distinction that exists in other genres. But the news arrived right after Beyoncé's "Cowboy Carter" won best country album, inspiring backlash online.

"I believe music had the power to change my life," Jelly Roll said in his acceptance speech, which he spent the majority of thanking God.

Pharrell Williams received the Dr. Dre Global Impact Award.

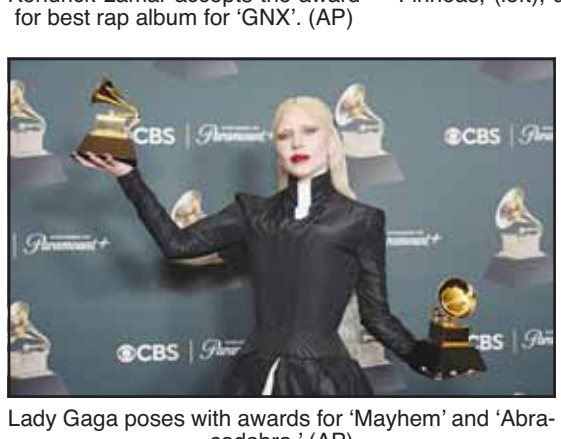
"To everyone in this room who believes in the power of Black music," he said, "thank you so much."

A powerful Grammy Awards in memoriam segment celebrated the legacies of the late D'Angelo and Roberta Flack at the 68th annual ceremony Sunday night.


Bad Bunny accepts the award for album of the year for 'Debí Tirar Más Fotos' during the 68th annual Grammy Awards on Sunday, Feb. 1, in Los Angeles. (AP)


Kendrick Lamar accepts the award for best rap album for 'GNX'. (AP)


Finneas, (left), and Billie Eilish accept the award for song of the year for 'Wildflower.' (AP)



Lady Gaga poses with awards for 'Mayhem' and 'Abracadabra.' (AP)



Leon Thomas poses with awards for 'Vibes Don't Lie' and 'Mutt.' (AP)

Ms. Lauryn Hill appeared on the Grammy stage for the first time since 1999, when she became the first hip-hop artist to win album of the year for her "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill."

The D'Angelo tribute was first: A medley of several songs, among them "Brown Sugar" with Lucky Daye, "Lady" with Raphael Saadiq and Anthony Hamilton and "Devil's Pie" with Leon Thomas.

Then, Hill focused her attention on Roberta Flack: "First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" with Jon Batiste, "Where Is The Love" with John Legend and Chaka Khan, and a mesh of "Feel Like Makin' Love" and "Killing Me Softly with His Song" with her Fugees bandmate Wyclef Jean.

If there was one set that felt like an avant-garde artistic performance piece on Sunday night, it was Tyler, the Creator's medley of "Thought I Was Dead," "Like Him," (in which he was joined by Regina King) and "Sugar On My Tongue." It played out like theater: others would be wise to take note.

All eight nominees in the best new artist category participated in a medley at the award show across multiple stages, the back halls of the arena and even the venue's loading dock. It was an interesting and impressive mod-podge of different styles, from the British soul of Young and Dean to Addison Rae and Katseye's hypnotic pop. The Marías kicked things off with their dreamy indie rock; sombr and Alex Warren offered their radio hits - "12 to 12" and "Ordinary" respectively. Leon Thomas reminded the audience why he's the only nominee also up for album of the year with his fully formed R&B.

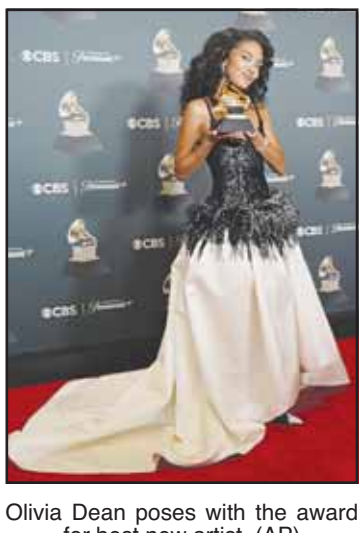
Rendition

The hits arrived fast and furious in the show's first hour. Rosé and Bruno Mars' opened Grammys with an electric rendition of their multicultural pop smash, "APT."; the Blackpink singer channeled a pop-punk Gwen Stefani in her tie and platinum blond hair. Sabrina Carpenter with her "Manchild" kiss-off. Justin Bieber slowed things down with "Yukon" from his comeback record "Swag." Lady Gaga reimagined her hit "Abracadabra" as an electro-rock song.

During the Premiere Ceremony, the Dalai Lama won his first Grammy for audio book, narration and storytelling recording, beating out Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. You read that correctly.

"Golden" from "KPop Demon Hunters" won song written for visual media at the Premiere Ceremony, marking the first time a K-pop act has won a Grammy. Songwriters delivered their acceptance speech in both English and Korean, highlighting the song's bilingual appeal.

Music film went to "Music for John Williams," which means director Steven Spielberg has officially won his first Grammy. That makes him an EGOT winner - an artist with an Emmy, Grammy, Tony and Oscar.

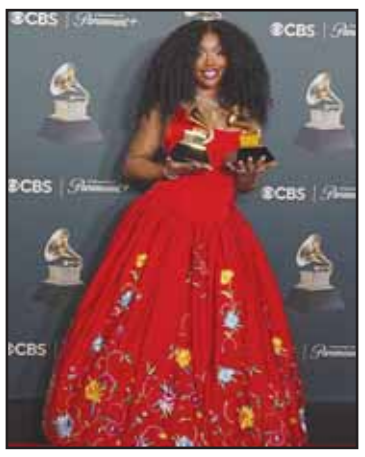

Olivia Dean poses with the award for best new artist. (AP)


Serena Göransson, (left), and Ludwig Göransson with award for best compilation soundtrack for 'Sinners.' (AP)


The team from KPop Demon Hunters accept the award for best song written for visual media for 'Golden.' (AP)


Laufey accepts the award for 'A Matter of Time.' (AP)


Jelly Roll accepts the award for 'Beautifully Broken.' (AP)



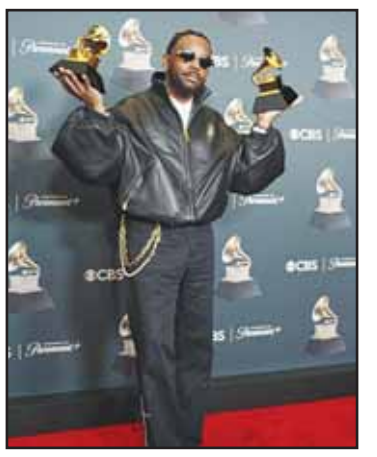
SZA with awards for record of the year and best melodic rap performance for 'Luther.' (AP)



Joni Mitchell, (left), accepts the award for best historical album for 'Joni Mitchell Archives - Volume 4: The Asylum Years (1976-1980)' during the 68th annual Grammy Awards. (AP)



Laurent Bouzereau, (second from left), accepts the award for best music film for 'Music by John Williams' during the 68th annual Grammy Awards. (AP)



Sounwave poses with the awards for record of the year for 'Luther' and best rap song for 'TV Off.' (AP)

List of Grammy Awards winners

LOS ANGELES, Feb 2, (AP): Bad Bunny won album of the year and Kendrick Lamar and SZA took home record of the year for "luther" at Sunday's Grammy Awards.

Olivia Dean, the "Wicked" duo of Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande and the Dalai Lama are among the winners at the 68th annual Grammy Awards.

While the Grammys saves the biggest categories for its telecast, 86 awards were handed out during the Premiere Ceremony Sunday afternoon. Lamar also won the night's first televised award: best rap album.

Trevor Noah was the host for the main telecast.

Here's a list of select winners at Sunday's Grammys:

■ Album of the Year: "Debí Tirar Más Fotos," Bad Bunny.
■ Record of the Year: "luther," Kendrick Lamar with SZA.
■ Best Rap Album: "GNX," Kendrick Lamar
■ Best Latin Urban Album: "Debí Tirar Más Fotos," Bad Bunny.
■ Best New Artist: Olivia Dean
■ Best Pop Vocal Album: "Mayhem," Lady Gaga.
■ Best Pop Solo Performance: "Messy," Lola Young.
■ Song of the Year (Songwriter's Award): "Wildflower," Billie Eilish O'Connell and Finneas O'Connell.
■ Best Dance/Electronic Album: "EUSEXUA," FKA twigs
■ Best Pop Duo/Group Performance: "Defying Gravity," Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande
■ Best Rock Album: "Never Enough," Turnstile
■ Best Contemporary Country Album: "Beautifully Broken," Jelly Roll.
■ Best R&B Album: "Mutt," Leon Thomas
■ Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album: "A Matter of Time," Laufey
■ Best Latin Pop Album: "Cancionera," Natalia Lafourcade
■ Best Música Mexicana Album: "Palabra De To's (Seca), Carín León
■ Best Compilation Soundtrack for Visual Media: "Sinners," various artists
■ Best Score Soundtrack for Visual Media (composer's award): "Sinners," Ludwig Göransson
■ Best Gospel Album: "Heart of Mine," Darrel Walls, PJ Morton.
■ Best Contemporary Christian Music Album: "Coritos Vol. 1," Israel & New Breed
■ Best Song Written for Visual Media: "Golden," from "KPop Demon Hunters"
■ Best Jazz Vocal Album: "Portrait," Samara Joy
■ Best Jazz Instrumental Album: "Southern Nights," Sullivan Fortner featuring Peter Washington and Marcus Gilmore
■ Best African Music Performance: "Push 2 Start," Tyla
■ Best Reggae Album: "BLXXD & FYAH," Keznamdi
■ Best Music Video: "Anxiety," Doechii
■ Best Music Film: "Music by John Williams"
■ Best Alternative Music Album: "Songs of a Lost World," The Cure
■ Songwriter Of The Year: Amy Allen
■ Producer Of The Year, Non-Classical: Cirkut
■ Best Comedy Album: "Your Friend, Nate Bargatze," Nate Bargatze.
■ Best Audio Book, Narration and Storytelling Recording: "Meditations: The Reflections of his Holiness The Dalai Lama," Dalai Lama
■ Best Spoken Word Poetry Album: "Words for Days Vol. 1," Mad Skillz.
■ Best Album Cover: "Chromakopia"
■ The Dr. Dre Global Impact Award: Pharrell Williams

Fashion

Rae, Dean, Doechii and Roan shine with statement looks

Rising stars take up space on Grammys red carpet

LOS ANGELES, Feb 2, (AP): Rising music stars ushered in a fresh new era of red carpet dressing at the Grammys on Sunday as they embodied their music personas and let their style take center stage.

Addison Rae, Olivia Dean, Doechii and Chappell Roan shined on the carpet with each artist bringing their own flair to the 68th Grammy Awards. Unlike other red carpets filled with demure evening wear looks and old Hollywood glamour, the Grammys are a night of rule-breaking looks and memorable fashion statements.

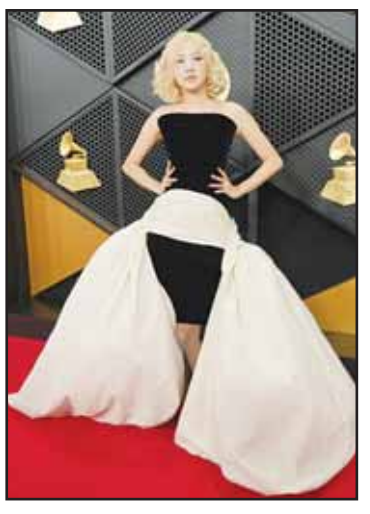
With some major industry names like Beyoncé and Taylor Swift absent from the night, newcomers had the chance to take up space.

"Some years when really established names like a Rihanna or a Taylor Swift comes, they can kind of suck up all the oxygen in the room and really command the spotlight as they've earned," Halie LeSavage, Marie Claire's senior fashion news editor, said. "But in this case, there's a really strong field of best new artists nominees who … have created a really distinct sense of personal style."

Roan is not one to waste the opportunity to make a red carpet fashion statement. In a departure from last year's canary yellow Jean Paul Gaultier tulle ballgown, Roan embraced naked dressing, removing her sheer red garnet Mugler cape to show a georgette négligée dress that was attached to her breasts. The low-cut dress revealed a design on her back.



Kelsea Ballerini arrives at the 68th annual Grammy Awards on Sunday, Feb. 1, in Los Angeles. (AP)



Rosé



Lady Gaga



EJAE



Tate McRae



Zara Larsson



Addison Rae



Chappell Roan

Shape-shifter

"She's such a shape-shifter," InStyle Beauty Director Lauren Valenti said. "She was just kind of looking like this moody pre-Raphaelite goddess."

Among the glitz and glamour, simple pins stood out across the carpet. Some of the biggest names in music, including Justin Bieber and his wife Hailey Bieber along with Kehlani, used their platform to speak out against U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement by wearing "ICE OUT" pins following the Trump administration's deportation campaign in cities across the country.

Several artists including Puerto Rican superstar Bad Bunny and Olivia Dean used their acceptance speeches to speak up in support of immigrants.

"I wanna say I'm up here as a granddaughter of an immigrant, I wouldn't be here," Dean said. "I'm a product of bravery, and I think those people deserve to be celebrated."

Red carpet attendees took playful approaches to their looks Sunday.

The British rising stars Lola Young and PinkPantheress who are shaking up the music industry with their individual sounds both opted for vastly different Vivienne Westwood looks Sunday. Best new artist nominee Young, who is back after taking a brief hiatus last year, sported an army green sweatsuit printed with children's toys on the carpet. PinkPantheress opted for a signature corseted off-the-shoulder gown draped with the Union Jack symbol.

Zara Larsson glowed on the carpet in her sunny yellow bra top and skirt sequined set referencing her "Midnight Sun" hit song. In keeping with her theme, the Swedish singer wore a circular ray around her skirt while performing at the Grammy's Premiere Ceremony before removing the rays for her walk down the carpet.

FKA twigs brought her album "Eusexua" to life on the carpet wearing a beige sheer flowy Paolo Carzana dress which she paired with a book and an anthurium symbolizing her eras as an artist from the start of her career to her latest album.

Doechii shed her suited Thom Browne apparel from last year for a dramatic Roberto Cavalli royal purple bustled dress with a strappy sheer bodice. Like Doechii's bombshell updo, one trend of the night was '90s supermodel hair, Valenti said.

British girl group Flo, a first-time nominee, paid homage to Destiny's Child with their matching sets. Jorja Douglas, Stella Quaresma and Renée Downer each wore coordinated beaded black and royal blue ensembles from Luar. Destiny's Child famously wore matching green lace cut-out looks at the 2001 Grammys where the group won two awards.

Flo brought back that synergy with their unified aesthetic.

"We actually have a sixth sense and a lot of things we just agree on," Quaresma told The Associated Press.

Former Destiny Child member Michelle Williams arrived on the carpet in a black sheer gown embellished with gold leaves and a black satin train from Jean-Louis Sabaji.

Other girl groups kept with the matching theme, including Katseye in white lace Ludovic de Saint Sernin dresses and the band HAIM dressed in variations of black and silver chained looks from Louis Vuitton.

Approach

Love bugs Yungblud and Jesse Jo Stark took a risqué approach to their coordinated attire. Yungblud showed off his bare chest under a leather Chrome Hearts' jacket with a detachable animal print collar and Stark wore a leather halter dress.

Some stars accidentally took coordinating too far by wearing the same looks. Two stars had a fashion face-off at the start of the night with singer Ledisi and TV host Jasmine Simpkins both flaunting the same off-the-shoulder pink peach dress with sparkly tinsel.

This year, a fashionable bunch of artists vied for the hotly contested best new artist category. Rising star Rae, who aptly has a song titled "High Fashion," wore a playfully structured white custom Alaia dress with a neckline that plunged down to her navel and a cheeky skirt that was longer in the front and shorter in the back.

"It was calling Marilyn Monroe to mind," Brooke Bobb, fashion news director for Harper's Bazaar said. "She's really a woman who loves to have fun with fashion and in a very genuine way."

Sabrina Carpenter once again brought Old Hollywood glamour to the carpet with a delicate custom Valentino white-jeweled coruscating mermaid gown adorned with flowers. The beloved Italian designer Valentino Garavani died last month, leaving a legacy of exquisite red carpet gowns.

Tyla may have a song titled "Chanel," but she went with Dsquared² for the red carpet. The South African singer wore low-cut cream look that featured a long-feathered train and gold beaded detailing. She styled the look with a loose updo and braids. Best new artist winner Dean wore a two-toned white and black feathered Chanel look from newly appointed creative director Matthieu Blazy. Dean pairing with Blazy speaks volumes to how the fashion industry views her, said LeSavage.

"She's a really cool alternative or juxtaposition to a lot of what's happening in pop music where you'll see a lot women performing in these really tight-fitting body suits and knee-high boots and things that feel very flashy, but Olivia Dean's style has this more vintage leaning aura that resembles her sound." LeSavage said.

Kesha and Lady Gaga went for full feathered looks. Kesha looked angelic in a white feathered off-the-shoulder gown from Atelier Biser, and Lady Gaga wore a glamorous high-neck and cinched waist black feathered dress by Matières Fécales.

Male artists put a twist on their tuxedos. Singer-songwriter Darren Criss, who hosted the Grammys Premiere Ceremony, donned a shimmering lace suit from Tanner Fletcher with an off-white silk cravat shaped into a bow. He paired it with his signature painted nails. Sombr sparkled on the carpet in a shimmering silver Valentino suit paired with a lace undershirt.

French luxury fashion house Schiaparelli debuted its first menswear red carpet suit with a black velvet tuxedo for Bad Bunny. The tuxedo featured the brand's signature corseted back. The global hitmaker won album of the year and will headline the Super Bowl halftime show this month.

Variety

BEIJING: Beijing on Monday criticized the Dalai Lama's first Grammy win, describing the music industry award for an audiobook, narration and storytelling as "a tool for anti-**China** political manipulation."

The Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader, who lives in exile in India, took the award on Sunday for his book, "Meditations: The Reflections of His Holiness the Dalai Lama."

He said in a statement on his website that he saw the award "as a recognition of our shared universal responsibility."

"I receive this recognition with gratitude and humility," he added.

China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson **Lin Jian** said: "It is well known that the 14th Dalai Lama is not merely a religious figure but a political exile engaged in anti-China separatist activities under the guise of religion." (AP)

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JAKARTA, Indonesia: Indonesia allowed **Elon Musk**'s artificial intelligence chatbot Grok to resume operations in the country on a conditional basis and under strict supervision, weeks after banning it for explicit sexual content.

Musk's social platform X Corp made a written commitment to service improvements and compliance with applicable laws, the communications ministry said in a statement Sunday.

The company told the ministry it had taken steps to address the misuse of Grok services, including restricting access to certain features, according to the statement. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

NEW YORK: **X.J. Kennedy**, an award-winning poet, author, translator and educator who schooled millions of students through "The Bedford Reader" and other textbooks and engaged voluntary readers with his children's stories and intricate, witty verse, died Sunday at 96.

Kennedy died of natural causes at his home in **Peabody**, **Massachusetts**, according to his daughter, Dr. **Kate Kennedy**.

Born **Joseph Charles Kennedy**, he chose the professional name X.J. Kennedy as a young man to avoid confusion with Joseph P. Kennedy, the former ambassador to Britain and father of President **John F. Kennedy**. Starting in the early 1960s, he turned out dozens of poetry and children's books, contributed to the popular Bedford Reader and collaborated with the poet and onetime National Endowment for the Arts chair Dana Gioia on anthologies of poetry, drama and fiction. (AP)

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NEW YORK: Promoted by President **Donald Trump** as "a must watch," the **Melania Trump** documentary "Melania" debuted with a better-than-expected $7 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday.

The release of "Melania" was unlike any seen before. Amazon MGM Studios paid $40 million for the rights, plus some $35 million to market it, making it the most expensive documentary ever. Directed by **Brett Ratner**, who had been exiled from Hollywood since 2017, the film about the first lady debuted in 1,778 theaters in the midst of Trump's turbulent second term. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

LOS ANGELES: **Demond Wilson**, who found fame in the 1970s playing Lamont on "Sanford and Son" and went on to become a minister, has died. He was 79.

Mark Goldman, a publicist for Wilson, confirmed to The Associated Press that he died following complications from cancer on Friday.

"A devoted father, actor, author, and minister, Demond lived a life rooted in faith, service, and compassion. Through his work on screen, his writing, and his ministry, he sought to uplift others and leave a meaningful impact on the communities he served," Goldman said in an emailed statement. (AP)

Hair samples may help assess stress in autistic children

Children with disabilities find joy, support through horse therapy

TAOYUAN, Taiwan, Feb 2, (Agencies): The young woman smiles widely as she prepares to get on the horse for her weekly ride. She laughs as the horse takes its first steps.

"The first time she got on a horse, she was happy," said Hector Chen of their initial visit. His daughter, Chen You-ching, was diagnosed with cerebral palsy more than 16 years ago. Since then, he has brought the now 18-year-old to horse therapy.

At the Therapeutic Riding Center of Taiwan in Taoyuan, a city in the island's northern region, children with cerebral palsy, autism, ADHD and other conditions find companionship and therapy through riding and interacting with horses.

Animal-assisted therapy is gaining popularity across the world, whether it's working with children with intellectual disabilities or veterans dealing with trauma.



A mother helps her daughter off a horse during an equine-assisted therapy course at the Therapeutic Riding Centre in Taoyuan in northern Taiwan on Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026. (AP)

Abigail Liu said her 5-year old daughter has benefited from the therapy immensely. Her daughter, Ayah, has Angelman Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that causes delayed development.

She said her daughter "started to be less scared about things she doesn't know and is willing to try (new things). All this started after she rode horses here."

The horses need special training to deal with the movements of a child or to stay calm when multiple people surround it, said Chan Shu-ya, a horse therapist.

Sometimes, the children just want to hug a horse for a long time or listen to its heartbeat. The horses will stand still with them.

"They feel very at ease, because the horse doesn't show annoyance even if they keep talking to it," said Alain Chang, who works at the Fang Hsing-Chung Social Welfare Foundation for Horses in Education and Health as a horse riding coach. "For them to come here to touch them, to observe them or even to hug them, this is a very special experience."

"Many of these students that I meet they look forward to coming to this every week, rain or shine," he said.

Also:

SYDNEY: Measuring hair cortisol may help reveal the impact of stress on autistic children, offering a biological tool to complement behavioral assessments, Australian research has found.

The study used biological samples from more than 580 autistic children, as well as their non-autistic siblings, and unrelated non-autistic children, aged 2 to 17, said a statement from Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA) on Monday.

Researchers from NeuRA and the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Australia found that lower hair cortisol concentration was associated with greater autism severity, particularly internalized distress, behavioral difficulties, and co-occurring ADHD.

"There were also links between higher hair cortisol concentration and sleep anxiety, night wakings, lower family income and younger children," said Adam Walker, research fellow from NeuRA's Laboratory of ImmunoPsychiatry.

UNSW Professor Valsamma Eapen said hair cortisol provides a reliable, non-invasive 3-6-month window into chronic stress in autistic children, avoiding issues with hard-to-collect acute tests like blood or saliva.

Experts spot tiny genetic malfunctions

Artificial organ keeps patient alive until lung transplants

LONDON, Feb 2, (Xinhua): A groundbreaking case published this week in the journal Med reported the successful use of an external, artificial lung system to sustain a critically ill patient for 48 hours after the complete removal of both lungs, which won enough time for the patient to have lung transplants.

In spring 2023, a 33-year-old male patient diagnosed with acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) was admitted to Northwestern Memorial Hospital in the United States. The patient's condition escalated into necrotizing pneumonia and overwhelming sepsis. Despite being placed on a ventilator, his condition kept deteriorating, and he had to face renal failure and cardiac arrest as a consequence.

Facing the rare clinical dilemma, the medical team led by thoracic surgeon Dr. Ankit Bharat at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago decided to support the patient with a newly developed artificial lung system, after removing the patient's infected lungs.

The patient's condition began to improve within just 48 hours. Bharat observed that the man's kidney function was completely restored and his heart returned to normal. He no longer required any medication to support his blood pressure. The patient later received a successful double lung transplant and has not experienced any signs of organ rejection or impaired lung function to this day.

Dr. Natasha Rogers, a transplant clinician at Westmead Hospital in Sydney, Australia, commented that the engineering behind the artificial lung system is remarkable and the team involved was "very brave."

Dr. Bharat expressed hope that such life-saving technology would be increasingly accessible for critically ill patients awaiting lung transplants. However, Rogers emphasized that implementing this approach requires multiple specialized teams, because only large hospitals would be capable of deploying it. Therefore, the application of this system remains limited.

❑ ❑ ❑

An international team led by scientists in Australia has developed a technique to reveal the smallest of malfunctions in the biochemical machinery that makes proteins in human bodies.

These malfunctions, however small, can trigger neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, cancer and developmental disorders, said a statement of the Australian National University (ANU) recently.

The technique, which works by squeezing molecules through tiny holes in a silicon-based membrane, helps scientists understand how a mutation in a transfer RNA (tRNA) molecule affects the molecule's real-time structure, according to the study, published in Nucleic Acids Research.

The tRNA, part of our genetic code, acts as a molecular messenger crucial for building proteins, which are essential for the body's structure and function, it said, adding a mutation in tRNA can disrupt protein production and lead to disease.

The new ability to identify malfunctions in the body's protein-developing machinery could enable a better understanding of disease pathways and ultimately lead to new and more effective treatment options, according to ANU Professor Patrick Kluth.

"We are examining the machinery that builds proteins in the first place. It's like checking the assembly line rather than inspecting finished products, allowing us to catch and understand problems much earlier," Kluth said.

By analyzing more than 3 million tRNA molecules, the team, involving collaborators from the United States and Poland, found that the mutant tRNA molecules can be permanently stuck in unusual shapes, which triggers the onset of disease.

The technology can be used for screening potential therapeutic drugs that stabilize tRNA's functional shapes, leading to massive advances in disease treatments, said lead author Shankar Dutt from ANU.



Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi at the opening of the Regional Oncology Conference and the 13th Gulf Union for Fighting Cancer Conference.



Conference organizing committee chairman Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh at the opening of the Regional Oncology Conference.



KUNA photos

A photo from the opening of the Regional Oncology Conference and the 13th Gulf Union for Fighting Cancer (GUFC) Conference.

GCC reports over 4% annual rise in cancer cases

Kuwait Health Minister calls for united efforts and cooperation to combat cancer

KUWAIT, Feb 2, (KUNA): Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi emphasized the need to unify efforts and strengthen regional cooperation to address cancer, describing it as one of the world's most significant health, social, and psychological challenges.

Speaking at the opening of the Regional Oncology Conference and the 13th The Gulf Union for Fighting Cancer (GUFC) Conference, Al-Awadhi said the growing number of specialized conferences in recent years reflects rapid scientific and technological advances in cancer diagnosis and treatment, particularly in the Gulf region.

He noted that the conference serves as a leading regional platform for knowledge exchange, showcasing the latest developments in prevention, early detection, treatment, palliative care, and psychological support, while enhancing collaboration between government, private health sectors, civil society, and academic institutions.

Al-Awadhi highlighted the key role of Gulf cancer organizations, particularly the GUFC, in developing national strategies and evaluating their impact, expressing hope that the conference's recommendations would contribute to improving cancer care across the Gulf.

Conference organizing committee chairman Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh said Gulf cancer registry data recorded more than 310,000 cancer cases between 1998 and 2020, with an annual increase of about 4.4 percent. He stressed that the conference aims to strengthen research cooperation and produce practical, actionable recommendations.

45M targeted

Pakistan starts anti-polio drive

ISLAMABAD, Feb 2, (Xinhua): Pakistan on Monday launched its first nationwide polio vaccination campaign of 2026, aiming to vaccinate more than 45 million children from Feb. 2 to Feb. 8, the National Emergency Operations Center said.

The campaign was inaugurated in Islamabad by Prime Minister's Focal Person for Polio Eradication Ayesha Raza Farooq, with representatives of UNICEF and the World Health Organization also attending.

Speaking at the ceremony, Farooq said polio eradication remains a top government priority, calling the campaign "crucial" to eliminating the disease.

Pakistan remains one of the few countries where polio is endemic, prompting authorities to intensify nationwide vaccination efforts.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan launched its first polio vaccination campaign of 2026 on Monday, aiming to protect over 7.3 million children under 5 years old against poliovirus, the Ministry of Public Health reported.

The four-day campaign, scheduled from Monday through Thursday, will administer polio vaccine drops to children in 18 of the country's 34 provinces, according to ministry spokesperson Sharafat Zaman Amarkhil.

In a public statement, Amarkhil called on tribal elders, religious scholars, and parents to fully cooperate with health workers to ensure the campaign's success.

No polio cases have been recorded so far in 2026. However, at least nine cases were confirmed in Afghanistan in 2025, despite ongoing government efforts to eliminate the paralyzing disease in the post-conflict nation.

Obesity cited

Heart deaths rise in youth

MELBOURNE, Feb 2, (Xinhua): Deaths from cardiovascular disease linked to overweight and obesity are rising among younger Australians, particularly in disadvantaged communities, new research has revealed.

The study, published in BMC Medicine, looked at premature overweight and obesity-related cardiovascular disease mortality for people aged between 35-74 years, said a statement from Australia's University of Melbourne on Friday.

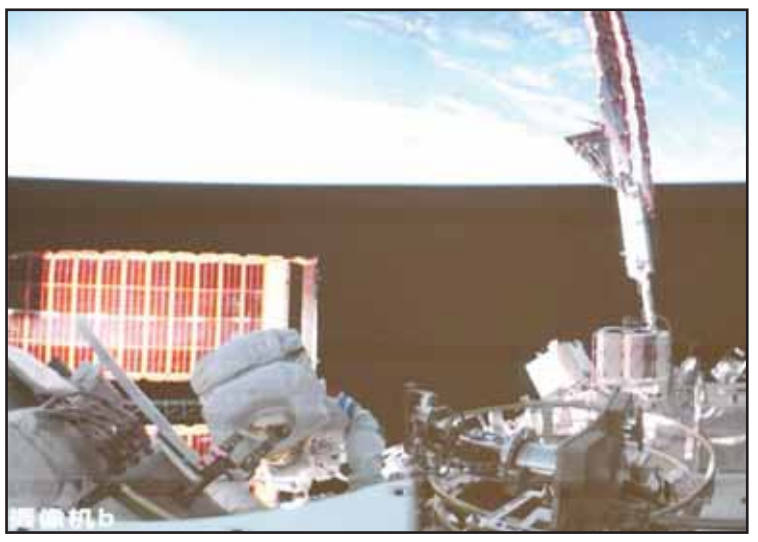
Using the Australian Bureau of Statistics death certificate data from 2007 and 2022, researchers found that low socio-economic areas were particularly disadvantaged.

Diabetes, chronic kidney disease, obesity, lipidemias or hypertension were taken into account as contributing causes of death, the statement said.

"These death rates are increasing fastest in younger adults, and we know this generation has experienced higher long-term obesity prevalence in childhood and young adulthood than previous generations," said Professor Tim Adair, a demographer at UniMelb's Nossal Institute for Global Health.

The research also found that overweight and obesity-related premature cardiovascular disease death rates are particularly high in people living in more socio-economically disadvantaged areas, widening the gap with more advantaged areas in recent years due to cheap unhealthy food and poor neighborhood walkability, Adair said.

While weight-loss drugs can help curb obesity, addressing social, economic, and environmental factors remains essential to prevent premature obesity-related deaths, he said, calling it "a global problem and an urgent public health concern."



This screen image captured at Beijing Aerospace Control Center on Dec 9, 2025 shows Shenzhou-21 astronaut Wu Fei performing extravehicle activities outside China's orbiting space station. (Xinhua)

Shenzhou-21's crew goals on track after 3 months in space

BEIJING, Feb 2, (Xinhua): The Shenzhou-21 crew members aboard China's Tiangong space station have successfully completed their first three months in space, with all planned tasks progressing smoothly, according to the China Manned Space Agency.

A video report by China Media Group on Sunday night showed specifically that to combat the physical effects of weightlessness, the crew, consisting of mission commander Zhang Lu and astronauts Wu Fei and Zhang Hongzhang, had performed a lower limb muscle force stimulation test.

Using specialized gear like bionic adhesive shoes, they exercised to stimulate their leg muscles and collected data to study muscle adaptation in space. In the field of space medical research, they have made progress with a pharmacokinetics project, which studies how drugs are processed in the human body in space. This involves collecting saliva samples that will be sent back to Earth for analysis, thereby providing critical data for managing medication use in space.

The three astronauts have also conducted multiple tests on human psychology, including assessments of human-computer trust, in-orbit emotional states and emergency decision-making capabilities.

In the realm of microgravity physical science, the crew members have maintained and serviced experimental facilities. This process has included cleaning and replacing samples inside a containerless experiment cabinet, a device that levitates materials to study their properties without interference from a container, the report revealed.

Beyond scientific experiments, regular health monitoring remains a priority as a disciplined regimen of in-orbit exercise is key to ensuring that crew members remain in optimal condition for the remainder of their mission.

The astronauts have already undergone numerous medical checks, including dynamic electrocardiograms, blood pressure monitoring, ultrasound exams and bone density measurements, which showed that they are in good health, the report noted.

The Shenzhou-21 manned spacecraft was launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China on Oct. 31, 2025. On Dec. 9, the Shenzhou-21 crew completed their mission's first series of extravehicular activities.

Are bidets healthier than toilet paper?

Doctors share best practices for bidet use

NEW YORK, Feb 2, (AP): Once considered an oddity in American homes, bidets are becoming increasingly common as more people seek a hygienic and sustainable alternative to toilet paper or a hand managing certain physical conditions.

Toilet paper shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic helped demystify the devices for US consumers, although Italy, Japan and some other countries where bidets are standard bathroom features also saw runs on TP. Environmental awareness, less expensive bidet options and the development of smart toilets that perform multiple functions have given further momentum to the idea of rinsing instead of wiping.

Bidets even earned a moment in the national spotlight last month when Zorhan Mamdani, New York City's new mayor, said he hoped to have them installed in the bathrooms of Gracie Mansion, the 18th century Manhattan home that serves as the official residence of the city's chief executive.

Medical professionals sometimes recommend bidets for patients with hemorrhoids, in recovery from surgery, or who have limited mobility due to age or disabilities. But experts say bidets are not best for everyone and need to be used properly to prevent other problems.

Here are some of the ins and outs to consider.

Bidets use a jet of water to clean the genitals and anal area after someone goes to the bathroom. They originally existed mainly as standalone fixtures separate from toilets.

These days, the options include toilet seat attachments and hand-held versions that resemble detachable shower heads. Many of the latest "smart" toilets come with integrated bidets and feature heated seats, adjustable water pressure and air dryers.

On YouTube and other social media platforms, there are videos demonstrations of how to make a portable bidet with a plastic soda bottle.

Bidet converts tend to rave about how much cleaner the appliances leave them feeling. Since all toileting activity involves delicate body parts and bacteria, experts stress that correct bidet use is required to make the activity as sanitary as possible.

When using standalone bidets and ones installed on toilets, it's best, especially for women, to turn on the faucet while facing the controls so the washing is done from front to back, according to Dr. David Rivadeneira, a colorectal surgeon with the Huntington Hospital in Huntington, New York.

That position prevents the transfer of bacteria from the anal area to the urethra, Rivadeneira said.

Most doctors recommend using warm water at low pressure for up to a few minutes, avoiding any extreme temperatures. You can also try a gentle soap if desired, but it's usually not necessary for regular bidet users.

Rivadeneira cautions patients against trying to inject water into the anus since the devices are not meant for internal use.

"You're not supposed to be substituting it for a colonic or an enema," he said.

After washing, pat dry with toilet paper or a dedicated cotton towel to remove any remaining stool and to prevent yeast



A smart bidet sits in a bathroom at the McKechnie Family LIFE Home on the University Illinois campus in Champaign, Ill., Dec. 9, 2021. (AP)

"The texture of toilet paper can cause irritation and itching, while the gentle water stream of a bidet is less abrasive and healthier for the skin," Dr. George Ellis, a urologist in Orlando, Florida, said.

Bidets therefore may benefit people with chronic diarrhea or other conditions that necessitate a lot of wiping, as well as those who are prone to urinary tract infections, medical experts said. They also may help relieve discomfort from hemorrhoids, fistulas and anal fissures, they said.

Three dermatologists from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center wrote in a 2023 editorial in the International Journal of Women's Dermatology that their peers should be "aware of the commonality of bidet use outside of American culture" and comfortable recommending bidets because skin conditions such as eczema, psoriasis and contact dermatitis can occur in the perianal region.

They also argued that by helping people with physical limitations clean themselves independently after using the toilet, bidets can reduce the workload of caregivers, most of whom are women.

Bidets are another example where it's possible to get too much of a good thing. Some doctors in Japan have advised patients who reported rashes or difficulty controlling their bowels after frequent bottom cleansing to stop using bidets until the conditions cleared up.

Antosh recommends checking with a doctor before using a high-pressure bidet right after childbirth or if you have genital ulcers because powerful streams of water may be irritating.

Dr. Jenna Queller, a dermatologist and founder of Boca Raton, Florida-based DermWorks, said the same was true for people with genital eczema or psoriasis. She recommends moisturizing the areas after using a bidet to prevent irritation..

And while bidets may offer relief for an itchy bottom, always consult a doctor if there's persistent bleeding from fissures or hemorrhoids because you could have a more serious condition, Rivadeneira advises.

Knicks spoil LeBron's Madison Square Garden night

Gilgeous-Alexander powers Thunder past Nuggets

NEW YORK, Feb 2, (AP): OG Anunoby scored 25 points, Landry Shamet added 23 and the New York Knicks beat the Los Angeles Lakers 112-100 to spoil LeBron James' 32nd game at Madison Square Garden.

Josh Hart finished with 20 points and Jalen Brunson had 12 points and a season-high 13 assists for the Knicks, who matched a season high with their sixth straight win, most of them coming easily.

James finished with 22 points, six assists and five rebounds after being chosen as a reserve earlier Sunday for his NBA-record 22nd consecutive All-Star selection. He fell to 23-9 in the regular season at MSG, where he came into the game having averaged 28.2 points, 7.6 assists and 7.0 rebounds.

Luka Doncic had 30 points, 15 rebounds and eight assists. The game was exactly a year to the day of the Lakers' last trip to New York, when shortly after their victory came word that they agreed to the blockbuster trade with Dallas that brought Doncic to Los Angeles.

James hasn't said if his 23rd season will be his last, but the possibility of a final MSG appearance sent ticket sales soaring, with seats far from the floor selling for more than $500 and ones near the court going for thousands of dollars.



Los Angeles Lakers guard Marcus Smart, left, and New York Knicks center Karl-Anthony Towns, right, go for the ball during the first half of an NBA basketball game in New York. (AP)

Thunder 121, Nuggets 111

In Denver, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 34 points and Cason Wallace added a career-best 27, including seven 3-pointers, as the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Denver Nuggets.

Gilgeous-Alexander had 13 assists and the Thunder, who had lost three of four, sank 19 3-pointers. They went 8 of 13 from long range in the third quarter when Oklahoma City expanded a seven-point halftime cushion to 16.

Peyton Watson's 29 points paced the Nuggets, who never led in the first of four games this season between the top two teams in the Western Conference. It was their first meeting since the Thunder beat Denver in Game 7 of the Western Conference semifinals last May on their way to winning the city's first NBA championship.

The Nuggets' pair of All-Stars had a rather quiet night.

Spurs 112, Magic 103

In San Antonio, Victor Wembanyama had 25 points, eight rebounds and five blocks and San Antonio beat the Orlando Magic in a game that started five hours late because of the Spurs' travel woes.

The Spurs were scheduled to leave Charlotte following a 111-106 loss Saturday, but had to stay overnight because of the storm that dropped nearly a foot of snow. The team then had a mechanical issue on its flight.

Devin Vassell added 16 points for San Antonio. Dylan Harper had 15 points, and De'Aaron Fox had 14 points and 10 assists.

Desmond Bane scored 25 points for Orlando, and Paolo Banchero had 19 points and 10 rebounds. Orlando had won two in a row.

The Magic had been in San Antonio since Saturday after a 130-120 home victory over Toronto. The Spurs weren't so lucky.

The game was scheduled to start at 3 p.m. but was pushed back to 6 p.m. and then 8 p.m. as the Spurs returned home nearly 24 hours later than planned.

Cavaliers 130, Trail Blazers 111

In Portland, Jarrett Allen scored a career-high 40 points and grabbed 17 rebounds as the Cleveland Cavaliers handed the Portland Trail Blazers their fifth straight loss.

Sam Merrill added 22 points, including six 3-pointers, and the Cavs rebounded from a loss to the Phoenix Suns on Friday night that snapped a five-game winning streak. Allen also contributed five assists and four blocks.

Clippers 117, Suns 93

In Phoenix, Kawhi Leonard scored 25 points and the Los Angeles Clippers, playing without James Harden, routed the Phoenix Suns.

Leonard, who was left off the Western Conference All-Star reserves announced earlier Sunday, had eight rebounds as well as his 27th consecutive game with 20 or more points. Ivica Zubac had 20 rebounds as the Clippers bounced back from a loss at Denver on Friday and dominated the inside, outrebounding Phoenix 63-35 and outscoring the Suns 64-18 in the paint.

Jordan Miller had 20 points, John Collins 16, Zubac 14 and Kobe Sanders 12 for the Clippers, who shot 51.8% from the field. Sanders started for Harden, who missed the game for personal reasons.

Since starting the season 6-21, the Clippers have won 17 of 21 and are just two games under .500. The Suns had won three straight before Sunday, and are still 15-7 since Dec. 21.

Raptors 107, Jazz 100

In Toronto, RJ Barrett scored 21 points, Sandro Mamukelashvili added 20 and the Toronto Raptors beat the Utah Jazz to open a five-game homestand.

Brandon Ingram added 19 points to help Toronto end a two-game losing streak. Immanuel Quickley had 17 points.

Scottie Barnes celebrated being added to his second NBA All-Star Game with 14 points and nine rebounds. Barnes hurt his left foot with 4:48 remaining after a steal. He departed 22 seconds later, only to return for the final 3:05.

Lauri Markkanen had 27 points and 11 rebounds for Utah. The Jazz have lost a season-worst six straight games.

Isaiah Collier added 19 points, and Jusuf Nurkic had 11 points and 13 rebounds.

Wizards 116, Kings 112

In Washington, rookie Will Riley scored a season-high 18 points, including a go-ahead 3-pointer with 2:07 left, and the Washington Wizards beat the Sacramento Kings in a matchup of last-place teams.

AJ Johnson added 17 points and Bilal Coulibaly and Marvin Bagley III each scored 15 for the Wizards, who relied heavily on their reserves as they handed the Kings their ninth straight loss.

Pistons 130, Nets 77

In Detroit, Jalen Duren had 21 points and 10 rebounds after being added to the All-Star Game as an Eastern Conference reserve, and the Detroit Pistons routed the Brooklyn Nets 130-77 in the most-lopsided victory in franchise history.

The 53-point margin topped the mark of 52 set in a 118-66 victory at Boston on Jan 31, 2003. The Nets had a 54-point loss - 120-66 - on Jan. 21 against New York.

Heat 134, Bulls 91

In Miami, Bam Adebayo and Pelle Larsson each had 20 points, and the Miami Heat tied their third-biggest victory margin ever in a rout of the Chicago Bulls.

The Heat led by as many as 54; before Sunday, their biggest lead this season was 45 at Memphis on Oct. 24. It was Miami's second-largest lead of the play-by-play era that dates to 1996; the Heat beat Memphis by 60 on March 29, 2024.

The 54-point hole was Chicago's biggest since a 58-point deficit against Boston on Dec. 8, 2018. The Bulls' biggest deficits this season were a pair of 41-point games - one against Minnesota on Dec. 29, the other also against Miami on Nov. 21.

Celtics 107, Bucks 79

In Boston, Jaylen Brown had 30 points and 13 rebounds, Anfernee Simons scored 27 points off the bench and the Boston Celtics coasted to a victory over the Milwaukee Bucks.

Derrick White added 17 points, eight assists and seven rebounds, and Neemias Queta had 14 points and eight boards as the Celtics won their second straight game after alternating wins and losses in their previous four. It was Brown's third double-double this season.

Ryan Rollins led Milwaukee with 25 points and Kyle Kuzma scored 16.

Gu, the face of China's ambitions

China targets multiple titles in freestyle skiing at Milan-Cortina

LIVIGNO, Italy, Feb 2, (Xinhua): A glance at China's freestyle skiing roster for the Milan-Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics reads like a constellation of stars. Gu Ailing, Xu Mengtao and Qi Guangpu alone accounted for four of China's nine gold medals at Beijing 2022, anchoring the country's best Winter Olympic performance ever.

Four years on, Chinese freestyle skiing has not merely sustained its world-class standing - it has evolved. What was once defined by isolated breakthroughs has matured into a deep, multi-pronged medal assault.

As competition unfolds in Livigno, a mountain town straddling the Italian-Swiss border, freestyle skiing stands out as China's most concentrated source of gold medal hopes at the Games.

The freestyle program features 15 medal events across three disciplines: aerials, moguls and park and pipe. China's strongest prospects lie in aerials, halfpipe and slopestyle, disciplines where both star power and depth converge.

At the forefront remains Gu, the face of China's park and pipe ambitions. The Beijing Olympic champion, who captured two golds and a silver, has weathered an injury-interrupted Milan cycle but returned with emphatic authority. She swept victory in each of her last six women's halfpipe World Cup appearances this season, reasserting a dominance that borders on the overwhelming.

Gu's competitive schedule in slopestyle has been lighter over the past two seasons, yet her recent commanding win at a World Cup stop in Switzerland served as a reminder that she remains very much in the gold-medal conversation.

As for big air, Gu has not competed in the event since Beijing 2022. Though she has secured Olympic qualification, whether she will contest the discipline in Milan remains an open question.

Behind Gu, China's park and pipe contingent has grown notably thicker.



In this file photo, Gold medalist Gu Ailing reacts during the award ceremony of women's freeski big air at the Beijing Medals Plaza of the Winter Olympics. (Xinhua)

In women's halfpipe, world championship silver medalist and Crystal Globe winner Li Fanghui, alongside World Cup event champion Zhang Kexin, form a formidable trio with Gu, giving China the realistic prospect of multiple podium finishes.

Rising talent Liu Mengting, meanwhile, has emerged as a promising force in big air. The Harbin Asian Winter Games flag bearer for China has already claimed two World Cup podiums this season, signaling genuine medal potential.

The international landscape, however, has shifted since Beijing 2022. Women's freestyle skiing has seen a regrettable wave of elite exits. France's Tess Ledeux, Italy's rising star Flora Tabanelli and Estonia's prodigy Kelly Sildaru have all been sidelined by serious injuries, dimming the once-crowded constellation of stars.

Still, challenges remain. Swiss defending Olympic champion Mathilde Gremaud looms as Gu's primary rival in slopestyle, while Britain's Zoe Atkin stands among the few skiers capable of mounting a meaningful challenge in the halfpipe.

If park and pipe offers brilliance, aerials remain China's most reliable gold mine.

Gaps persist at the Winter Olympics

Programs aim to diversify winter sports

NEW YORK, Feb 2, (AP): Whether it's on indoors halfpipes in New Jersey or the Rocky Mountains slopes of Colorado and Wyoming, there seems to be plenty of programs aimed at developing a diverse new generation of skiers, skaters and snowboarders. Yet that work is not often reflected with the athletes seen at the Winter Olympics.

A year before the last Winter Games in Beijing, former Canadian figure skater Elladj Baldé started the Skate Global Foundation, a group he says was inspired by his own experiences dealing with adversity as a skater of color.

As athletes prepare to gather next month for global competition at the Milan Cortina Games, organizations like the foundation and the National Brotherhood of Snowsports say they are creating accessibility to the slopes for underserved communities with a charge to develop from recreational-level participation to an Olympic path.

Wealth and access to ski resorts make a significant difference in one's ability to progress. An athlete's chance of making an Olympic team increases significantly with intensive training at elite boarding schools or academies that can costs tens of thousands of dollars.

"If there were more organizations like this doing this type of work, I think we would have a lot more funding available for skaters of color to be able to access support and the technical background that they need in order to continue to evolve in the sport," Baldé said.



In this file photo, Erin Jackson of United States competes during the women's 500 meters at the World Cup speedskating event in Inzell, Germany. (AP)

The majority of Team USA athletes are white even though the roster is more diverse than some at the Winter Games. The U.S. Alpine skiing team in Milano-Cortina is predominantly white. The U.S. figure skaters competing this year are also include Asian American athletes, but none who are Black or Hispanic. Laila Edwards is a rising star of the powerhouse U.S. women's hockey team and will be the first Black woman to wear the American sweater on the Olympic stage.

Still, there will be many athletes of color competing next month, the majority from African and Caribbean nations.

Baldé, 35, grew up being told he couldn't skate to hip-hop music, wear his hair out because it was nappy or that he looked like a monkey. Hearing things like that, Baldé said, he would have benefited from more support or ice skaters to look at who may have experienced similar things and could offer ways to overcome the noise.

His foundation is focused on creating more diversity in figure skating, offering $3,000 grants to skaters of color in Canada who are close or on a path to competing at the Olympics.

Baldé said the biggest struggle for him was the lack of representation, but receiving similar grants when he was younger helped him to break into competitions at a higher level.

"To be able to have skaters competing internationally and competing at the Olympics that are Black, Indigenous or skaters of color can really inspire generations of athletes to come into a sport where they might feel like don't belong without that representation," he said.

Best of the Rest

Merino needs foot surgery: Spain midfielder Mikel Merino should be fit for the World Cup after he was ruled out for "an extended period" by Arsenal because of a right foot injury.

The Premier League leaders said that Merino will have an operation on the bone injury sustained during the home loss to Manchester United on Jan. 25.

"Mikel will have surgery in the coming days and will then begin his recovery and rehabilitation programme," Arsenal said.

"Mikel is expected to be out of action for an extended period, with the aim of returning to full training before the end of the season." (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Hellas Verona fires coach Zanetti: Hellas Verona, the team in last place in the Italian league, fired its coach.

Paolo Zanetti was released two days after a 4-0 loss at Cagliari, which left Hellas Verona bottom of Serie A - below Pisa, which also has 14 points from 23 games.

Pisa fired its coach, Alberto Girardino, on Sunday.

It means six Italian top-flight clubs have changed coaches already this season.

Hellas Verona's only two wins so far in Serie A came back to back in December.

The team is four points from safety with 15 rounds remaining. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Bremen sacks coach Steffen: Werder Bremen has dismissed head coach Horst Steffen following a late 1-1 home draw against Borussia Monchengladbach, the Bundesliga club announced.

The 56-year-old was recruited last summer from second-tier side Elversberg, but his first Bundesliga assignment has ended after just 20 league games in charge.

The decision came a day after Werder extended its winless league run to ten matches against Gladbach. The result leaves Bremen 15th in the Bundesliga standings on 19 points after 20 matches, level on points with Wolfsburg and just one point clear of Mainz in the relegation play-off place. (Xinhua)

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England's resurgence threatens France's and Ireland dominance

LONDON, Feb 2, (AP): There's finally a serious threat to the France and Ireland dominion over the Six Nations.

England has come on for the first time since its last title in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The team is riding an 11-game winning streak, in which the highlight was beating New Zealand 33-19 in November. It ended the All Blacks' grand slam hopes and sealed the exit of New Zealand coach Scott Robertson.

A resurgent team with British and Irish Lions on the bench and brimming with X-factor in Immanuel Feyi-Waboso and Henry Pollock has prompted coach Steve Borthwick, normally cautious, to talk up their climactic last-round showdown with defending champion France in Paris.

"On 14 March ... we want to be in a position in that game to get what we all want to achieve," Borthwick told the BBC.

England is vulnerable, though. Its last test of 2025 against Argentina was an aerial dogfight that wasn't clinched until the Pumas bungled a last-minute throw-in.

France and Ireland have shared the last four Six Nations titles and anticipation of their matchup this year will be resolved in the opening game, the first Thursday kickoff in championship history to avoid the Milan Cortina Olympics opening ceremony.

France is the favorite thanks to an ideal schedule - home games against Ireland and England - the return of inspirational captain Antoine Dupont, and the strength of the Top 14, home of the last five European club champions.

But France's autumn campaign raised questions: It was outsmarted and overpowered by 14-man South Africa and notched unconvincing wins against Fiji and a depleted Australia.

Coach Fabien Galthié has appeared to accept their struggles while transitioning the team for the 2027 Rugby World Cup in Australia.

Pakistan departs for T20 World Cup, awaits ICC response

'There will be consequences'

ISLAMABAD, Feb 2, (AP): Pakistan departed for the T20 World Cup in Sri Lanka on Monday and awaited any sanction from the International Cricket Council for refusing to play India in the tournament. In video footage released by the Pakistan Cricket Board, the cricketers were dressed in their new World Cup kit as they boarded a bus from a hotel to the airport in Lahore.

India is co-hosting the World Cup, but Pakistan will play all of its games in Sri Lanka - including any in the knockout stage - because of political tensions with India. Pakistan shook the cricketing world when its government instructed the team on Sunday to compete in the World Cup but boycott the group game against India in Colombo on Feb. 15.

The government did not give a reason on its X account. The PCB has reportedly not given official notice to the ICC. The ICC warned Pakistan that there will be consequences. The ICC said "the position of selective participation is difficult to reconcile with the fundamental premises of a global sporting event." The ICC added Pakistan's decision was "not in the interest of the global game or the welfare of fans worldwide, including millions in Pakistan." Pakistan and India have fought four wars and frequently clash on their border, so their cricket matchups often attract the highest audience and are therefore a significant source of income for broadcasters, sponsors, and the ICC.

They are regularly grouped at ICC tournaments because they have not played a bilateral cricket series for 14 years. The T20 World Cup starts on Saturday when Pakistan is scheduled to open against the Netherlands.

Pakistan will play a final warmup game against Ireland on Wednesday in Colombo. After Pakistan wrapped up a 3-0 Twenty20 series win over Australia on Sunday in Lahore, Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha said he will follow the government's instructions. "It's not our decision (to boycott the India game), we can't do anything about it," Agha said. "We will do whatever our government and the (PCB) chairman say."

PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi has criticized the ICC for "double standards" by refusing to shift Bangladesh's games to Sri Lanka after the Bangladesh government didn't allow its team to travel to India due to security concerns.

The ICC axed Bangladesh and replaced it with Scotland for the tournament. The strained political relations between India and Pakistan spilled onto the cricket field last year when Indian players refused to shake hands with Pakistani players during three Asia Cup games, including the final, in the United Arab Emirates. Later, India left without the trophy after it refused to accept it from Naqvi, who is the president of the Asian Cricket Council.



Pakistani players and officials pose for photograph with the trophy after winning the T20 series against Australia on the end of the third T20 cricket match between Pakistan and Australia, in Lahore, Pakistan. (AP)

Foord sinks Corinthians in extra time

Arsenal wins inaugural Women's Champions Cup

LONDON, Feb 2, (AP): Caitlin Foord scored on a breakaway in extra time and Arsenal won the inaugural Women's Champions Cup with a 3-2 victory over Brazil's Corinthians .Corinthians leveled the match at 2-2 in second-half stoppage time when Victoria converted a penalty in the pouring rain at Emirates Stadium.

Olivia Smith and Lotte Wubben-Moy scored in regulation for Arsenal, which earns $2.3 million for winning the intercontinental tournament. Corinthians takes home $1 million as the runner-up.

Arsenal, which qualified for the tournament as winners of the UEFA Champions League, earned a spot in the final with a 6-0 defeat of Morocco's ASFAR in Wednesday's semifinals.

Smith, who also scored in the semifinal, opened scoring in the 15th minute when Corinthians goalkeeper Leticia punched a shot from Stina Blackstenius into Smith's path.

Six minutes later, Corinthians evened the score with Gabriela Zanotti's goal that crossed the line before Arsenal goalkeeper Anneke Borbe could get to it. The 40-year-old Zanotti also scored in Corinthians' 1-0 semifinal victory over Gotham FC.

Lotte Wubben-Moy scored the go-ahead goal in the 58th with a header off a cross by Emily Fox as FIFA President Gianni Infantino looked on.

It appeared that Arsenal had the trophy in hand, but video review awarded a penalty to Corinthians after Katie McCabe's foul in the box in stoppage time, sending the vocal group of Corinthians fans at the match into a frenzy.



Arsenal's team captains Kin Little, left, and Leah Williamson, right, lift the trophy after winning the Women's Champions Cup final soccer match between Arsenal FC and SC Corinthians in London. (AP)

Foord put Arsenal back in front with the winning goal in the 104th minute. Arsenal's Borbe was involved in a collision in front of her goal in the waning moments of the match and had to be stretchered off with an injury.

Gotham won the third-place match 4-0 over ASFAR earlier in the day. Khyah Harper, who started after coming in as a substitute in the semifinal, opened scoring with a goal in the 27th minute.

Gotham doubled the lead with a goal from Savannah McCaskill and Jaedyn Shaw converted a penalty to make it 3-0 before halftime. Midge Purce added the final goal in the 48th.

Gotham qualified by winning the first CONCACAF Champions Cup with a 1-0 victory over Mexico's Tigres last May. Corinthians won the CONMEBOL Copa Libertadores Femenina to earn a spot and ASFAR won the CAF Champions League.

Two continental champions were eliminated in earlier rounds: Auckland United from Oceania and Wuhan Chegu Jiangda representing Asia.

The six-team women's Champions Cup was created as an intercontinental championship for women's club teams. It builds on a growing number of regional club competitions, led by the success of the UEFA Women's Champions League.

FIFA also is introducing a 16-team Women's Club World Cup, which will launch in 2028 and be played every four years. The new Champions Cup will be held every year, except years when the Club World Cup takes place.

Djokovic revels in fan adoration after Australian Open heroics

MELBOURNE, Feb 2, (Xinhua): As he clutched unfamiliar runner-up silverware on his favored center court, with great rival Rafael Nadal watching on in the stands while his newest Spanish opponent Carlos Alcaraz stood nearby, Novak Djokovic basked in the adulation of a rowdy Rod Laver Arena on an unforgettable chilly Sunday night in Melbourne.

The 38-year-old inevitably ran out of gas against world number one Alcaraz in four sets, perhaps forever banishing his hopes of a record 25th Grand Slam title.

But Djokovic stole the show of the trophy presentation following an engrossing final that may have been his last match at Melbourne Park.

Giddy fans chanted "Nole, Nole" repeatedly as if he had won an 11th Australian Open title, such was the reverence on display for the Serbian.

It's the type of hysteria that Djokovic had never really been showered with before despite being the most accomplished male tennis player in history.

This was the moment that Djokovic had always craved having for so long been in the shadow of Nadal and Roger Federer, adored players who were feted wherever they played.

In his younger days, Djokovic spent a record 91 consecutive weeks stagnant at world number three as Nadal and Federer traded majors in the most compelling rivalry the sport had ever seen.

Djokovic became flustered by being seen as a third wheel. He tried to win over the public with humorous antics, but it only made him feel less serious and weighty compared to the gravitational pull of his two rivals.

Eventually, Djokovic let his indefatigable game do the talking and overtook an aging Federer and battered Nadal to become the undisputed best player.

His remarkable fitness, dedication and willpower ensured he has had the type of longevity that defied logic.

But Djokovic has never been able to shrug off controversies on-and-off the court, most notably when he refused to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and thus was deported from Melbourne before the 2022 Australian Open.



Novak Djokovic of Serbia hits a forehand to Carlos Alcaraz of Spain during the men's singles final at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

Last-placed Metz slumps to 14th defeat in 20 league matches this season

PSG reclaims top spot, Nartey scores for Lyon on debut

PARIS, Feb 2, (AP): Midfielder Noah Nartey made an immediate impact at his new club by scoring on his Ligue 1 debut to lead Lyon to a 10th consecutive win across all competitions, and Paris Saint-Germain won 2-1 at Strasbourg to reclaim top spot despite playing the last 15 minutes with 10 men.

Lyon beat Lille 1-0 in a match of few chances for both teams. Nartay netted the decisive goal in the 37th minute and Lyon climbed to fourth, level on points with third-place Marseille.

PSG faced strong opposition and returned to first place after Nuno Mendes headed home the winner in the 81st as Strasbourg failed to capitalize on its numerical advantage. PSG goalkeeper Matvey Safonov saved a penalty in the first half.

Defending champion PSG holds a two-point lead over Lens, with Marseille and Lyon nine points adrift.

Mendes' goal from Warren Zaïre-Emery's cross came only a few minutes after Achraf Hakimi was sent off for a reckless challenge on Joaquín Panichelli.

In an enthralling first half, Strasbourg had the chance to take the lead in the 19th minute from the penalty spot. But Safonov, a spot-kick specialist who was preferred to Lucas Chevalier in goal for the second match in a row, dived to deny Panichelli.



PSG's Marquinhos is in action during a Champions League opening phase soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Newcastle. (AP)

PSG broke the deadlock following a defensive mistake from Mamadou Sarr in the 22nd minute. The Strasbourg captain failed to clear the ball inside the box and instead fired it straight at Bradley Barcola. It fell to Senny Mayulu, who scored with a left-footed strike.

The hosts drew level five minutes later through a goal from Guéla Doué, with his brother Désiré Doué - who plays for PSG - watching from the visitors' bench.

The goal came at the conclusion of a move ignited by a brilliant pass from Panichelli that released Ben Chilwell on the left. The former Chelsea player then crossed into the middle for Doué to slot home.

"It was a very difficult match against a very difficult opponent," Safonov said. "We were a bit lucky at the end of the game, it's true. It was a nervy ending."

It was a first league defeat for Strasbourg coach Gary O'Neil, who had been unbeaten since replacing Liam Rosenior following his fellow Englishman's departure to Premier League club Chelsea.

The 20-year-old Danish player signed a five-year contract with Lyon last month, joining from Brondby.

Lille dominated the first half and Nartay showed his solid defensive skills. He then displayed his composure to send a low shot between the legs of the Lille goalkeeper. That capped a fine move by Ruben Kluivert, who had rushed down the the left flank then set up his teammate with a precise cut-back pass at the penalty spot.

"I'm proud of the team, we worked hard," Kluivert said. "Lille was good, but we were better."

Nartay's goal extended Lille's losing streak to a fourth consecutive Ligue 1 match, with Bruno Génésio's team in fifth place, seven points behind Lyon.

Last-placed Metz slumped to a 14th defeat in 20 league matches this season, losing 1-0 at Angers. Metz's task was made harder early on when Jean-Philippe Gbamin was sent off after slipping on the ball and stamping on the ankle of Haris Belkebla. Angers took advantage of the situation and Louis Mouton scored the decisive goal in the 25th minute with a precise finish.

Auxerre moved one point above Metz after a 0-0 draw at Toulouse, and Nice fought back from two goals down at home to draw 2-2 with Brest thanks to second-half goals from Ali Abdi and Elye Wahi.





Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, right, drives past Denver Nuggets guard Jalen Pickett in the second half of an NBA basketball game in Denver. (AP)
– See Page 14

Sports

Kuwait's figure skaters shine with seven medals at Bucharest Open

BUCHAREST, Feb 2, (KUNA): Kuwait's women's figure skating team delivered an impressive showing at the 2026 Bucharest International Open Championship, winning a total of seven medals over the two-day competition.

Kuwait team manager Salem Al-Ajmi told KUNA after the event concluded that Najat Al-Turki, Lara Al-Barrak, Noura Dashti and Bibi Dashti each captured gold medals. Zahra Al-Sayegh claimed silver, while Sama Jarragh and Hayat Hussein secured bronze medals.

Al-Ajmi explained that the Kuwaiti skaters competed across specific categories based on athletes' levels and classifications, praising the strong performances recorded by the team throughout the championship.

He said the achievement reflected the players' intensive preparation, commitment and discipline during both training and competition.



Najat Al-Turki was crowned with the gold medal.

Al-Ajmi added that the tournament provided the athletes with an important opportunity to further develop their technical skills and gain valuable international experience.

Kuwait continues strong run at Arab Wheelchair Basketball Championship



Kuwaiti player goes for a basket as opponents look on.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: The first Arab Wheelchair Basketball Championship is ongoing in Kuwait from January 29 to February 5, organized by the Kuwait Wheelchair Basketball Federation, with seven national teams competing.

In Group A match held at the Kuwait Disabled Sports Club Hall, Kuwait defeated Palestine 67–43, maintaining its lead in the group. Kuwait has 4 points from two wins, scoring 130 points and conceding 71.

Palestine sits second in the group with 3 points from two matches (one win, one loss), scoring 106 points and conceding 103. In the other Group A match, Libya defeated Jordan 53–33, taking third place with 3 points, while Jordan remains last with 2 points after two losses.

In Group B, Egypt cruised past Yemen 81–9.

Kuwait Club gears up for West Asia Championship

Kuwait Volleyball Federation opens board nominations

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: The Board of Directors of the Kuwait Volleyball Federation has announced the opening of nominations to fill vacant positions on the board, including Secretary-General and Board Member, starting Monday for a period of 10 days.

The announcement came during the board meeting held the day before yesterday at the federation headquarters in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex.

The meeting was chaired by Board President Dr. Jaber Al-Merri, and attended by Treasurer Talal Al-Adwani, Assistant Secretary Naif Al-Khamili, and board members Jassim Al-Felkawei and Naif Al-Felkawei.

The federation has scheduled the ordinary general assembly to hold the complementary elections on Tuesday, February 17, at 6:00 PM, with applications accepted at the federation headquarters in Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Hall.



Kuwait Club intensifies training for the championship.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Club has completed preparations for the fourth edition of the West Asia Volleyball Clubs Championship, which the club will host from February 4 to 14. The tournament begins tomorrow in Kuwait.

The team held a preparatory training camp in Turkey, concluding last Saturday, during which they played four friendly matches.

The tournament draw placed Kuwait Club, the host, in Group B alongside Lebanese club Shabab Al-Batroun, Qatari club Al-Wakra, and Bahraini club Al-Ahli. The second Kuwaiti team, Burgan Club, was drawn in Group C with Saudi club Al-Ittihad, Omani club Al-Seeb, and Bahraini club Dar Klab. Group A features three teams: Qatari club Al-Rayyan, Omani club Majees, and Iraqi club Ghaz Al-Janoub.

Kuwait Club's squad includes professional players Estonian Veno and Canadian Hough, while the club has also enlisted Burgan's Brazilian professional Costa, along with the return of Kuwait player Abdulaziz Al-Anzi, who had been on loan to Al-Nasr.

Burgan strengthens squad with Egyptian pivot Azzo

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: Burgan Club has completed the signing of Egyptian pivot Youssef Azzo to bolster the team until the end of the current season. Azzo previously represented Zamalek, Sporting and Algeria's WA Ain Tuta, and is regarded as an experienced player in the pivot position.

Burgan is set to resume action in the Premier Handball League next Friday as the ninth round gets underway. Salmiya will face Burgan, while Al-Arabi takes on Al-Nasr. The following day sees Kazma meet Al-Sulaibikhat, with Kuwait Club clashing with Al-Qadsia in the standout fixture of the round.



Egyptian pivot Youssef Azzo

Kuwait Club leads the standings with 16 points from eight wins, followed by Kazma with 11 points. Burgan is third with eight points, level with fourth-placed Al-Qadsia in but ahead on goal difference. Al-Sulaibikhat sits fifth on seven points, Al-Arabi sixth with six points, Salmiya seventh also with six, and Al-Nasr eighth with two points.

The league is played in a three-round league format, with the team accumulating the most points crowned champion.

The eighth-placed team will be relegated directly to the First Division, while the team finishing seventh will contest a playoff against the First Division runners-up for a place in the Premier League.

The league has been suspended since October due to clubs' international commitments and Kuwait's national handball team participation in the Asian Championship, which concluded in Kuwait last week. The national team finished third, while Bahrain claimed the title after defeating Qatar in the final.

Super Cup win boosts Qadsia ahead of Gulf Champs League

Kahraba demands payment

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 2: After securing the Super Cup the day before yesterday, Qadsia SC enjoyed multiple benefits from the triumph.

The biggest advantage was the team's return to the podium after two years. The victory also boosts morale ahead of Qadsia's crucial Gulf Champions League clash against Iraq's Zakho next week. A win is essential for the club to maintain hopes of reaching the semifinals. The team also looks forward to competing in the Amir's Cup after an early exit from the Crown Prince Cup.

Under Tunisian coach Nabil Maaloul, Qadsia has increasingly relied on young talents who have proven themselves, including Abdullah Al-Awadhi, Abdullah Al-Ghniman, Ahmed Boudi, Youssef Al-Haqqan, and Jassim Al-Matar. The squad also welcomed back Abdullah Mataw, who successfully filled the gap left by Algerian Victor Lekhel.

The team expects the return of Mohammad Al-Sharifi, Khalid Sabah, Ahmed Al-Yahya, and Abdulaziz Wadi, completing the squad for the remainder of the season. The Zain Premier League matches will continue to give younger players opportunities to gain experience, particularly as Qadsia trails league leaders Kuwait Club by 11 points with 10 games remaining.

Maaloul expressed his satisfaction with the title, saying: "We deserved this trophy. Qadsia is a great club and does not rely on a single player or coach."

Captain Bader Al-Mutawa highlighted the team's depth, saying: "Qadsia's future is bright thanks to our young talents. This title belongs to the entire squad, not just me." He also praised the fans, noting that their support in every match is vital for winning trophies.

Off the field, Qadsia announced legal action against Lekhel after his absence from training. Lekhel had received an offer from Al-Riyadh Club, but Qadsia's request for a swap involving foreign player Victor failed after the local transfer window closed on Saturday.

Meanwhile, Egyptian forward Mahmoud Kahraba announced he had terminated his contract with Qadsia, citing "non-payment of financial dues". He confirmed that lawyers will pursue his case to reclaim his rights.



Qadsia players celebrate after winning the Super Cup. KUNA photo

Huge favor for Arsenal

Solanke double rescues Tottenham as City stumbles

LONDON, Feb 2, (AP): Tottenham did fierce rival Arsenal a huge favor in the Premier League title race .

Dominik Solanke scored a second-half double - including an outrageous scorpion kick - as Spurs came from two goals down to salvage a 2-2 draw with second-place Manchester City, leaving Arsenal with a six-point lead with 14 games left.

It was almost the perfect day for the leaders, with Aston Villa - the other title contender - losing 1-0 at home to 10-man Brentford.

Villa stayed seven points adrift of Arsenal and was in danger of being reeled in by fourth-place Manchester United, which scored a stoppage-time winner through Benjamin Sesko to beat Fulham 3-2 for a third straight league win under new manager Michael Carrick.

Having already overseen victories over City and Arsenal in his short tenure, Carrick appears to have the magic touch at revitalized United.

The same cannot be said of Pep Guardiola at the moment.

This was a huge wasted opportunity for Guardiola's City, which was up against a heavily depleted Tottenham team and was cruising 2-0 ahead at halftime thanks to goals by Rayan Cherki and Antoine Semenyo. At times, it was almost too easy for City in front of an apathetic home crowd at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

City then collapsed as a revitalized Tottenham fought back. Solanke bundled in Spurs' first goal - appearing to kick the back of Marc Guehi's leg, resulting in the ball dribbling over the line - and then grabbed the equalizer with a deft, flying back-flick that looped over City goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma and into the corner.

"The first half was difficult - we could not get near them at times," Solanke said. "The second half was a different story. In the second half, we were great and grew with confidence and belief."

In the last five games, City has looked vulnerable in losing twice - to United and tiny Bodo/Glimt in the Champions League - and now spluttering against an injury-hit Tottenham.

Arsenal, a 4-0 winner at Leeds on Saturday, might not have a better chance to end its league title drought stretching back to 2004.

Villa played for more than half the match with an extra man after Brentford winger Kevin Schade's straight red card for kicking out at Matty Cash in the 42nd minute after they had challenged for the ball.

In the first minute of first-half stoppage time, Dango Ouattara escaped down the right and scored at the second attempt for what proved to be only goal as Brentford weathered a second-half onslaught.

United squandered a two-goal lead earned by goals from Casemiro and Matheus Cunha, with Raul Jimenez - via a penalty - and Kevin scoring to bring Fulham briefly level at Old Trafford.



Manchester City's Erling Haaland, right, attempts a shot on goal past Tottenham's Radu Dragusin during the English Premier League soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester City in London. (AP)

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