



Scan the QR code to access  
the Arab Times WhatsApp Channel

# ARAB TIMES

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IN FREE KUWAIT  
Established in 1977 / [www.arabtimesonline.com](http://www.arabtimesonline.com)

0 005587 745481



Kuwait strengthens status as  
'trusted' energy partner: PM

Page 8

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2026 / SHA'BAN 16, 1447 AH

emergency number 112

NO. 19122

16 PAGES

150 FILS



His Highness the Amir receives the Kingdom of Bahrain's Crown Prince and Prime Minister and the official delegation accompanying him, on the occasion of his official visit to the country.

Amiri Diwan photo

## KUWAIT ENDS EASY LICENSES, TIGHTENS DRIVING STANDARDS



### Opinion

**Ahmed Al-Jarallah**

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

### We do not want to fan the flames of hatred among people

PEOPLE belong to the land as much as the land belongs to its people.

Therefore, no matter how harsh the sovereign measures are, there should be enough compassion to compel everyone to leave the matter to the ruler and the government.

This includes the citizenship issue, for which the ruler and the government have the authority to take whatever measures are necessary to address it.

However, on the other hand, some people, who consider themselves above accountability, use the social media to spread poison without regard for people's feelings. If someone were to suffer harm, they would seek help and prayers from others. These people forget the eternal wisdom: "As you sow, so shall you reap."

As we have said regarding the sensitive citizenship issue, the people have entrusted the matter to the ruler and the Council of Ministers. May Allah bring everyone out of this crisis safely. Nevertheless, we must pause to ponder on what is circulated on social media, especially by those who mock, ridicule and tarnish the reputation of those whose citizenship was revoked, with a gloating tone, as if there is vendetta be-

tween them.

While freedom of expression is guaranteed, there are limits. People's feelings should not be sold or bought. No one has the right to slander or bully others.

Until recently, those whose citizenship was revoked were citizens with full rights, just like any other Kuwaiti. They have children and grandchildren. They have feelings. Most of them served this country, and some even gave their lives for it. Some of them left their mark on the nation's history, hence, gloating is inhumane. No one has the right to harm their dignity. Thus, it is the duty of the relevant authorities to address this issue and stop those who disrupt social stability.

Indeed, many who were subject to these procedures have no other homeland than this country. Today, the number of illegal residents (Bedouins) has increased.

Continued on Page 5

Follow me on:

@AhmedAlJarallah

Ahmed aljarallah

ahmed@aljarallah.com



Scan QR code to visit the website:

Scan Me

aljarallah.com

## Tougher tests for all drivers

Uber, Careem talks signal expansion

**By Munif Naif**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah revealed that the representatives of Uber and Careem, who are participating in the National Forum for Transport and Smart Services, discussed with him the significance of promoting investment in Kuwait.

In his speech at the opening of the forum, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef affirmed that the State welcomes investment, while stressing the necessity of employing Kuwaiti nationals.

He said the government supports the private sector through labor subsidies, and that a quota for the employment of Kuwaiti citizens in private companies will be specified in the future. He stressed that this is the type of support the government expects from private companies.

Continued on Page 5



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq  
Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah delivers his speech at the opening of the forum.



Photo by Samer Shiqer  
Tuesday drizzle casts a gloomy mood over Kuwait City.

### Newswatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** The Higher Committee for Kuwaiti Citizenship Investigation issued two decisions, published in the official gazette (Kuwait Al-Yoom) on Tuesday, stipulating the revocation of the Kuwaiti citizenship of nine individuals with dual nationalities, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The first decision revokes the Kuwaiti citizenship of a woman, based on Article 10 of Amiri Decree No. 15/1959 (Kuwaiti Nationality Law), which states that "a Kuwaiti woman who marries a foreigner does not lose her Kuwaiti citizenship unless she acquires her husband's nationality upon her request."

□ □ □

**TEHRAN:** Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad tasked Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi with conducting negotiations with the United States.

In a post on the social media platform X on Tuesday, Ahmadinejad said he instructed Araghchi to prepare the ground for fair and equitable negotiations based on the principles of dignity, wisdom, and national interest, within the framework of Iran's interests, provided a suitable climate free from threats and unreasonable demands is available.

Pezeshkian added that the decision came in response to requests from friendly governments in the region to engage with the proposal put forward by the US president regarding negotiations. (KUNA)

They expect that the Durra field tenders will involve advanced technical services designed to ensure efficient implementation, strict adherence to project schedule, and the application of the highest standards of safety and quality throughout all stages of development.

Last September, Khafji Joint Operations issued a tender for project management, followed by an introductory meeting with bidding companies. This entails the seriousness of the preparations and the gradual shift from the planning phase to execution.

At the same time, energy experts believe that available indicators suggest the Durra field tenders will

## Kuwait airport T2 sets new aviation benchmark in Gulf

**By Mohammad Ghanem**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The new Kuwait International Airport project is not just a building, as it is the gateway of the country to the future, keeping pace with the latest global technologies in the field of aviation, say those in charge of the project.

According to the Government Performance Monitoring Agency in a post on its 'X' platform account on Monday, the completion rate of the project as of December 2025 reached around 81.14 percent. It indicated that T2 Airport Terminal is one of the most vital and strategic projects in the country.

Its role extends beyond simply increasing passenger capacity, because it serves as a global air hub connecting the East and West, thereby, redefining the concept of travel in the Gulf and Middle East region and establishing a new era of leadership in the aviation sector.

The project includes a passenger jetway that is around 550 meters long and 75 meters wide, featuring two main lanes, each with three traffic lanes and parking on both sides.

The lane closest to the terminal is designated for taxis, while the other lane is open to all passengers. The passenger arrival area has five entrances: the two outer entrances are for business and first-class passengers, while the three middle entrances are for economy class passengers.

The terminal also features a central

concourse with signage directing passengers to their gates, as well as lounge areas furnished specifically for the project using environmentally friendly materials and a selection of restaurants and cafés.

The airport has 189 elevators, 94 of which are panoramic, along with 30 jetways – nine for Type C aircraft and 21 for Type C and Type F aircraft.

The project includes short-term parking with about 5,000 spaces, general parking, parking for people with disabilities, multi-passenger vehicle parking, and parking for electric vehicles, including spaces with charging points and others designated for environmentally friendly vehicles.

The parking garage consists of four floors, three of which are for parking and one for services, distributed to eight sections separated by open spaces.

The project features extensive green spaces with more than 87,600 plants, in addition to around 4,000 concrete planters covering the parking garage facades. Irrigation relies on collected water and treated wastewater.

The third phase of the project includes the buildings, support services for the new passenger terminal, most notably the main building cooling plant, the catering building responsible for preparing and supplying meals to aircraft, and the technical support building responsible for shipping and storing materials for the airside.

Continued on Page 5



## Kuwait-Saudi coordination drives Durra field forward

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: In a move indicating an accelerated pace in the development of Durra gas field, Oil Minister Tariq Al-Rumaih announced that coordination with the Saudi side is advancing swiftly, clearing the way for the launching of the tendering process later this year, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement Tuesday, Al-Rumaih explained that Durra offshore field is among the largest projects in the region. He disclosed that the tenders will cover a wide range of technical and engineering works. He added that these efforts are being exerted through close cooperation between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to ensure full preparedness in all aspects of the project.

He affirmed that the project is not facing any major challenges, describing the current situation as stable and encouraging.

He also stated that the prevailing oil prices are acceptable in light of global conditions, with expectations that they will improve soon.

At the same time, energy experts believe that available indicators suggest the Durra field tenders will

pique the interest of international engineering firms, considering the size of the reserves and the project's significance in the strategies of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to expand offshore natural gas production.

Experts indicated that Khafji Joint Operations is making preparations to receive bids for project management consultancy services as part of the development of production facilities, including engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) works for both the offshore and onshore components.

They expect that the Durra field tenders will involve advanced technical services designed to ensure efficient implementation, strict adherence to project schedule, and the application of the highest standards of safety and quality throughout all stages of development.

Last September, Khafji Joint Operations issued a tender for project management, followed by an introductory meeting with bidding companies. This entails the seriousness of the preparations and the gradual shift from the planning phase to execution.

At the same time, energy experts believe that available indicators suggest the Durra field tenders will

## Price dip sparks gold rush in Kuwait

**By Najeh Bilal**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Gold traders confirmed that Kuwaitis seized the opportunity presented by the significant drop in gold prices over the past two days, filling their coffers with the precious metal after a three-day decline.

They revealed to the newspaper that Kuwaiti purchases accounted for 70 percent of gold purchases, compared to 30 percent for sales and liquidations.

This is considered a sound economic strategy

given the fluctuations in the global economy, not to mention the geopolitical challenges that the region is facing and the escalating tensions between the United States and Iran.

They agreed that the local gold market witnessed a surge in Kuwaiti gold purchases, citing several factors behind the recent sharp decline in the price of the precious metal, which reached around 12 percent two days before resuming a slight, albeit fluctuating, upward movement.

Continued on Page 4

**Oil service company looking for Expat executive assistant to the CEO**

- Bilingual ( English / Arabic ) or more.
- Flexible on travel missions.
- Preferably holding UD degree.

Contact: [Ceo.services@hotmail.com](mailto:Ceo.services@hotmail.com)

## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 05:15 Asr ..... 15:06  
 Sunrise .. 06:36 Maghrib .. 17:28  
 Zohr ..... 12:02 Isha ..... 18:46

# Local

## Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** A significant decrease in temperature and mild with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-35 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

**By Night:** Rather cold with light

to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-26 km/h.

**Station** Max Exp Min Rec

Kuwait Airport 30 15

Abdaly 29 13

Bubyan 23 11

Jahra 30 14  
 Failaka Island 26 13  
 Salmiyah 24 17  
 Ahmadi 29 12  
 Jal Aliyah 28 13  
 Nuwaibis 28 13  
 Salmy 31 15

## Weather

## Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah takes part in UAE-Kuwait Media Forum



Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah with Counselor Hamad Al-Mansouri.



From Right-Left: Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi, Mahmoud Al-Rasheed and colleague Saud Al-Farhan.



Photos by Samer Shaqir

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah participated in the United Arab Emirates (UAE)-Kuwait Media Forum at the invitation of Dubai Press Club, which organized the event as part of the "UAE and Kuwait ... Brothers Forever" program, reports Al-Seyassah daily. Media figures, journalists, artists and intellectuals from both countries attended the forum held Sunday evening at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in Kuwait, under the slogan, "Brothers Forever."

The forum is an important platform for discussing frameworks for enhancing Gulf media integration and strengthening cooperation among media institutions in the region. The aim is to consolidate professional partnerships and coordinate media efforts to produce a unified and responsible discourse that serves the shared interests of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and their citizens, who are bound by ties of brotherhood and a common destiny.

On the sidelines of the forum, fellow participants and colleagues congratulated Al-Jarallah on his safe return from medical treatment and the resumption of his regular activities and professional duties. They wished him continuous good health, well-being, and an enduring distinguished presence in the field of journalism.

Al-Jarallah expressed his appreciation to the colleagues and friends for their warm sentiments and kind wishes, extending his best wishes to them for perpetual success in their endeavors.

# Thyroid tumors witness increase among women

Colon, prostate cancer common in men: Dr Yousef

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Consultant and Head of the Surgical Oncology Department at Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC) Dr. Amal Yousef said the center organized a scientific workshop on head and neck tumors, featuring international experts from the United Kingdom and the United States of America, with doctors from various medical disciplines in attendance.**

Yousef confirmed that the workshop is an advanced scientific platform for discussing 28 complex cases like tumors in the jaw,



Dr. Amal Yousef

facial bones, thyroid gland and tongue. She stated this was done through a multidisciplinary medical team approach, which includes oncological surgeons, radiologists, radiation therapists, chemotherapyists and pathologists in order to develop comprehensive treatment plans for each case.

She disclosed that the medical team performed 11 complicated surgical procedures during the workshop, such as surgeries for thyroid, salivary gland, jaw, facial bone and tongue tumors. She considers these surgeries a reflection of the advanced skills of the medical staff and their readiness to handle the most complex head and neck tumor

surgeries.

Regarding epidemiological indicators, she stated that the latest data from KCCC showed that breast cancer topped the list of cancers among women in Kuwait, while colon cancer is the most common among men, followed by prostate cancer and then leukemia.

She indicated that thyroid tumors are witnessing a significant increase in diagnosis rates, particularly among women. She said the risk factors include childhood radiation exposure, genetic factors, advancing age, obesity, iodine imbalances, and the presence of goiter accompanied by antibodies.

She also affirmed the commitment of KCCC to keep on organizing workshops and scientific conferences, as well as attract international expertise, to develop treatment services, raise the efficiency of medical staff, and achieve the best possible treatment outcomes for patients.

## Relations with Kuwait model of unique fraternity: UAE VP

DUBAI, Feb 3, (KUNA): UAE Vice President and Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum affirmed that UAE-Kuwait relations are deeply rooted in history and represent a unique model of fraternity.

Kuwaiti nationals have been partners in the UAE's success stories from the very beginning, contributing their knowledge, expertise, and steadfast support to laying the foundations of comprehensive development, Emirates News Agency (WAM) quoted him as saying on Monday.

Sheikh Mohammad made the comments during his meeting with a number of Kuwaiti business people on the sidelines of the UAE-Kuwait Economic Forum in Dubai.

The forum is part of the "UAE and Kuwait: Brothers Forever" week, which celebrates the deep-rooted ties between the two nations.

"Our celebration of the 'UAE and Kuwait: Brothers Forever' week is a message of gratitude and loyalty, reflecting the depth of the bond between our two peoples and our appreciation for Kuwait's remarkable support and contributions to the UAE's de-

velopment," Sheikh Mohammad said.

"These events are not merely a celebration, but a manifestation of a solid partnership based on mutual trust, shared destiny, and a common history that we hold with pride and honour," he pointed out.

The meeting highlighted the historical ties and cooperation between the UAE and Kuwait, with particular focus on the early role played by Kuwaiti businessmen in the UAE's economic landscape, both before and after the founding of the Union.

Furthermore, he also praised the contributions of Kuwaiti business people who chose the UAE as the home for their businesses and investments, emphasizing that the success of these partnerships reflects the UAE's open economic environment and embodies a practical model of Gulf integration based on trust and sustainable cooperation.

"We will continue to strengthen our historical ties so that the UAE and Kuwait continue forward hand in hand, brothers forever. To Kuwait and its people, we say: you are always in our hearts, and our partnership remains enduring and renewed across generations," he added.

## Regional media shows massive growth: JPPI

RIYADH, Feb 3, (KUNA): Director General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Joint Program Production Institution (JPPI), Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Al-Sabah praised on Tuesday the participation of media institutions and content creators from various countries at the Saudi Media Forum, saying it reflects regional media development.

In a press statement on the sidelines of his participation in the forum, currently held in Riyadh from February 2 to 4, Sheikh Mubarak said the institution is taking part with a dedicated pavilion at the accompanying Future of Media Exhibition (FOMEX).

He said that this is in line with its approach to supporting Gulf media events and strengthening its presence among active regional media organizations.

He noted that the pavilion showcases a selection of the institution's works and programs that reflect the shared Gulf identity, in addition to introducing a number of new products scheduled for launch during the current year.

Sheikh Mubarak said the accompanying media exhibition represents an important platform to highlight the latest technologies and innovations in media and digital production, stressing that it offers an opportunity to strengthen partnerships and exchange expertise among Gulf, Arab, and international media entities.

The Saudi Media Forum kicked off on Monday in Riyadh, with the participation of media experts, academics, and specialists, including Kuwaiti Ministry of Information Undersecretary Dr. Nasser Muhayen.

At the opening of the forum, Saudi Minister of Media Salman Al-Dossary said that the patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, had contributed to enhancing the status of the Saudi Media Forum and granting it a broader dimension and a deeper vision, noting that this patronage reflects the great interest in developing the media sector and its role in keeping pace with global transformations.

## Handling labor disputes

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Labor Relations Department at the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has started implementing a new mechanism for receiving and handling labor complaints, particularly those filed against small and medium enterprises (SMEs), reports Al-Rai daily quoting a source from PAM.

According to the source, this is in line with ongoing efforts to develop the work system and improve the quality of services. He disclosed that the new mechanism allows the receipt of complaints through the labor relations departments in the governorates, instead of centralizing them in Mubarak Al-Kabeer as the practice earlier. He pointed out that this move will ease pressure and ensure a fairer and more organized distribution of cases.

The source indicated that the new distribution of complaints will be on appointment basis, taking into account the nature of each case and its registration source -- whether in terms of the governorate or the relevant labor department. He emphasized that this step saves time and effort for workers, and expedites the resolution of labor disputes.

The source reiterated that this mechanism is in line with the continuous efforts of PAM to improve the work environment, raise administrative efficiency, and achieve greater speed and flexibility in resolving disputes. He added this serves the interests of all parties involved in labor relations and guarantees the stability of the labor market.

Swiss companies

He added that the number of Swiss companies operating in Kuwait is witnessing continuous growth, and that the possibility of Kuwaiti participation in similar economic events to be held in Switzerland in the future is being explored.

He emphasized that human and personal relations are at the heart of the Swiss-Kuwaiti relationship, pointing out that business leaders and entrepreneurs are the primary drivers of this partnership, which has spanned decades. Regarding agreements, he said there is no need to sign new agreements now, given the existence of a comprehensive legal framework.

He stressed that the role of governments is limited to creating a suitable environment, while the investment decision rests with the private sector.

He also highlighted the importance of the memorandum of understanding with the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, considering that linking the economy with scientific research contributes to the development of innovative ideas and joint projects.

He also disclosed that the strategic dialogue between the GCC countries and Switzerland will be held in the near future, as per the agreements that are being implemented now.

He confirmed that economic and investment agreements are available, both at the GCC level and specifically with Kuwait, including agreements on investment protection and the avoidance of double taxation. He added "the challenge today lies in encouraging the private sector to utilize these tools and actively pursue partnerships and joint ventures. This visit serves as a catalyst to the practical application of these agreements."

He stressed that the celebration of 60 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries is a manifestation of a mature and stable partnership, expressing his confidence that the future holds promising prospects for more cooperation and shared success. He said his visit to Kuwait aims to put weight on the existing frameworks and encourage companies to utilize them in order to strengthen the economic and investment partnership between the two countries.



KUNA photo  
 Acting Director General of KUNA Mohammad Al-Mannai receives the award from Director of Communication at ICESCO's Media and Communication Sector, Barakat Al-Wuqayan.

## KUNA receives ICESCO Award for major jump in media field

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) on Monday honored KUNA in recognition of its prominent role in developing media work and enhancing the professional capabilities of media practitioners.

The recognition took place during a meeting at KUNA headquarters between Acting Director General of KUNA Mo-

hammad Al-Mannai and Director of Communication at ICESCO's Media and Communication Sector, Barakat Al-Wuqayan.

Al-Mannai expressed appreciation for the initiative, affirming KUNA's continued commitment to expanding horizons of cooperation and joint training that serve professional media and strengthen its developmental and cultural mission.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Labor Relations Department at the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has started implementing a new mechanism for receiving and handling labor complaints, particularly those filed against small and medium enterprises (SMEs), reports Al-Rai daily quoting a source from PAM.

According to the source, this is in line with ongoing efforts to develop the work system and improve the quality of services. He disclosed that the new mechanism allows the receipt of complaints through the labor relations departments in the governorates, instead of centralizing them in Mubarak Al-Kabeer as the practice earlier. He pointed out that this move will ease pressure and ensure a fairer and more organized distribution of cases.

The source indicated that the new distribution of complaints will be on appointment basis, taking into account the nature of each case and its registration source -- whether in terms of the governorate or the relevant labor department. He emphasized that this step saves time and effort for workers, and expedites the resolution of labor disputes.

The source reiterated that this mechanism is in line with the continuous efforts of PAM to improve the work environment, raise administrative efficiency, and achieve greater speed and flexibility in resolving disputes. He added this serves the interests of all parties involved in labor relations and guarantees the stability of the labor market.

Swiss companies

He added that the number of Swiss companies operating in Kuwait is witnessing continuous growth, and that the possibility of Kuwaiti participation in similar economic events to be held in Switzerland in the future is being explored.

He emphasized that human and personal relations are at the heart of the Swiss-Kuwaiti relationship, pointing out that business leaders and entrepreneurs are the primary drivers of this partnership, which has spanned decades. Regarding agreements, he said there is no need to sign new agreements now, given the existence of a comprehensive legal framework.

He stressed that the role of governments is limited to creating a suitable environment, while the investment decision rests with the private sector.

He also highlighted the importance of the memorandum of understanding with the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, considering that linking the economy with scientific research contributes to the development of innovative ideas and joint projects.

He also disclosed that the strategic dialogue between the GCC countries and Switzerland will be held in the near future, as per the agreements that are being implemented now.

He confirmed that economic and investment agreements are available, both at the GCC level and specifically with Kuwait, including agreements on investment protection and the avoidance of double taxation. He added "the challenge today lies in encouraging the private sector to utilize these tools and actively pursue partnerships and joint ventures. This visit serves as a catalyst to the practical application of these agreements."

He stressed that the celebration of 60 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries is a manifestation of a mature and stable partnership, expressing his confidence that the future holds promising prospects for more cooperation and shared success. He said his visit to Kuwait aims to put weight on the existing frameworks and encourage companies to utilize them in order to strengthen the economic and investment partnership between the two countries.

## LOCAL

# diwaniya

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## Thank Allah you're living in Kuwait

"NEWSPAPERS recently reported that Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, in her capacity as supervisor of cooperative societies, has been addressing the widespread corruption in the food warehouses of cooperatives," Hassan Ali Karam wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"At the same time, we continue to hear almost daily about the opening of a new cooperative society somewhere in Kuwait. The number of cooperatives has increased remarkably. New cooperatives are established in every new area, city or suburb, while additional branches are opened to serve distant neighborhoods.

"The cooperative society system in Kuwait is considered one of the most innovative systems created to serve both citizens and expatriates. It is worth noting that this system was originally adopted from communist models, where the idea emerged following the rationing of citizens' shares, particularly those of the working class.

"Kuwaiti cooperative societies, however, differ from those in other countries. They are not limited to providing basic commodities, such as rice, tea, sugar, milk and lentils. Instead, they function as open markets that offer a wide range of food products, cleaning materials, toiletries, clothes and baked goods. Indeed, in Kuwait we enjoy an abundance of blessings that many others envy.

"If you were to count the blessings of Allah, you could not enumerate them." An expatriate from a neighboring country, whose 30-year employment contract with his company ended, returned to his homeland. Less than two months later, he came back to Kuwait. His colleagues at the company asked him, 'Why did you return?' He replied, 'Brother, when you are hungry there, you have to go to sleep hungry. After the evening prayer, you go out and find the streets empty, with shops and restaurants closed. But here in Kuwait, restaurants remain open, cooperative societies operate round the clock, and food delivery is readily available. Thank Allah you live in Kuwait. What people say is true – it is a land of abundance.'

"However, our topic is not the cooperative societies themselves or the high-quality services they provide. Rather, it concerns the issue of food rations and the thefts that take place in their warehouses. The Minister of Social Affairs launched a new initiative aimed at exposing those who steal food supplies intended for citizens. These supplies are smuggled out of the warehouses and then taken outside Kuwait, where they are sold openly. How, and by whom, are Kuwaiti food rations being tampered with and smuggled out of the country to neighboring and friendly states? The government attempted to take several measures to curb these thefts, but the problem proved to be internal. As a result, the bright minds at the Ministry of Social Affairs proposed installing cameras inside the food warehouses of cooperative societies and linking them to cameras in the offices of senior officials at the ministry.

"I say: this is a scheme that would not even occur to the devil himself! What brilliance and ingenuity! Instead of all this effort and unnecessary expense, why not take the simpler route and close the cooperative societies' food warehouses altogether, replacing food rations with cash distribution? In doing so, you will achieve multiple objectives at once. First, you will spare citizens the inconvenience of visiting cooperative societies and standing in long lines to collect their rations. Second, there will be no need for food warehouses. Third, you will eliminate the need for employees in charge of distribution, supervision, storage and security.

"Finally, there will be no need to rent warehouses to store food supplies – if the real concern is safeguarding these supplies from theft and smuggling for sale abroad. I believe that the esteemed Minister, Ms. Amthal Al-Huwailah, is genuinely committed to upholding rights and protecting public funds from misuse and theft."

### Also:

"Many critics and colleagues may disagree with me on this point, but it is a fact, rather than an opinion," Tariq Idris wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"The Yemeni and Palestinian peoples are quite similar. Political reality confirms that the Palestinian people are one, just as the Yemeni people are one. Nevertheless, the political parties and political ideologies of both peoples are identical in terms of motivation and logic.

"Therefore, the Palestinians are divided between Hamas and its ideology, and Fatah and its ideology. We find the same reality in the divisions among the Yemeni people – the ideologies of the North and the South. Thus, the Yemeni society is divided, just like the Palestinian society.

"As a result, the Palestinian cause and Palestine itself have been lost.

"The political problems in Yemen have further complicated the Yemeni issue. So, we see a similar scene in both Palestinian and Yemeni causes due to the parties' inability to agree on their fundamental issues.

"Consequently, we are grappling with problems that have no radical solutions. It is regrettable that the plight of the two dear peoples in both Yemen and Palestine stems from the ideological thinking of the political parties, leading to missed opportunities, absence of viable solutions, and fragmentation of attempts at political reform and rapprochement.

"External interventions, both regional and international, have deepened the divisions and fueled the flames of confrontation.

"The UN Security Council has been mired in addressing the political crises in both issues, rendering its resolutions ineffective and too weak to facilitate dialogue and impose alternative political solutions. Thus, the positive outcomes and aspirations of the Yemeni and Palestinian peoples have not been realized.

"So we say and emphasize that Palestine and Yemen are two issues with similar fundamental aspects. Untangling their complex web begins with defusing the political conflict and discord between the movements and political parties in the two brotherly countries.

"When will the Yemenis meet at the table of Yemeni-Yemeni dialogue? Shall we see the Palestinian people meet at the table of national dialogue that serves the best interests of the people?"

□ □ □

"It is a mistake to limit the education crisis to weak curricula, teacher competence or school quality, as the real crisis is much deeper, it is a crisis of knowledge, meaning and awareness – a crisis of human understanding of oneself and the world around oneself." Dr. Bader Othman Malallah wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"When education loses its ability to instill these dimensions in the mind, it transforms into a technical process for producing certificates, not intellect, and into a narrow career path, not a comprehensive civilizational project.

"Education, as a primary driver of development, loses its meaning when it is emptied of its cognitive content.

"When profound knowledge is replaced by superficial, fragmented knowledge measured by tests, not analysis, and by memorization, not understanding, education becomes a tool for adapting to reality, instead of understanding and developing it.

"When the number of students increases, while their impact on awareness and development diminishes, the loss is compounded.

"There is huge spending on education that does not produce a genuine cognitive impact. The crisis in education is not a crisis of buildings or technology, but rather a crisis of meaning and a deep understanding of the subjective and the objective.

"The core of the problem lies in the disconnect between education and the development of awareness, and its transformation from a space for questioning into a system of ready-made answers. Instead of the students becoming a thinking individual capable of connecting and analyzing, they become a vessel for memorization, regurgitating information in exams without possessing the ability to apply it to understanding themselves, their society, and the world.

— Compiled by Saeed Mahmoud Saleh



Hassan Ali Karam



Dr. Bader Malallah

## Landmark ruling in 'e-fraud' case

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: In a landmark ruling regarding a major case of electronic fraud and money laundering, the Criminal Court delivered mixed verdicts, acquitting several defendants while imposing severe penalties on others.

The investigation exposed a sophisticated transnational organized criminal network. This network systematically targeted citizens and expatriates, employing advanced fraudulent techniques and organized banking manipulation to obtain funds illegally.

A notable outcome was the full acquittal of one defendant. This is a remarkably triumph for the defense, spearheaded by Attorney Mohammad Al-Rifai. His legal strategy focused on proving the lack of essential elements of the crime, the absence of criminal intent, and the failure of the Public Prosecution to produce conclusive evidence connecting his client to the criminal network or the disputed funds. The court accepted these compelling arguments, resulting in a favorable ruling.

Details of the case trace back to a victim receiving a phone call from an individual impersonating a bank employee, who defrauded her to steal money from her bank account.

Probes unveiled the criminal organization's method: exploiting bank accounts and SIM cards registered in others' names – obtained for a fee – to transfer the illicit proceeds abroad and obscure their real origin.

Following the announcement of the verdicts, the court mandated the immediate deportation of the convicted individuals upon the completion of their prison terms.



### Child Buffet

KD 4.250

KD 3.400

### Adult Buffet

KD 7.450

KD 5.960

EVERY THURSDAY  
DINNER ONLY  
6 PM TO 11 PM

EVERY FRIDAY  
LUNCH & DINNER  
12:30 PM TO 4:30 PM  
& 6 PM TO 11 PM

EVERY SATURDAY  
LUNCH ONLY  
12:30 PM TO 4:30 PM

AVAILABLE AT  
HAWALLY BRANCH  
BEIRUT ST, LULU AL  
WATAN COMPLEX, OPPOSITE CBK

AVAILABLE AT  
FAHAHEEL BRANCH  
1ST FLOOR, AL HOOR BUILDING  
BLOCK NO.11, BEHIND TO CENTERPOINT

22626782 22626783

23911175 23911174

## Gov. honors schools social activities role



Farwaniya Governorate photo

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Under the patronage and in the presence of Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, a ceremony was held Tuesday morning at Abdulrahman Ali Al-Badah Elementary School for Boys in West Abdullah Al-Mubarak to honor the schools participating in the 'Your School's Wish' competition. Head of West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Health City Faisal Al-Baidan and Principal of Abdulrahman Ali Al-Badah Elementary School Nahla Al-Ghamlas warmly welcomed the Governor during the event.

The ceremony is part of a program organized by West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Health City, West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Community Volunteer Team, and West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Cooperative Society, with Abdulrahman Ali Al-Badah Elementary School for Boys as host. The principals of participating schools attended the ceremony, along with a number of educational sector officials, and the chairman of West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Cooperative Society.

A total of 10 schools were honored for their efforts, positive engagement, and role in promoting environmental awareness and community participation among students.

In his speech, the Governor stressed the importance of supporting meaningful educational, environmental and pedagogical initiatives. He commended the role of the organizing and supporting entities in the success of such an outstanding initiative, as well as the coordinated efforts of various community institutions in serving the governorate.

## Kuwait major US partner in trade & food security

'Gulfood 2026' platform for business: Butler

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The American Embassy, in cooperation with the US Department of Agriculture, organized the "Taste of America: Bringing a Slice of Gulfood to Kuwait" event.

American Chargé d'Affaires Steve Butler, media representatives, importers, food industry leaders and government officials attended the event, which showcased the high quality, innovation and diversity of American food products, aiming to support trade and commercial diplomacy be-



Steve Butler

tween the United States and Kuwait.

Following the US delegation's participation in Gulfood 2026, the event aimed to bring a portion of this global experience to the Kuwaiti market.

In his opening remarks, Butler emphasized that the event falls under the US

Department of Agriculture's Freedom 250 initiative, which aims to showcase American innovation and creativity, enhance trade opportunities, and strengthen bilateral relations with international partners, particularly Kuwait.

Butler affirmed that Kuwait is a major partner for the United States in both trade and food security, adding that events like this provide an effective platform to foster communication between American exporters and Kuwaiti importers, explore future partnership opportunities, and exchange expertise in the food industry.

He commended the US Department of Agriculture for supporting American exporters and expressed appreciation for the ongoing cooperation with Kuwaiti entities, emphasizing that US-Kuwaiti relations are built on decades of partnership, mutual trust and respect.

**ETH zürich**

Production and  
Operations Management

## In the Presence of the Swiss President KDD and ETH Zürich Sign Landmark Memorandum of Understanding

Kuwait — 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026

In the esteemed presence of His Excellency the President of the Swiss Confederation, Mr. Guy Parmelin, senior officials from the Governments of Kuwait and Switzerland, and distinguished dignitaries from both nations, KDD signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ETH Zürich — one of the world's foremost institutions of science and technology — at the Residence of the Ambassador of Switzerland HE Mr. Tiziano Balmelli.

The agreement, signed by Professor Torbjørn Netland on behalf of ETH Zürich and Mrs. Bahia Ezzat Jaafar on behalf of KDD, marks the first Memorandum of Understanding between ETH Zürich and a private company in Kuwait, highlighting Kuwait's growing leadership in technology-driven collaboration that benefits both industry and society.

The document establishes a framework for cooperation in education and research across areas such as production and operations management, supply chain optimization, artificial intelligence in manufacturing, factory planning, logistics, and food science. The partnership will enable joint research initiatives, academic exchanges, seminars, and the hosting of graduate students for applied industrial projects, effectively linking academic excellence with real-world industry needs.

An early example of this collaboration is already in progress, with an ETH Master's Degree student currently undertaking his dissertation work at KDD, focusing on operational efficiency, an engagement that laid the foundation for formalizing this partnership.

The signing also coincides with the celebration of sixty years of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Switzerland, underscoring a long-standing partnership built on mutual respect, trust, and friendship, and reflecting the shared ambition of both nations to deepen economic, educational, and technological ties.



# KISR, Australian Embassy launch international aquaculture forum

Kuwait emerges as regional hub for biodiversity

**By Abdulrahman Al-Shammary**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal stated on Monday that the organization of the Second International Conference on Successful Aquaculture and Biodiversity Conservation is in line with the commitment of his ministry, represented by Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), to reinforce international partnerships, exchange expertise, and support scientific research.

Al-Jalal made the statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on the occasion of the launching of the conference that KISR organized under his patronage and in his presence, in cooperation with the Australian Embassy in Kuwait. The conference will run until Wednesday.

He asserted that the conference makes an effective contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and to solidifying Kuwait's standing as a regional hub for research and innovation in the fields of food security and environmental sustainability.

Director General of KISR Dr. Faisal Al-Humaidan and Australian Ambassador to Kuwait Melissa Kelly stressed the importance of strengthening scientific and research cooperation in the areas of aquaculture and biodiversity conservation, considering them the two essential pillars for supporting food security and the sustainability of resources.

The conference is being held with the participation of an elite group of experts and scientists from around the world, and in the presence of a number of ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps.

Al-Humaidan pointed out that Kuwait focuses on environmental sustainability and the proper management of natural resources, stressing that the marine sector is the main pillar in achieving food security and diversifying the national economy.

He explained that the marine environment in the Gulf region has been exposed to several chal-



A glimpse of the tour of Minister Al-Jalal and the Australian Ambassador at the accompanying exhibition.

lenges, including urban expansion, pollution, overfishing and climate change, which have affected fish stocks. He added that these challenges have underscored the importance of aquaculture as a sustainable solution that enhances self-sufficiency and alleviates pressure on natural fisheries.

He confirmed that KISR prioritizes supporting scientific research and encouraging investment in aquaculture as a strategic objective, affirming the institute's commitment to organize and host scientific conferences that help link research outcomes with practical applications.

He praised the fruitful cooperation with the Australian Embassy, expressing his appreciation for its efforts in organizing the conference, which reflects the depth of scientific partnership and the exchange of expertise between the two countries, and contributes to strengthening research and development in areas of mutual interest.

Meanwhile, Kelly underscored the importance of strengthening scientific and research cooperation between the two countries, commending the strong historical ties linking Australia and Kuwait.

She added that bilateral relations are witnessing continuous development in various fields, particularly in scientific research and aquaculture, in a manner that supports food security and preserves biodiversity.

She expressed her country's pride in its long-standing scientific partnership with KISR, affirming that this cooperation is the cornerstone of bilateral relations and contributes to supporting Kuwait's transition toward a knowledge-based economy, as well as enhancing its food and health security.

She added that cooperation in the field of aquaculture is the natural extension of relations between the two countries, as both are maritime nations with deep historical and cultural connections to the sea.

She confirmed that the conference is witnessing the participation of a number of Australian experts and scientists who are presenting Australia's experiences and policies in aquaculture, scientific innovation, and the promotion of natural resource sustainability.

## Cuba invites Kuwaiti tourists to explore UNESCO heritage

**By Fares Chaleh**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Cuban Ambassador to Kuwait Allen Pérez Torres affirmed that his country is a tourist destination, which is rich in history, culture and natural beauty, stressing that Kuwaiti visitors can discover captivating stories in every corner of the country.

Torres made the statement on the sidelines of a tourism conference organized by the Cuban Embassy to highlight the island's most prominent tourist attractions and promote Kuwaiti tourism.

Assistant Foreign Minister for the Americas Nawaf Al-Ahmad, representatives of Kuwaiti tourism agencies, and ambassadors of Latin American countries attended the event.

Torres disclosed that several Cuban cities, such as Old Havana – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – as well as Trinidad and Cienfuegos, boast of meticulously preserved historical centers that offer a vivid picture of life in old Cuba and reflect the influence of Neoclassical and Baroque architecture, which constitute the country's unique character.

He added "Cuban culture is vibrant and dynamic, a product of a rich blend of African, Spanish and Caribbean influences." He indicated that music and dance are considered the soul of the island, with energetic rhythms like son, rumba and mambo echoing through the streets, bars and cafés. He said visitors can also enjoy live performances, learn salsa from local



Cuban Ambassador to Kuwait, Allen Pérez Torres, delivers a speech at the event.

instructors, and visit renowned jazz clubs that have hosted legends of world music.

He pointed out that the Cuban people are the country's true wealth, thanks to their warmth and hospitality, making every visitor feel at home.

He also highlighted Cuba's flavorful cuisine, beautiful beaches with crystal-clear waters, and the world-famous Cuban tobacco, which allows tourists to visit tobacco farms and learn firsthand about the production of the renowned Cuban cigars.

He stated that Cuba has high-quality hotel infrastructure capable of receiving Kuwaiti tourists and that about 70 Kuwaiti citizens visited Cuba over the past year, hoping to increase this number in the coming years by strengthening tourism cooperation and intensifying promotion of the Cuban destinations in Kuwait.

**Continued from Page 1**

## Kuwait Amir,

## Price dip

Among these factors was US President Donald Trump's nomination of Kevin Warsh to head the Federal Reserve once the current chairman's term ends.

Bader Al-Arbash, an official at Bader Al-Arbash & Sons Jewelry Company, stated that the Kuwaiti gold market is currently experiencing a constant influx of gold buyers. He attributed the high demand in January to the price surge expected in the second half of the month, when gold proved to be the safest investment option while still providing satisfactory long-term returns.

He explained the decline in gold prices over the past three days as a market correction resulting from profit-taking in trading and portfolio markets, in addition to several technical factors related to the stock and bond markets.

He believes that gold prices will stabilize and not experience sharp declines, with the price per ounce fluctuating between \$4,600 and US\$4,800 in the near future.

He emphasized that the losers in the current 12 percent drop are speculators, not those who hold gold for investment or treasury purposes. He anticipates a return to the price surge seen in late January if there is further military escalation in the region, potentially pushing the price per ounce to around \$6,000.

He advised local consumers to purchase gold as a reserve, not for quick resale (speculation), whenever prices rise.

Fawaz Al-Duaj, CEO of Al-Duaj Jewelry, stated that the local gold market is currently experiencing tremendous activity, with buying significantly exceeding selling. He anticipates that gold prices will remain at their current level without sharp declines or exaggerated increases.

However, he added that if the political conflict in the region intensifies, geopolitical tensions escalate, and Iran is subjected to a military strike, the price of an ounce could potentially rise to more than \$6,000.

He explained that the current unavailability of gold coins in the market is due to a general shortage of gold resulting from the massive surge in demand since the beginning of this year, following the dramatic global price fluctuations.

Mohammed Mansour, manager of Mansour Al-Sarheed Gold Shop and a jewelry expert, stated that gold prices have witnessed a significant decline, and he anticipates further drops in the coming days.

He pointed out that despite the price decrease, there is still strong consumer demand. He dismissed any link between rising gold prices and the potential US strike on Iran, arguing that gold prices fluctuate due to international market activity, not military conflicts.

Mohammad Hatab Adel Al-Abdullah, Marketing Director of Dar Al-Sabaik Company, said the buying volume in the local market reached 70 percent, with sales accounting for around 30 percent. He added that buying activity continued despite the global decline in gold prices by about 12 percent.

He pointed out that one of the most important factors contributing to the global drop in gold prices was the decline in financial and technology stocks on Wall Street, which strongly encouraged traders to compensate for these losses by selling gold to generate liquidity.

He also mentioned profit-taking and Trump's statements regarding the appointment of Warsh in the coming period.

He indicated that the Federal Reserve's decision to hold interest rates steady at the end of last week was a contributing factor to the decline in gold prices, but this factor had a slight impact, especially since everyone was anticipating the interest rate decision.

Meanwhile, gold continued its decline Monday, affected by the rising dollar, as investors awaited the approach of Warsh regarding interest rate cuts.

Gold fell 9.3 percent in spot trading before recovering to close down about 4.53 percent at \$4,645 an ounce, while US gold futures for April delivery fell 4.8 percent to \$4,516.70 an ounce. Gold hit an all-time high of \$5,594.82 last Thursday.

Silver pared its losses in spot trading, falling 0.11 percent to \$78.62, after plunging more than 15 percent at the start of trading. It also reached an all-time high of \$121.64 on Thursday, according to Reuters.



**Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)**

**Price**

One night stay in a Queen Bed Cabana for 2 persons with inclusive of Breakfast

**BHD 46.000**

One night stay in a Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons inclusive of Breakfast

**BHD 102.148 / Net**

**Weekends (Thursday & Friday)**

**Price**

One night stay in a Queen Bed Cabana for 2 persons with inclusive of Breakfast

**BHD 53.361 / Net**

One night stay in a Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons inclusive of Breakfast

**BHD 119.173 / Net**

Terms & conditions apply

## LOCAL



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah holds banquet in honor of Bahraini Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa.

## Kuwait Crown Prince holds banquet in honor of Bahraini peer

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah held a banquet Tuesday in honor of visiting Bahraini Crown Prince and Premier Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa and his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace.

Bahraini Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa and accompanying delegation concluded on Tuesday an official visit to the country.

The high-level dignitary was seen off by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh

Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Cabinet Affairs Shereedah Al-Mousherji and Chief of Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Sabah, in addition to senior state officials.

**'Kuwaiti press open to global dialogue'**

### Al-Jarallah hosts Tanzanian Ambassador

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah met with His Excellency the Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania to Kuwait Saidi Hussein Massoro at his office in Dar Al-Seyassah on Tuesday.

Massoro was accompanied by Councilor Ibrahim Isaka Juma and Public Relations Officer at the Embassy Maysaa Fahd Al-Jeghami.

Colleague Mohammed Al-Farhan was also present at the meeting.

The discussions focused on strengthening cooperation between the two nations in the media and cultural spheres. The goal is to strengthen ties by increasing knowledge exchange through the respective countries' media outlets.

Massoro commended the Kuwaiti press for its prominent position in the region. He affirmed the commitment of his country to expand the media and cultural collaboration to solidify the bonds of friendship between the Tanzanian and Kuwaiti nations.

He also congratulated Al-Jarallah on his safe return following medical treatment, extending wishes for continuous good health and well-being.

Al-Jarallah welcomed the Ambassador, reiterating the Kuwaiti press' dedication to global dialogue and openness to diverse cultures, especially with media institutions in friendly African countries.

He emphasized the need to



Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism Ahmed Al-Jarallah meets Tanzanian Ambassador Saidi Hussein Massoro at Dar Al-Seyassah, discussing media and cultural cooperation.



Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times, Tanzanian Ambassador to Kuwait Saidi Hussein Massoro at Dar Al-Seyassah, with members of the embassy and colleague Mohammed Al-Farhan in attendance.

adapt to the rapid pace of developments in the media and journalism, particularly in light of the digital revolution and modern communication technologies.

Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

## Kuwait pushes digital agenda at WGS 2026

**Bridging policy and technical expertise**



KUNA photo

From the opening of the World Governments Summit in Dubai.

DUBAI, Feb 3, (KUNA): The World Governments Summit 2026 opened in Dubai on Tuesday under the theme "Shaping Future Governments," bringing together governments, international organizations, leaders, and decision-makers to address challenges and propose practical, sustainable solutions.

His Highness the Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received an invitation directed to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to attend the summit from vice President of the UAE, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum.

The summit aims to strengthen international cooperation, advance government policymaking, and anticipate future trends across key sectors including artificial intelligence, economy, governance, education, and sustainability.

This edition records the largest leadership participation in the summit's history, with more than 35 heads of state, over 150 governments, and upwards of 500 ministers and global experts, alongside academics and scientists, including recipients of international awards in future sciences and technology.

The agenda includes 24 global forums, more than 35 ministerial and high-level meetings, and the release of 36 strategic reports.

Discussions focus on global gov-

ernance, effective leadership, societal well-being, human capital, economic prosperity, emerging opportunities, the future of cities, demographic shifts, and forward-looking prospects, through more than 320 sessions featuring over 450 global figures.

Dr. Ahmad Al-Mansouri, faculty member at the Department of Media at UAE University, told KUNA that the World Governments Summit 2026 represents a major global event that reflects the UAE's standing as an international hub for ideas and future governance.

He said the summit has evolved into a global laboratory for sharing successful experiences and formulating practical responses to shared challenges facing governments in a rapidly changing world, rather than remaining a platform for discussion alone.

Al-Mansouri added that the summit's focus on artificial intelligence, sustainability, the future of cities, and human development demonstrates a deep understanding of global transformations and the need for new policy tools, not-

ing that its outcomes provide valuable knowledge to enhance public policy and government efficiency.

Political analyst and writer Dr. Essa Al-Amiri told KUNA that Kuwait's participation in the summit reflects a strategic approach that goes beyond protocol to active engagement in future-oriented discussions, particularly in digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and smart governance.

He noted that the participation aligns closely with Kuwait Vision 2035, especially in building a more efficient government apparatus, diversifying income sources, and strengthening the knowledge economy, while benefiting from international best practices adaptable to the Kuwaiti context.

Al-Amiri said Kuwait's presence contributes to improving policy quality through intellectual exchange and experience-sharing, adding that the summit has become an influential platform that links political leadership with technical expertise to transform visions into implementable policies.

### Continued from Page 1

#### We do

We have said many times before that their problem must be solved either by granting opportunities to travel to other countries and rectify their status, or by obtaining passports from the countries to which they were assigned. The State must find a way out for them in order to alleviate the burden of the State and to end their suffering.

Yes, I emphasize that no one is questioning the sovereign procedures. Nonetheless, we reiterate that the relevant authorities must rein in those who are fanning the flames, pretending to be the sole defenders of sovereign decisions, when their methods are often vulgar and offensive.

Undoubtedly, no official condones this. We have statesmen at the highest levels of the sovereign and executive branches with a humanitarian perspective. They bear a great and crucial responsibility.

On this basis, they refuse to tarnish people's reputation, regardless of their circumstances, because a person is not held accountable for what is beyond his control. Human dignity remains protected for the accused. Even prisoners are protected from defamation.

It has become imperative to stop those who use social media to attack individuals facing issues, such as citizenship revocation, because they do not represent the true nature of Kuwaitis, their culture or the customs and traditions upheld by the Kuwaiti society for four centuries. These individuals must be restrained, because they are damaging Kuwait's reputation abroad.

Accordingly, we entrust this matter to First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef in order to prevent these individuals from inciting hatred among the people.

#### Tougher tests

He also asserted that there has been an improvement in law enforcement, adding that public respect for the law has increased.

He confirmed that the Ministry of Interior is ready to support companies, indicating the General Traffic Department (GTD) will introduce a system similar to those applied in other countries, under which a driving license will not be issued immediately. He pointed out that applicants must complete training hours and pass the tests before obtaining such a license.

He stated that it is illogical for anyone to obtain a driving license just because he knows how to park or has basic driving abilities.

He emphasized the importance of completing the specified training hours and examinations, and achieving the required scores to qualify for a driving license. He cited the practice in Abu Dhabi, where the test requires 20 hours of training, and if the applicant fails, additional hours are imposed. He said the license is issued only after full mastery of all requirements — from traffic signs to proper driving skills. He added "we are facing a problem with taxi drivers. They do not speak Arabic, they are unfamiliar with the roads, and they are unable

to communicate with customers."

He said the ministry refers any expatriate who commits a serious traffic violation for deportation, while emphasizing the need for companies to establish driving schools in their countries of origin to train drivers on Kuwaiti laws and traffic regulations before their arrival in Kuwait.

He affirmed as well his interest in technology and his desire to use it in the same way as advanced countries.

He pointed out that GTD has opened its doors to everyone, and announced his readiness to meet with any company that has a new product it wishes to introduce to Kuwait. He added he is willing to meet with the managers of companies participating in the forum on the same day, even without an appointment.

On the other hand, GTD Director General Brigadier General Omar Al-Sari revealed that the department is currently working on the establishment of four academies for training and qualifying individuals prior to the issuance of a driving license.

He explained that the objective of this training is to ensure the drivers' competence, particularly those with limited driving experience, through accredited programs that require 20 training hours for those residing in Kuwait and 40 hours for those arriving from abroad.

He said the training programs will include simplified educational materials designed to help trainees understand the road network in Kuwait, its traffic systems, traffic laws and regulations. He indicated that the proposed academies will be established

in Sabahiya, South Khaitan, Capital Governorate and Jahra.

He added that training will be conducted under the supervision of instructors who speak the trainees' native language, ensuring accurate communication of information and enabling trainees to better understand the characteristics of Kuwaiti roads and comply with traffic laws.

He revealed that the training centers will undergo a comprehensive overhaul, with both training and testing being shifted to an external evaluation system that more accurately simulates real traffic conditions, using mechanisms similar to those adopted by the department in its official tests.

He further stated that coordination is underway regarding the allocation of land for the ministry to establish the training academies, as well as regulating the companies that will operate the academies.

He emphasized that this initiative aims to enhance the quality of driver training for citizens and expatriates who intend to obtain a driving license, focusing on raising driver standards and curbing hazardous driving behaviors.

He added that the project includes specialized training programs for motorcycle riders and delivery drivers, offered through courses conducted in their native language in cooperation with the contracting companies. He said qualified instructors will be recruited from the trainees' countries of origin to teach them Kuwait's traffic laws and regulations before they begin work.

Assistant Director General for Edu-

cational Affairs at GTD Brigadier Khaled Al-Adwani confirmed that the department is entering a new phase of comprehensive development, with all services expected to become fully electronic in the current and upcoming year.

Al-Adwani disclosed that the ministry will issue a tender this month for the establishment of driving academies, aimed at improving driving skills and enhancing road safety.

He said the department is also preparing to launch the Uber and Careem applications, enabling citizens to register within two months, which will help streamline transportation procedures and traffic-related services.

He indicated that the recommendations presented at the conference will be submitted to the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior.

He also confirmed the decline in the number of fatal traffic accidents, stating that deaths fell to just 193 in 2025.

He added that seatbelt compliance among drivers has now reached 100 percent.

He said the forum aims to establish global applications, integrate citizens into these platforms, and position Kuwait as an attractive destination for investors and tourists.

He went on to disclose that traffic safety objectives for 2035 include reducing traffic accidents by 50 percent, achieving international traffic safety benchmarks, lowering the death rate per 100,000 people, and implementing smart transportation systems to ensure the highest possible level of

road safety.

Mohammed Al-Ibrahim, Chief Executive Officer of Jazz Events — the organizer of the forum — welcomed the participants to the inaugural National Forum for Transportation and Smart Services, which is being held in cooperation with the ministry, represented by GTD. He stated that the forum seeks to establish a national platform that brings together government entities and the private sector to create a sustainable framework for developing the delivery and light transportation sector.

He asserted this will be achieved through improving road safety, modernizing legislation, adopting smart technologies, and building effective partnerships that enhance service quality and safeguard road users.

Antonio Al-Asmar, Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa at Uber, welcomed Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, expressing his sincere thanks and appreciation for his patronage of the forum.

#### Kuwait airport

This is in addition to the airside infrastructure works, including the eastern reservoir for collecting and reusing rainwater for irrigation, along with a similar reservoir on the western side of the project.

The project also features a strategic tunnel, constructed at a depth of about 17 meters and extending for about five kilometers, to serve future projects and directly connect to the new passenger terminal (T2).

Out with the old?

## Young Democrats trying to convince voters to send new generation to Congress

SACRAMENTO, Calif., Feb 3, (AP): Mai Vang wouldn't be born for another seven years when Bob Matsui was first elected to Congress from California in 1978. By the time Matsui died in 2005 and was replaced by his widow, Doris Matsui, Vang was still studying biology and sociology in college.

Now a member of the Sacramento City Council, Vang, 40, is mounting the first serious challenge that 81-year-old Matsui has faced since she began representing the area two decades ago. Vang is among a nationwide cadre of young Democrats who are trying to oust some of their party's most stalwart figures in Washington, channelling angst that an aging generation of lawmakers is unable or unwilling to mount a bare-knuckles opposition to President Donald Trump.

"I'm not waiting for permission," Vang said. "Because our communities are under attack, and we need leaders in this moment that understand the day-to-day struggles of our working families, and I believe that I could be the leader in this moment."

In Trump's first term, grassroots Democrats focused their ire on the Republican president. But now, after President Joe Biden's reluctance to step aside in 2024 at age 81 helped

pave the way for Trump's return to the White House, many see their party's own veterans as part of the problem.

At a supporter's house near downtown Sacramento last month, Vang chatted with about two dozen people, mostly young professionals who sipped wine or craft beer and cheered when she committed to dismantling U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"No more wash, rinse and repeat," said Abbie Morrissey, who works at the University of California, Davis, and attended Vang's event. "We need to find young, engaged, energetic people that understand their young, engaged and energetic populations."

Matsui, who was born in a Japanese internment camp during World War II, said she's fought Trump's strict immigration policies and delivered billions of dollars for her district.

"Experience isn't about clinging to power," she said in a statement. "It's about being effective when the stakes are highest for our families."

Matsui ended 2025 with a financial advantage, reporting \$785,000 in the bank, compared with \$200,000 for Vang.

Evan Turnage had barely learned to walk when Rep. Bennie Thompson, a



Luke Bronin, former mayor of Hartford, Conn., who is challenging Rep. John Larson, in the 2026 election primary, speaks with James Jeter, (left), and Elizabeth Hinton at the Semilla Cafe and Studio in Hartford on Jan 22. (AP)

civil rights leader, was first elected to Congress from Mississippi.

Now Thompson, 78, is one of the most senior Black lawmakers on Capitol Hill, and Turnage, 33, is challenging him in the state's Democratic primary. Turnage, who is also Black,

back against what he sees as predatory corporations.

"We have got to finally secure civil rights and economic rights for the people of this state," Turnage said. "Mr. Thompson has done a good job with being a part of the Civil Rights Movement, but what about the economic rights?"

Winning those battles requires more than accumulating seniority on Capitol Hill, he said, and the modern era demands leaders who understand how social media and artificial intelligence are transforming life.

"Just steadily doing the committee work with your head down behind the scenes is not how we're gonna get the transformational change that we need here in this district," Turnage said.

Still, Turnage has struggled to raise significant money, which could make it hard for him to get his message out and overcome Thompson's incumbency advantage. He ended the year with just \$54,000, while Thompson had \$1.7 million in his campaign account.

Thompson formerly chaired the House committee that investigated the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol by a mob of Trump's supporters. In responding to the launch of Turnage's

campaign last month, Thompson said he is confident his record will speak for itself.

"Elections were created to give people the ability to make a choice," he said. "I trust the voters of the district."

Some level of generational change is already coming in the next Congress, no matter what. Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, 85, of California, and her longtime deputy, Maryland's Steny Hoyer, 86, are retiring from Congress when their current terms end. So are Reps. Jerry Nadler, 78, of New York, and Jan Schakowsky, 81, of Illinois. All had served for decades and decided to retire rather than face primary challengers.

But others want to stay. Rep. Steve Cohen, 76, of Tennessee, is running for an 11th term. He's up against Justin Pearson, 31, who was a sixth grader when Cohen was first elected to Congress. He later interned for Cohen.

Pearson was one of two Black Democrats expelled from the Tennessee Legislature by Republicans after leading a gun control protest inside the state Capitol building. He was quickly reinstated by local officials and later reelected.

### America

**Clinton's agree to testify in Epstein probe:** Former US president Bill Clinton and former secretary of state Hillary Clinton agreed late Monday to testify in a House investigation into convicted offender Jeffrey Epstein, but the Republican leading the probe said an agreement had not yet been finalized.

Rep James Comer, the chair of the House Oversight Committee, continued to press for criminal contempt of Congress charges against both Clintons Monday evening for defying a congressional subpoena when attorneys for the Clintons emailed staff for the Oversight panel, saying the pair would accept Comer's demands and "will appear for depositions on mutually agreeable dates."

The attorneys requested that Comer, a Kentucky Republican, agree not to move forward with the contempt proceedings. Comer, however, said he was not immediately dropping the charges, which would carry the threat of a substantial fine and even incarceration if passed by the House and successfully prosecuted by the Department of Justice. (AP)



Clinton

**Suspected biolab found at Vegas home:** A suspected biolab found in a Las Vegas home and now under investigation by authorities is linked to the owner of an unauthorized California biolab who was arrested in 2023, officials said Monday.

SWAT officers served a search warrant on Saturday after receiving a tip that a biolab was located at the house on the city's east side, according to a statement from the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. Officers took one person, the property manager of the residence, into custody but there was no immediate information about possible charges.

Investigators "located evidence of possible biological material, including refrigerators containing vials with unknown liquids," the statement said.

Authorities said there is no threat to the public. (AP)

**Gas blast sparks fire at NH facility:** Three firefighters were injured when a natural gas leak caused an explosion and fire Monday at a New Hampshire mental health center, but the building's occupants all evacuated safely.

About 40 people were in the Greater Nashua Mental Health facility when someone called 911 to report an odor of gas, State Fire Marshall Sean Tooney said. Firefighters were still investigating when the explosion happened and part of the building began to collapse, said Nashua Fire Chief Steve Buxton. He said the three injured firefighters were taken to a hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

The incident prompted authorities to send an alert to nearby homes and businesses telling people to extinguish any burners or flames and to prepare to evacuate. (AP)

□ □ □



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, emergency services personnel work to extinguish a fire at a multi-storey apartment building following a Russian attack in Kyiv, Ukraine on Feb 3. (AP)

US-brokered talks to resume in Abu Dhabi

## Russia fires 450 drones, 70 missiles at Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine, Feb 3, (AP): Russia fired around 450 long-range drones and 70 missiles of various types at Ukraine in a major attack overnight, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday.

The barrage came as NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte visited Kyiv in a show of support and a day before Russia and Ukraine were due to attend US-brokered talks in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, on ending the all-out war, which Russia launched nearly four years ago.

The bombardment of at least five regions of Ukraine specifically took aim at the power grid, Zelenskyy said, as part of Moscow's ongoing campaign to deny civilians light, heating and running water amid the coldest winter in years. At least 10 people were wounded, officials said.

"Taking advantage of the coldest days of winter to terrorize people is more important to Russia than diplomacy," Zelenskyy said. Temperatures in Kyiv fell to minus 20 degrees Celsius (minus 4 Fahrenheit) during the night and stood at minus 16 C (minus 3 F) on Tuesday.

He urged allies to send more air defense supplies and bring "maximum pressure" to bear on Russia to end its full-scale invasion, which began on Feb. 24, 2022.

Officials have described recent talks between Moscow and Kyiv delegations as constructive. But after a year of efforts, the Trump administration is still searching for a breakthrough on key issues such as who keeps the Ukrainian land that Russia's army has occupied, and a



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Presidential Press Office, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, (left), and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte attend a commemorative ceremony at the memorial of fallen Ukrainian soldiers at Independence Square in Kyiv, Ukraine on Feb 3. (AP)

comprehensive settlement appears distant. The Abu Dhabi talks were scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday.

Rutte addressed the Ukrainian parliament during his visit and said that countries in the military alliance "are ready to provide support quickly and consistently" as peace efforts drag on.

Since last summer, NATO members have provided 75% of all missiles supplied to the front, and 90% of those used for Ukraine's air defense, he said.

European countries, fearing Moscow's ambitions, see their own fu-

ture security as being on the line in Ukraine.

"Be assured that NATO stands with Ukraine and is ready to do so for years to come," Rutte said. "Your security is our security. Your peace is our peace. And it must be lasting."

A Kremlin official said last week that Russia had agreed to halt strikes on Kyiv for a week until Feb. 1 because of the frigid temperatures, following a personal request from U.S. President Donald Trump to Russian President Vladimir Putin. However, the bitter cold is continuing and so are Russia's aerial attacks.

Russia has tried to wear down Ukrainians' appetite for the fight by creating hardship for the civilian population living in dark, freezing homes.

It has tried to wreck Ukraine's electricity network, targeting substations, transformers, turbines and generators at power plants. Ukraine's largest private power company, DTEK, said that the overnight attack hit its thermal power plants in the ninth major assault since October.

In Kyiv, officials said that five people were wounded in the strikes that damaged and set fire to residential buildings, a kindergarten and a gas station in various parts of the capital, according to the State Emergency Service.

By early morning, 1,170 apartment buildings in the capital were without heating. Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said. That set back desperate repair operations that had restored power to all but 80 apartment buildings, he said.

European countries, fearing Moscow's ambitions, see their own fu-

## Trump hosts Colombian leader Petro at White House after disagreements

WASHINGTON, Feb 3, (AP): US President Donald Trump is set to welcome Colombian President Gustavo Petro to the White House on Tuesday for talks only weeks after threatening military action against the South American country and accusing the leader of pumping cocaine into the United States.

US administration officials say the meeting will focus on regional security cooperation and counternarcotics efforts. And Trump on Monday suggested that Petro - who has continued to criticize Trump and the US operation to capture Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro - seems more willing to work with his administration to stem the flow of illegal drugs from Colombia.

"Somehow after the Venezuelan raid, he became very nice," Trump told reporters. "He changed his attitude very much."

Yet, bad blood between the leaders overshadows the sit-down, even as Trump sought to downplay any friction on the eve of the visit.

The conservative Trump and leftist Petro are ideologically far apart, but both leaders share a tendency for verbal bombast and unpredictability. That sets the stage for a White House visit with an anything-could-happen vibe.

In recent days, Petro has continued poking at the US president, calling Trump an "accomplice to genocide" in the Gaza Strip, while asserting that the



Colombian President Gustavo Petro arrives at the presidential palace in Panama City on Jan 28. (AP)

capture of Maduro was a kidnapping.

And ahead of his departure for Washington, Petro called on Colombians to take to the streets of Bogotá during the White House meeting.

Historically, Colombia has been a US ally. For the past 30 years, the US has worked closely with Colombia, the world's largest producer of cocaine, to arrest drug traffickers, fend off rebel groups and boost economic development in rural areas.

But relations between the leaders

have been strained by Trump's massing US forces in the region for unpreceded deadly military strikes targeting suspected drug smuggling boats in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific.

At least 126 people have been killed in 36 known strikes.

In October, the Trump administration announced it was imposing sanctions on Petro, his family and a member of his government over accusations of involvement in the global drug trade.

### Europe

**UK politician faces pressure to quit:** A year ago, Peter Mandelson was Britain's ambassador to Washington, the latest high-profile post in a rocky but consequential political career.

Friendship with Jeffrey Epstein cost him that job. Now, after new revelations, Mandelson - like other powerful men including King Charles III's brother Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor - is facing new demands he come clean about his relationship with Epstein.

Mandelson resigned from the governing Labour Party on Sunday following new claims he received payments from Epstein two decades ago. Mandelson said he was stepping aside to avoid causing "further embarrassment," even as he denied the allegations stemming from a trove of more than 3 million pages of documents relating to Epstein released by the US Department of Justice. (AP)



Mandelson

**Høiby pleads not guilty to charges:** The son of Norway's crown princess pleaded not guilty to rape charges as he went on trial Tuesday for multiple alleged offenses,

opening weeks of proceedings in a case that has cast a shadow on the royal family's image.

Marius Borg Høiby, 29, is the eldest son of Crown Princess Mette-Marit from a previous relationship and the stepson of the heir to the throne, Crown Prince Haakon. Høiby has no royal title or official duties.

Høiby stood for 24 minutes while prosecutor Sturla Henriksen read out the 38 counts against him at the Oslo district court, asking him if he pleaded guilty. He replied "no" to each of the most serious charges. (AP)

□ □ □

**Belarus balloons cross into Polish airspace:** Balloons used to smuggle cigarettes from Belarus have been reported crossing into Polish airspace for a third night in a row.

Polish authorities on Monday said the "hybrid incidents" were part of the threat to the country's eastern border posed by Russia's ally Belarus.

The Belarusian side made another attempt at reconnaissance and checking the reaction of the Polish air defense systems," the Operational Command of the Polish Armed Forces wrote in a report on X into the incidents from Jan. 31 to Feb. 1.

Armed forces spokesman Jacek Goryszewski said there were more balloon incidents in the first weeks of 2026 compared to the beginning of 2025. He said the increased frequency could be caused by a political decision in Minsk, or by smugglers adapting to stronger border defenses by Poland. (AP)

## Czech govt faces no-confidence vote in Parliament over dispute with Pavel

PRAGUE, Feb 3, (AP): The new Czech Republic coalition government of populist Prime Minister Andrej Babiš on Tuesday faced a parliamentary no-confidence vote over the handling of a dispute with the country's president.

The opposition parties that requested the vote have sided with President Petr Pavel, who accused Foreign Minister Petr Macinka of blackmailing him, because he refused to appoint a government minister representing the right-wing Motorists for Themselves euroskeptic party. Macinka heads the Motorists.

Pavel said that Filip Turek was ineligible to become the environment minister after a daily newspaper 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 consequences, including working to prevent Pavel from representing the country at a NATO summit this year, if he fails to come as his associate.

Tens of thousands of Czechs rallied in the capital, Prague, and elsewhere in support of the president.

Babiš has rejected opposition calls to dismiss Macinka, who has refused to



From left: European Council President Antonio Costa, Czech Republic's Prime Minister Andrej Babiš and European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas speak during a round table meeting at the EU summit in Brussels on Jan 22. (AP)

apologize. The government has a majority to survive the vote in the lower house of Parliament. The timing of the vote is uncertain, but it could come as soon as Tuesday.

The president and the prime minister are scheduled to meet Wednesday over the issue.

Pavel swore in a new government on Dec 15 after Babiš and his ANO,

or YES, movement won big in the country's October election and agreed to form a majority coalition with two

'World today undergoing major changes unseen in century'

## Xi calls for cooperation with Uruguay in multiple areas

BEIJING, Feb 3, (Xinhua): China and Uruguay should strengthen the alignment of development strategies, and deepen cooperation in areas such as economy and trade, finance, agriculture and animal husbandry, infrastructure construction, and information and communications technology, Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday.

Both sides should explore the potential for cooperation in emerging fields including green development, digital economy, artificial intelligence, and clean energy, so as to drive economic growth and transformation, Xi said when holding talks with President of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay Yannandu Orsi in Beijing.

Orsi on Sunday began a week-long state visit to China. He is the first leader from Latin America to visit China in 2024, and his visit follows those of leaders from Ireland, the Republic of Korea, Canada, Finland and Britain.

"On this day 38 years ago, China and Uruguay established diplomatic relations," Xi said, pointing out that over the years, regardless of changes in the international situation, the two countries have always got along with each other on the

basis of mutual respect and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Xi called on both sides to carry forward their traditions and deepen their comprehensive strategic partnership under the new circumstances, to make sure their friendship grows stronger and more vibrant.

China and Uruguay should continue to firmly support each other's core interests and major concerns, strengthen friendly exchanges at all levels and across all areas, enhance exchanges of experience in governance, and continuously deepen strategic mutual trust, Xi emphasized.

Xi said that the fourth plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China had adopted the recommendations for formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan, outlining a blueprint for China's development over the next five years, which will offer broad opportunities for countries worldwide, including Uruguay.

The peoples of China and Uruguay share a natural affinity, Xi noted, adding the two sides should continue to deepen exchanges in areas like culture, education, sports, media and subnational

engagement, and facilitate personnel exchanges, to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two peoples.

The world today is undergoing major changes unseen in a century, said Xi, noting the international landscape is marked by a mix of turbulence and transformation, while unilateral bullying is intensifying.

Also:

**BEIJING:** China supports Venezuela in safeguarding its sovereignty, dignity and legitimate rights, a foreign ministry spokesperson said on Tuesday.

A month ago, the United States blatantly launched military strikes against Venezuela and forcibly seized President Nicolas Maduro and his wife, said spokesperson Lin Jian at a daily press briefing.

"The hegemonic act has seriously violated international law and infringed upon Venezuela's sovereignty, jeopardizing peace and stability in Latin America and the Caribbean. China firmly opposes it," Lin said.

China will work with the international community to resolutely defend the purposes and principles of the UN

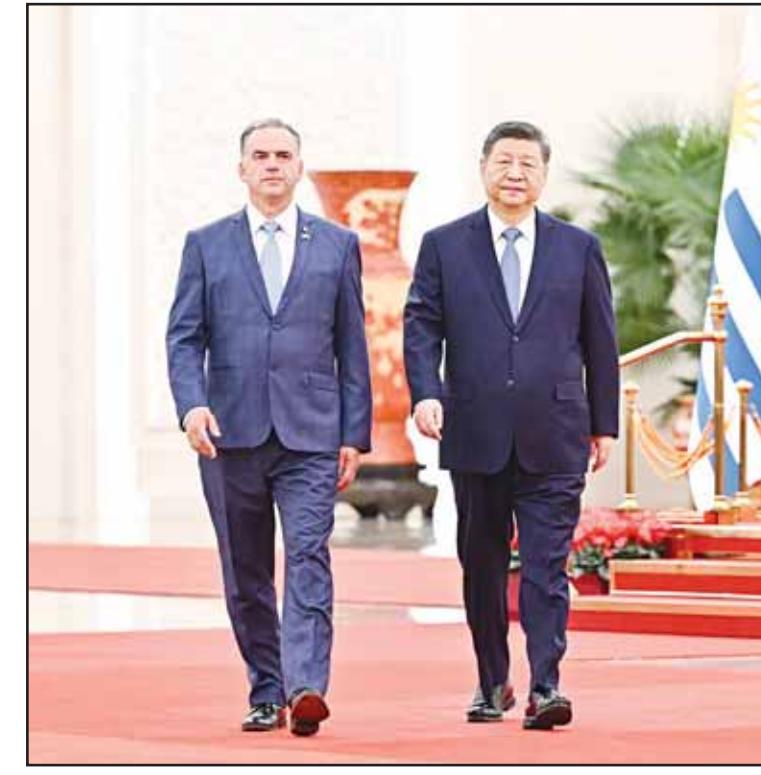
Charter, the fundamental principles of international justice and international fairness, Lin added.

□ □ □

**BEIJING:** China hopes that the United States will respond positively to Russia's constructive proposal on the follow-up arrangements of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) and truly maintain global strategic stability, a foreign ministry spokesperson said on Tuesday.

The New START treaty, signed by Russia and the United States in 2010, is set to expire on Feb 5, 2026. Russian President Vladimir Putin said in September 2025 that Russia would continue to observe the core limits of the treaty for one year after its expiration, provided that the US refrains from actions that undermine the existing strategic balance.

China's position on trilateral nuclear arms control talks involving China, the United States and Russia is clear, spokesperson Lin Jian said at a regular news briefing in response to a query about the US side expressing interest in China joining the relevant negotiations.



Chinese President Xi Jinping holds a welcome ceremony for President of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay Yannandu Orsi in the Northern Hall of the Great Hall of the People prior to their talks in Beijing, capital of China on Feb 3, 2024. Xi held talks with Orsi, who is on a state visit to China, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Tuesday. (Xinhua)

## Internal document shows Vietnamese military preparing for possible American 'war of aggression'

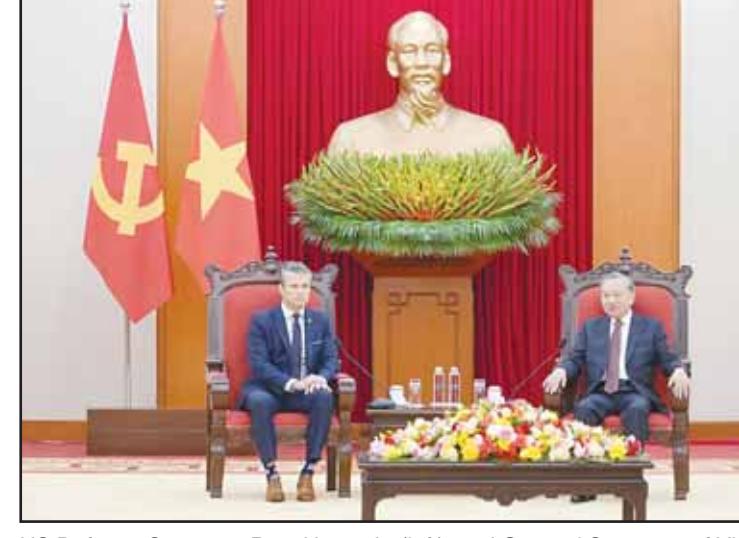
HANOI, Vietnam, Feb 3, (AP): A year after Vietnam elevated its relations with Washington to the highest diplomatic level, an internal document shows its military was taking steps to prepare for a possible American "war of aggression" and considered the United States a "belligerent" power, according to a report released Tuesday.

More than just exposing Hanoi's duality in approach toward the US, the document confirms a deep-seated fear of external forces fomenting an uprising against the Communist leadership in a so-called "color revolution," like the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine, or the 1986 Yellow Revolution in the Philippines.

Other internal documents that The 88 Project, a human rights organization focused on human rights abuses in Vietnam, cited in its analysis point to similar concerns over US motives in Vietnam.

"There's a consensus here across the government and across different ministries," said Ben Swanton, co-director of The 88 Project and the report's author. "This isn't just some kind of a fringe element or paranoid element within the party or within the government."

The original Vietnamese document titled "The 2nd U.S. Invasion Plan" was completed by the Ministry of Defense in August 2024. It suggests that in seeking "its objective of strengthening deterrence against China, the



US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, (left), and General Secretary of Vietnam's Communist Party To Lam talk during a meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam on Nov 2, 2024. (AP)

US and its allies are ready to apply unconventional forms of warfare and military intervention and even conduct large-scale invasions against countries and territories that "deviate from its orbit."

While noting that "currently there is little risk of a war against Vietnam," the Vietnamese planners write that "due to the US's belligerent nature we need to be vigilant to prevent the U.S. and its allies from 'creating a pretext'

to launch an invasion of our country."

The Vietnamese military analysts outline what they see as a progression over three American administrations - from Barack Obama, through Donald Trump's first term, and into Joe Biden's presidency - with Washington increasingly pursuing military and other relationships with Asian nations to "form a front against China."

In his term, Biden in 2023 signed a "Comprehensive Strategic Partner-

ship" with Vietnam, elevating relations between the nations to their highest diplomatic level on par with Russia and China as "trusted partners with a friendship grounded in mutual respect."

In the 2024 military document, however, Vietnamese planners said that while the US views Vietnam as "a partner and an important link," it also wants to "spread and impose its values regarding freedom, democracy, human rights, ethnicity and religion" to gradually change the country's socialist government.

"The 2nd US Invasion Plan provides one of the most clear-eyed insights yet into Vietnam's foreign policy," Swanton wrote in his analysis. "It shows that far from viewing the US as a strategic partner, Hanoi sees Washington as an existential threat and has no intention of joining its anti-China alliance."

Vietnam's Foreign Ministry did not answer emails seeking comment on The 88 Project report or the document it highlighted.

The US State Department refused to comment directly on the "2nd US Invasion Plan," but stressed the new partnership agreement, saying it "promotes prosperity and security for the United States and Vietnam."

"A strong, prosperous, independent and resilient Vietnam benefits our two countries and helps ensure that the Indo-Pacific remains stable, secure, free and open," the State Department said.

## 13-year-old boy swims for hours to save family swept out to sea

MELBOURNE, Australia, Feb 3, (AP): A 13-year-old boy is credited with saving the lives of his mother and two younger siblings with an hourslong swim after the family was swept out to sea off the Australian coast.

Austin Appelbee swam 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) to shore to raise the alarm after he got into difficulties on Friday with his mother Joanne Appelbee, 47, brother Beau, 12, and sister Grace, 8, police said.

Austin said he initially set off for help on an inflatable kayak that was taking water. He abandoned the kayak then took off his life jacket because it impeded his swimming.

He said he tried to focus on positive thoughts as he swam for around four hours through rough seas for shore, raising the alarm at 6 p.m.

"The waves are massive and I have no life jacket on. ... I just kept thinking 'just keep swimming, just keep swimming,'" Austin said on Tuesday. "And then I finally made it to shore and I hit the bottom of the beach and I just collapsed."

The family, from the state capital Perth, were on vacation and were using kayaks and paddle boards hired from their hotel around noon when rough ocean and wind conditions started dragging them out to sea.

## Where is Morales? Bolivia's former leader vanishes from public view

LA PAZ, Bolivia, Feb 3, (AP): The almost monthlong disappearance from public view of Bolivia's towering socialist icon, ex-leader Evo Morales, shortly after the Jan. 3 US seizure of his close ally former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, is alarming his supporters, roiling his enemies and galvanizing the internet.

On Monday, he missed a ceremony that he typically attends welcoming students back from summer break. On Sunday, Morales was a no-show for the fourth straight weekly broadcast of his political radio show, which he has hosted without interruption for years.

Since early January, he has skipped scheduled meetings with members of his coca-leaf growing union in Bolivia's remote Chapare region and his daily stream of social media content has all but dried up.

Although Morales has spent the past year evading an arrest warrant on charges of human trafficking, his fugitive status hasn't stopped the firebrand union leader from speaking at rallies, receiving supporters, giving interviews, posting on X - or even running an unconventional presidential cam-



Supporters hold a sign with an image of former President Evo Morales and a message that reads in Spanish, 'Without Evo, there are no elections,' during a protest demanding he be allowed to compete in the upcoming presidential election, near the Supreme Electoral Tribunal in La Paz, Bolivia on May 29, 2025. (AP)

paign last year - all from his political stronghold in the Chapare.

Morales rejects the statutory rape allegations as politically motivated.

The question of Morales' whereabouts has set off furious speculation as the Trump administration imposes its political will in South America through sanctions, punitive tariffs, electoral endorsements, financial bailouts and military action.

Morales' close associates have privately declined to provide an explanation for his absences while publicly telling supporters that the former president has been recovering from dengue fever, a mosquito-borne viral illness with symptoms that typically last no longer than a week.

"We have asked our brother Evo Morales to rest completely," said Díeter Mendoza, vice president of a body of farmers known as the Six Federations that runs the coca-leaf trade in the tropics, declining to elaborate.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

For Morales' rivals, the mystery has stirred resentful memories of 2019, when he resigned under pressure from the military after his disputed bid for an unconstitutional third term provoked mass protests.

&lt;p

## Kuwait oil price down to \$63.33 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by USD 1.61 to reach USD 63.33 per barrel on Monday, compared to USD 64.94 on Friday, reported the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on

Tuesday.

In global markets, the price of Brent crude dropped USD 3.54 to reach USD 67.09 per barrel, while the West Texas Intermediate went down USD 2.23 to reach USD 62.99 pb.



Photo by Samer Shaqair  
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah at the Kuwait Oil and Gas Show Conference.

KPC to boost refining capacity

## Kuwait strengthens status as 'trusted' energy partner: PM

By Najeh Bilal  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times  
Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The major turnout for an annual oil and gas conference in Kuwait is a testament to the nation's transformation into a "trusted" international energy partner, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said on Tuesday.

Underlining an existential "economic shift" Kuwait has seen as part of its long-term development plan, "Kuwait Vision 2035," His Highness the Prime Minister told the Kuwait Oil and Gas Show Conference (KOGS) that this strategy is a roadmap towards a more "diverse and sustainable" economy that places greater emphasis on the long-term value of the nation's natural resources.

Such a strategy will revolve around the virtues of "flexibility and creativity," in a bid to transform Kuwait into a global and competitive "energy hub," he emphasized, citing the crude project "Shaheen" that promises to be the "biggest foreign investment" in the history of the national oil industry, pending its completion in the next few months.

His Highness the Prime Minister went on to say that Kuwait is inviting international oil companies to assist in efforts to develop offshore oil and gas production, which will be instrumental in propping up the operations of Kuwait Oil Company, he explained.

The fifth edition of KOGS is the biggest in the event's history, according to the chief executive of state-owned Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah, citing the impressive turnout the talks have garnered.

KPC is pushing forward with its strategy to raise its refining capacity by 1.4 million barrels per day (bpd) on a national level, while the figure for abroad is at 600,000 bpd, the official told a press conference after the opening of KOGS.

He went on to say that KPC would rely on the completion of marquee oil production projects to bring the strategy to fruition, in addition to leveraging the expertise of international firms into reaching a crude output of "four million bpd

by the year 2035," added the official.

In light of growing global energy demand, he said that stability in global markets was necessary to ensure long-term supply, predicting the "pivotal role" that oil will play by providing a quarter of global energy supply by the year 2050 given the expected shortcomings of other sources.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) Ahmad Al-Eidan said the entire world is facing unprecedented challenges, while the oil and gas sector is undergoing fundamental transformations that necessitate a higher level of cooperation.

In his speech at the opening of the Fifth Kuwait Oil and Gas Conference and Exhibition, Al-Eidan pointed out that this cooperation necessitates better knowledge exchange and investment in technology and innovation to ensure energy security and achieve a balance between meeting global needs and environmental responsibility.

He stated that the conference reflects the Kuwaiti leadership's vision to solidify the position of the country as a global hub for dialogue on energy, innovation, strategy and cooperation, amidst the rapid developments in the global oil and gas sector.

He said the conference gathered decision-makers, technical experts and partners from around the world, underscoring the shared responsibility for shaping the future of energy and transforming global challenges into opportunities for growth, stability and prosperity.

He added that this year's conference technical program, themed "Transforming Tomorrow's Energy," witnessed exceptional engagement from the technical community.

He indicated that 200 outstanding scientific papers were selected from over 1,500 submissions and will be presented in 31 technical sessions.

He also disclosed that the program includes eight high-level sessions, a ministerial session, an opening session, and six strategic sessions with the participation of industry executive leaders, along with 56 speakers -- top experts.

# Business

Reinforcing its role in driving sustainable economic development

## NBK participates as strategic partner in KOGS 2026

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announced its participation as a Strategic Partner of the Kuwait Oil & Gas Show (KOGS 2026), which kicked off yesterday in Kuwait City under the patronage and in the presence of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah. The event witnessed the attendance of senior government officials, global energy company leaders, international organizations, investors, and industry experts, to discuss current energy issues and explore the future of the sector.

A delegation from the Bank's executive management attended the conference, led by Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Salah Al-Fulaij, Chief Executive Officer, NBK-Kuwait, and Mr. Pradeep Handa, Chief, Foreign Corporate Banking.

KOGS 2026 stands as one of the region's most prominent energy platforms, convening an elite gathering of global industry leaders to help shape the future trajectory of the energy sector.

This year's conference places a strategic emphasis on energy transition, innovation, and sustainable economic development, core themes that closely align with NBK's enduring commitment to responsible financing and its support for national development objectives.

NBK's participation underscores its central role in advancing Kuwait's efforts to build a more sustainable and resilient economy, while reinforcing the importance of embedding responsible banking principles within business strategies, risk management frameworks, and long-term value creation.

Furthermore, the Bank's participation in the conference also reaffirms the depth of its long-standing and close relationship with the oil sector, as one of the most vital pillars of the Kuwaiti economy. Over the decades, NBK has played a central role in financing energy projects and supporting national companies operating in this sector, reflecting its sustained commitment to strengthening the country's economic foundations and advancing sustainable growth.

As part of the conference's knowledge sharing aspect, Mr. Emad Al-Abdullah, Group Chief Human Resources Officer – NBK, will participate in a keynote panel titled "Shaping a Responsible Future: People, Planet, and Principles," exploring how companies are embedding ESG principles into their operations,



Isam Al-Sager and Salah Al-Fulaij during the conference.

alongside Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, within governance frameworks, environmental protection efforts, and operational processes.

The session will discuss how these efforts are driving stronger performance, improving stakeholder trust, and building more resilient organizations across the industry.

In addition, the Bank's Group Sustainability and Human Resources teams are participating in multiple knowledge-sharing sessions to showcase NBK's multidisciplinary capabilities in sustainable finance, climate action, ESG risk management, and the development of an inclusive workplace such as NBK's proprietary women's empowerment initiative, NBK RISE.

During the conference, NBK will deliver a presentation on the transformation of the global energy landscape and the growing importance of sustainable

finance for Kuwait's oil and gas sector. The presentation will also highlight the Bank's issuance of Kuwait's first green bond, valued at USD 500 million in 2024, alongside its ongoing efforts to strengthen sustainability governance, climate risk assessment, stress testing, and risk-based pricing frameworks to support clients in their transition toward sustainability.

The knowledge sharing sessions highlight the importance of a collaborative partnership for Kuwait's energy transition, whereby the oil and gas sector delivers technical expertise, and financial institutions provide capital, structuring, and risk insights.

NBK's participation in KOGS 2026 reflects its continued commitment to supporting responsible growth, advancing national priorities, and contributing to the development of Kuwait's energy sector and broader economy.

### In collaboration with Strategy Focused Group

## NBK launches HR Business Partner Excellence Program

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: In a step that reflects its ongoing commitment to developing human capital and enhancing its key role in supporting corporate performance, National Bank of Kuwait announced the launch of the HR Business Partner Excellence Program, in collaboration with Strategy Focused Group.

This valuable program aligns with NBK's vision to enhance the human resources' abilities to influence, lead, and raise the level of corporate performance through an advanced training model that is parallel to the bank's strategic priorities for 2026, and includes two pivotal layers.

### HR Business Partners

The first layer of the program, titled "HR Business Partners Workforce Architect Masterclass," focuses on HR Business Partners, targeting up to 15 participants through an intensive two-day foundational workshop.

This layer aims to provide HR Business Partners with the skills and confidence needed to move from an operational support role to being effective strategic partners in supporting and achieving the goals of business groups.

Moreover, this layer focuses on deepening the understanding of business strategy and its connection to corporate performance and human resources strategy, along with enhancing Business Efficiency through business acumen. It also covers workforce engineering, defining the scope and responsibilities of the strategic HR partner, strategic workforce planning, and change management, in addition to organizational consulting, stakeholder and influence management. The first layer also includes enhancing integration and partnership with centers of expertise, in addition to practical applications through simulations of business cases in each area, which are consistent with the work environment in the banking sector in general, and NBK in particular.

### Executive Leadership Program

The other layer of the program, titled "The Workforce Architect: Executive Leadership Program" targets heads of human resources units within the NBK Group, through an intensive two-day strategic training program. This layer is scheduled to take place next June and aims to enhance the ability of human resources leaders to provide strategic advice, actively participate in guiding executive decisions, and outline the structure of the future workforce at the Group level.

This layer of the program focuses on developing strategic foresight skills and building future scenarios, along with preparing strategic feasibility studies and developing a human resources strategy at the bank level. It also highlights the key role human resources play in transactions of mergers and acquisitions, as well as their role in supporting digital transformation and sustainability practices in line with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards, in addition to their role in addressing workforce risk



### Ghena Ben Ghareeb:

- The program reflects NBK's commitment to developing leaders capable of making a real impact on the business and decision-making levels.
- A high-quality program aimed at NBK's Human Resources partners and leaders, aligned with its strategic priorities for 2026.



Group photo

management. The layer also includes developing executive communication skills and enhancing the advisory role of HR leaders in senior management decision-making.

On this occasion, SVP - Head of HR Strategic Business Partners at NBK Group, Ms. Ghena Ben Ghareeb commented: "The launch of the HR Business Partner Excellence Program is an important milestone in NBK's journey towards developing its HR system, through which we focus on building advanced strategic capabilities that are in line with our future aspirations, as we strongly believe that human capital is a fundamental pillar in the process of leading change and achieving institutional sustainability".

Ben Ghareeb also explained that this program

reflects NBK's commitment to preparing leaders capable of making real impact at the business and decision-making levels, noting that the collaboration with Strategy Focused Group comes within the framework of the Bank's desire to benefit from the best global practices in developing leaders, and help them adapt to the specific nature of the banking work environment.

Through this program, NBK confirms its unwavering commitment to long-term investments in developing its human capital and enhancing its ability to lead institutional transformation, which in turn supports the bank's leading position and helps it keep pace with its strategic aspirations that wish to establish a more sustainable and innovative future.

## 'Oil Innovates 4' bridges academia & industry, says Al-Roumi

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): The "Oil Innovates 4" Award has become one of the leading national initiatives reflecting the Ministry's approach to embracing innovation and reinforcing the role of youth as active partners in developing the oil sector and shaping its future, said Oil Minister Tareq Al-Roumi.

Speaking at the award ceremony honoring the winners and marking the conclusion of the fourth edition, Al-Roumi said the initiative comes within the framework of supporting young national talents and linking academic outputs with the needs of the oil sector.

He noted that the projects submitted by students from the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University represent an advanced model of

integration between academic knowledge and practical application through realistic solutions.

He affirmed that the Ministry will continue supporting and developing the award, building on its outcomes, studying the submitted projects, and directing them toward paths that serve the Ministry's objectives and help transform promising ideas into practical, implementable applications.

In turn, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Oil Sheikh Dr. Nimer Fahad Al-Malik Al-Sabah said that the award is an effective institutional tool for linking educational outputs with the needs of the oil sector and opening pathways for national competencies.

Sheikh Nimer added that the award is part of a clear vision to serve as an intellectual and applied platform

for attracting ideas and transforming them into projects capable of development and contributing to addressing operational challenges facing the sector.

Meanwhile, Director of Public Relations and Petroleum Media at the Ministry, Sheikha Tamatha Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, said that this distinguished initiative opened the door for national talent projects to keep pace with rapid changes in the energy sector.

She added that since the award's launch, the Public Relations and Petroleum Media Department has been keen to develop its organizational and media framework in an integrated manner to present it as a professional platform combining scientific content with institutional organization.

## UAE-Kuwait trade volume

### tops \$14.8 bln: UAE Minister

DUBAI, Feb 3, (KUNA): UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade Thani bin Ahmad Al-Zeyoudi said the bilateral non-oil trade volume with Kuwait grew by 9.1 percent on annual basis to hit AED 54.5 billion (nearly USD 14.8 billion) in 2025.

The volume of exchanged investments went up sharply by 60 percent by the end of 2024 to more than USD 10 billion, he said in a speech to the

UAE-Kuwait Economic Forum in Dubai on Monday.

Hailing the forum, Al-Zeyoudi said it takes place at a time when the bilateral ties were gaining unprecedented momentum in keeping with the shared will of leaders of both countries.

He expressed hope for opening wider prospects for the strategic partnership and integration in all areas, particularly in trade and investment.

Offer limited to first 600 eligible female customers

## Gulf Bank launches exclusive offer for female Rose Gold Credit Card holders in collaboration with Abyat

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: On the occasion of the upcoming Holy Month of Ramadan, Gulf Bank has announced the launch of a limited-time exclusive shopping offer tailored specifically for its female customers holding the Rose Gold Credit Card, in collaboration with Abyat.

As part of this initiative, Rose Gold cardholders will be eligible to enjoy a 25% discount, capped at KD 50, when shopping in the Ramadan preparation section at Abyat's Flagship Store in Shuwaikh, for a duration of three days only starting from tomorrow (Thursday). The offer is available on a first-come, first-served basis and is limited to the first 600 eligible customers, reinforcing the exclusive nature of the promotion and underscoring the bank's focus on delivering high-value privileges to its customers.

This collaboration comes as part of Gulf Bank's broader strategy to provide differentiated banking solutions and lifestyle benefits that cater to the evolving needs of women, particularly during significant seasonal periods such as Ramadan, when household preparation and purchasing activity typically increase.

Abyat is recognized as one of Kuwait's leading destinations for home furnishing and interior finishing solutions, offering a wide and diverse product portfolio that includes furniture, décor, kitchenware, lighting, and building and finishing materials. Through this partnership, Gulf Bank aims to enhance the overall customer experience by aligning its financial products with trusted retail brands that add tangible value to customers' everyday lives.

Commenting on the initiative, Gulf



Najla Aleisa

**Najla Aleisa:** We remain committed to empowering women by offering thoughtfully designed products and exclusive partnerships that add value to their everyday lives, especially during meaningful seasons such as Ramadan.



Get ready for the holy month with the Rose Gold Credit Card at Abyat Shuwaikh Branch  
e-gulfbank.com + 1803 603

First 600 Customers

GULF BANK

Bank's Chief Marketing Officer, Mrs. Najla Aleisa, stated that the collaboration with Abyat provides Rose Gold cardholders with an opportunity to benefit from exclusive savings on selected products, particularly as they prepare their homes for the Ramadan season. She noted that this initiative forms part of a broader series of carefully curated offers designed to meet the lifestyle and financial expectations of female customers.

Mrs. Aleisa further emphasized that women empowerment remains a core strategic pillar for Gulf Bank, particularly within the financial services sector. Through dedicated products such as the Rose Gold Credit Card

and targeted partnerships with leading retailers, the bank continues to support women's financial independence, encourage informed spending, and enhance their access to exclusive privileges that reflect their evolving roles and aspirations.

She also highlighted that the Rose Gold Credit Card is enrolled in the Gulf Points loyalty program, offering cardholders a dual advantage. In addition to benefiting from exclusive partner discounts such as the Abyat offer, customers earn Gulf Points on their spending, which can be redeemed in multiple ways. These include cash-back credited directly to the card, gifting Gulf Points to family and friends, and using them for flight bookings, hotel reservations, and car rentals worldwide.

Furthermore, cardholders can redeem their Gulf Points through Gulf Bank's Online Store available on the bank's mobile application, allowing customers to purchase a wide range of

products directly using their accumulated points, enhancing convenience and flexibility.

Positioned as a premium lifestyle product, the Rose Gold Credit Card extends beyond traditional payment functionality to offer a comprehensive suite of benefits across shopping, travel, dining, and exclusive services. The card also provides a range of travel-related privileges, including discounts on flights and hotel bookings, car rental offers, complimentary airport lounge access in selected destinations, and travel insurance benefits that support Schengen visa applications.

Through initiatives such as this limited-time offer with Abyat, Gulf Bank continues to reinforce its commitment to delivering meaningful value, empowering women financially, and offering tailored experiences that combine practicality, exclusivity, and lifestyle relevance, especially during important occasions such as the Holy Month of Ramadan.

## KSA & UAE markets outperform

## Kuwait market retreats 3.8% in January on profit booking

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" released its Monthly Market Review report for January 2026. Kuwait's equity market declined in January 2026, driven by profit booking, after registering a strong performance in 2025. Kuwait All Share Index declined by 3.8% in January, led by stocks in the Consumer Staples (-18.2%), Technology (-14.5%), and Consumer Discretionary (-6.8%) sectors. Kuwait's banking sector index declined by 3.0% for the month. Among banking stocks, Burgan Bank and National Bank of Kuwait declined the most, falling by 9.1% y/y and 6.3% y/y respectively during the month. National Bank of Kuwait reported a 5.4% y/y increase in profit before tax for 2025. Among sectors, Oil and Gas and Telecommunications were the only gainers, rising by 4.2% and 1.7% respectively in January 2026.

Global markets were positive during the month, supported by continued inflows in the markets despite the elevated investor demand for safe haven assets like gold. MSCI World and S&P 500 rose by 2.2% and 1.4% respectively during the month. Strong corporate results from major US tech companies supported the growth. However, the continued depreciation of USD and concerns over declining consumer confidence weighed on the US stocks' performance. Nasdaq Composite index rose by 1.2% during the month, supported by higher-than-expected corporate earnings results. Emerging Markets, as measured by MSCI EM Index, gained 8.8% during the month, supported by Chinese equities. Chinese stocks registered 3.8% gains for the month, majorly driven by artificial intelligence trades and optimism about the domestic tech sector in response to U.S. curbs on high-tech exports. South Korea, Taiwan and Brazil equities registered strong gains for the month.

Kuwait's domestic credit growth remained robust in 2025, expanding 7.6% y/y, much higher than the growth in 2024. This was driven by a surge in lending to banks and financial institutions and business credit. Meanwhile, Kuwait's real estate sales reached an all-time high in 2025, growing by 26% y/y to KD 4.4 billion. This was supported by strong growth in the investment segment, which grew by 39% y/y in 2025 as compared to 2024. This momentum can be expected to continue through 2026, supported by the tailwinds unlocked through implementation of the mortgage law.

Most GCC equity indices, except Kuwait and Bahrain, ended the month on a positive note with S&P GCC composite index registering a gain of 6.5%. The gains were led by Saudi's equity index, which registered an 8.5% growth during the month. Strong earnings results from major blue-chip stocks and the announcement of opening their financial markets to all foreign investors boosted investor optimism, propelling growth in its equity market. Saudi National Bank increased by 18.4% during the month, following the 18% y/y growth in its net income for 2025, supported by expansion in its core business and improved operational efficiency. Al Rajhi Bank gained 9.9% after reporting a 25.7% y/y increase in its net income (at SAR 24.8 billion) for 2025, recording its highest net income ever.

Ma'aden gained 26.8% during the month following 7.8 million ounces of gold discovery across four key sites. Abu Dhabi's equity index expanded by 2.9% during the month, supported by major blue-chip stocks. First Abu Dhabi Bank gained 6.7% after recording 24% y/y growth in its net income for 2025. Dubai equity index increased by 6.4% during the month, supported by 6.8% monthly gain in Emaar Properties. Meanwhile, the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) rose 7.9% during the month, continuing the robust growth momentum from 2025.

The UAE's domestic credit growth reached a decade-high of 9.7% y/y in November, primarily driven by the private sector credit growth of 9.9% y/y. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia saw its non-oil exports (including re-exports) increase by 21% y/y in November 2025, led by growth in footwear/headwear

items, construction materials, and food and beverage segments. The growth was further solidified by an 81.5% y/y increase in machinery and electrical re-exports, highlighting the country's successful evolution into a regional logistics hub. Fitch reaffirmed Saudi Arabia's 'A+' credit rating with a stable outlook, highlighting a sovereign balance sheet and fiscal reserves that remain significantly more robust than those of its global peers. Driven by strong non-oil momentum, the agency projects the Saudi Arabia's GDP to grow by 4.8% y/y in 2026.

Global markets were positive during the month, supported by continued inflows in the markets despite the elevated investor demand for safe haven assets like gold. MSCI World and S&P 500 rose by 2.2% and 1.4% respectively during the month. Strong corporate results from major US tech companies supported the growth. However, the continued depreciation of USD and concerns over declining consumer confidence weighed on the US stocks' performance. Nasdaq Composite index rose by 1.2% during the month, supported by higher-than-expected corporate earnings results. Emerging Markets, as measured by MSCI EM Index, gained 8.8% during the month, supported by Chinese equities. Chinese stocks registered 3.8% gains for the month, majorly driven by artificial intelligence trades and optimism about the domestic tech sector in response to U.S. curbs on high-tech exports. South Korea, Taiwan and Brazil equities registered strong gains for the month.

The yield on the 10-year US treasury notes increased by 8 basis points during the month, to 4.26%, amid hovering geopolitical uncertainties. During the FOMC meeting on January 27-28, 2026, the U.S. Federal Reserve opted to hold interest rates at 3.50% - 3.75%, citing low job gains, elevated inflation levels, and signs of economic stabilization as reasons. This brought a pause in the current rate cut cycle of three consecutive cuts in late 2025.

Oil (Brent) prices closed the month at USD 70.69 per barrel, gaining 16.2% during the month. This was primarily driven by heightened tensions between US and Iran which elevated the concerns of supply disruptions among investors, resulting in an increase in the geopolitical premium of oil prices. Additionally, supply disruptions stemming from the shutdown of Kazakhstan's largest oil field Tengiz, which remained shut until the end of January, supported the rally.

The key driver for market movements in February 2026 will be the extent of headwinds posed by geopolitical tensions. Although markets remained relatively resilient in January, overvaluation of tech stocks (indicated by S&P 500 Shiller CAPE ratio at second-highest levels ever of 39-40), raised market-wide concerns. For GCC markets, corporate earnings will drive stock movements. While global oil oversupply worries pose challenges, positive reform momentum and capital expenditure should be closely watched from a long-term perspective.

**About Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz"**

Established in 1974, Kuwait Financial Centre K.P.S.C "Markaz" is one of the leading asset management and investment banking institutions in the MENA region with total assets under management of over KD 1.61 billion (USD 5.28 billion) as of 30 September 2025. Markaz was listed on the Boursa Kuwait in 1997. Over the years, Markaz has pioneered innovation through the creation of new investment channels.

## One of six dealers worldwide recognized by Toyota Motor Corporation

## ALSAAYER honored with Toyota's prestigious 70th Year Award



Journey to Excellence & Customer Trust  
ALSAAYER HONOURED AS ONE OF SIX GLOBAL DISTRIBUTORS OF TOYOTA MOTOR CORPORATION'S 70-YEAR AWARD

Since its inception, the Group has been a pioneer in the region, transforming the local landscape through a relentless focus on innovation and the "Customer First" philosophy.

### A Legacy of Global Significance

The 70th Year Award is not merely a celebration of longevity; it is a testament to ALSAYER's role as a global benchmark for dealership operations which includes:

• Decades of Market Leadership: Maintaining a leadership position in

the Kuwaiti market through strategic growth.

• Operational Excellence: Continuous investment in world-class facilities and service standards.

• Brand Stewardship: Upholding the core values of Toyota while adapting to the evolving needs of the Kuwaiti consumer.

Strong Performance of Toyota and Lexus Powered by a Legacy of Kaizen

Central to ALSAYER's success is the philosophy of Kaizen (continuous

improvement), which has driven the Group to reach unprecedented global milestones. This journey of growth is defined by a series of industry-leading achievements:

• Pioneering Luxury: The successful launch of the Lexus trademark in 1989, followed by the 2010 opening of the world's largest Lexus luxury showroom in Kuwait.

• Customer Centricity: The launch of the "No. 1 by Far" program, a revolutionary 360-degree customer care initiative that was the first of its kind globally.

• Unmatched Service Excellence: Winning the TMC Customer Service Excellence Award for 16 consecutive years—a feat achieved by only three Toyota dealers worldwide.

• Technological Leadership: The recent implementation of the AutoStore robotics parts warehouse system, making ALSAYER the first Toyota dealer globally to adopt such advanced automation.

These milestones reflect a continuous expansion of facilities and a dedication to staying at the forefront of the global automotive industry.

### Driving the Future of Kuwait's Automotive Market

As ALSAYER enters its eighth decade, the Group remains committed to pioneering new standards in the industry. From futuristic mobility solutions to digital transformation in customer service, ALSAYER continues to lead by example, ensuring that the partnership with TMC remains a catalyst for further growth and excellence in Kuwait.

## Event encourages fitness, wellness, and community engagement

## ABK sponsors Al Shaab Co-op Sports Day to promote healthy living



Sager Albenali, Chief Communications Officer

■ Albenali: We remain steadfast in our dedication to meeting the diverse needs of the Kuwaiti community



A group of bank employees during the event.



Group photo



A large crowd attended the sports.

social responsibility program to enhance its role and leading position in the local market.

Looking ahead, Albenali reaffirmed the Bank's ongoing commitment to social responsibility and community engagement. "We remain steadfast in our dedication to meeting the diverse needs of the Kuwaiti community and will continue to actively participate in various sports, awareness, cultural, and humanitarian events throughout the year," he affirmed.

Since its establishment in 1967, ABK has progressed to become one of the leading Kuwaiti banks in the region that offers a wide array of personal, corporate, and private banking products and services. ABK also provides a broad range of local, regional, and global investment solutions and services through its subsidiary, ABK Capital.

Across the region, the Bank offers individuals and corporates the convenience of comprehensive banking and financial services in the Egyptian market through ABK-Egypt's network of 46 branches.

This is in addition to ABK's three branches located in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) in the United Arab Emirates, servicing both Kuwaiti and Emirati individual and corporate clients.

ABK is a strong supporter of Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's 'Let's Be Aware' awareness campaign. Through its various initiatives, the Bank aims to promote financial inclusion by educating Kuwaiti society about customer rights, responsibilities, and the different types of banking and special needs services. Additionally, ABK consistently provides strategic information on how to avoid banking and financial fraud, loan application requirements, digital services, and more.

Cementing its proactive role in driving digital transformation & sustainability across Kuwait's vital sectors

## talabat leads conversation on digital economy & technology at the NFTSS

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Expanding on its influence as a pillar of Kuwait's digital landscape, talabat, the leading on-demand online ordering platform in the MENA region, concluded its participation in the National Forum for Transport and Smart Services (NFTSS) as the Main Partner. Organized by ALGAS Events in collaboration with the General Traffic Department – the Ministry of Interior, and held under the patronage and attendance of His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, the one-day forum took place on February 3 at the Four Seasons Hotel. This partnership is a testament to talabat's commitment to driving innovation-driven, technology-backed sustainable progress in line with its dedicated support of Kuwait Vision 2035.

As part of talabat's participation as Main Partner, Abdullah Al-Mansour, Director of Corporate Affairs at talabat Kuwait, and Amal Bukhamseen, Manager of Corporate Affairs at talabat Kuwait, shared valuable insights about the present landscape of digital transformation within the transport and road safety sector, as well as the future digital solutions that can be adopted to support the development of the digital economy and ensure a safer and smoother experience for all commuters across Kuwait.

Other experts from the public and private sectors contributed their vast expertise on the topic, including government officials and decision-makers, representatives from online ordering platforms, transport and logistics companies, as well as technology innovators, entrepreneurs, academics, and a distinguished group of specialists.

During his keynote address titled "From Governance to Sustainability," Al-Mansour shared insights on building an effective partnership model for transport and smart services sector, inspired by the talabat success story of moving from a "service and logistics marketplace" to "digital economy;" from a "luxury" to a "national infrastructure supporting the digital economy."

"In this time and age of digital economies, sustainable governance is essential for the success of aspiring endeavors that promise efficiency, convenience, safety, and collective welfare," Al-Mansour clarified. "Discussions such as the ones had at the NFTSS are crucial for advancing with confidence toward achieving Kuwait Vision 2035. Establishing sustainable



Abdullah Al-Mansour, Director of Corporate Affairs at talabat Kuwait, receives a commemorative award from His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, during the National Forum for Transport and Smart Services.



Amal Bukhamseen, Manager of Corporate Affairs at talabat Kuwait, speaks during a panel session on 'Regulation, Legislation, and Collective Responsibility,' highlighting the importance of data-driven insights in operational excellence.



Abdullah Al-Mansour delivers a keynote address titled 'From Governance to Sustainability,' showcasing a timeline of talabat's 22-year history and its evolution from a logistics marketplace to a pillar of the digital economy.



Partnership Group Portrait – Key participants and representatives from talabat and the Ministry of Interior pose with awards at the NFTSS forum held at the Four Seasons Hotel.

governance that provides protection, offers proactive solutions, and attracts investments is critical for the fruition of the synchronized efforts shared by all relevant parties; governance that

provides clarity, responds with agility, and reduces friction."

To this effect, Al-Mansour closed his keynote address saying: "To ensure this dialogue doesn't end to

day, I would like to propose the establishment of a Permanent National Committee for Transportation and Smart Services. This committee would bring together the Ministry

of Interior, tech platforms, and local operators to meet regularly. Our goal? To anticipate challenges, co-create regulations, and ensure Kuwait remains a leader in the regional

### Modi praises Trump's leadership

## Trump to cut tariffs on Indian goods to 18% after Modi agrees to stop buying Russian oil

WASHINGTON, Feb 3, (AP): President Donald Trump said Monday that he plans to lower tariffs on goods from India to 18%, from 25%, after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi agreed to stop buying Russian oil.

The move comes after months of Trump pressuring India to cut its reliance on cheap Russian crude. India has taken advantage of reduced Russian oil prices as much of the world has sought to isolate Moscow for its February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Trump said that India would also start to reduce its import taxes on U.S. goods to zero and buy \$500 billion worth of American products.

"This will help END THE WAR in Ukraine, which is taking place right now, with thousands of people dying each and every week!" Trump said in a Truth Social post announcing the tariff reduction on India.

Modi posted on X that he was "delighted" by the announced tariff reduction and that Trump's "leadership is vital for global peace, stability, and prosperity."

"I look forward to working closely with him to take our partnership to unprecedented heights," Modi said.

Trump has long had a warm relationship with Modi, only to find it complicated recently by Russia's war in Ukraine and trade disputes.

Trump has struggled to make good on a campaign pledge to quickly end the Russia-Ukraine war and has been reluctant since his return to office to place pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin. He has simultaneously imposed tariffs without going through Congress to achieve his economic and foreign policy aims.

The announcement of the agreement with India comes as his special envoy, Steve Witkoff, and son-in-law Jared Kushner are expected to hold another round of three-way talks with Russian and Ukrainian officials in Abu Dhabi later this week aimed at finding an endgame to the war, according to a White House official who requested anonymity to describe the upcoming meeting.

Trump has voiced that he believes that targeting Russia's oil revenue is the best way to get Moscow to end its nearly four-year war against Ukraine, a view that dovetails with his devotion to tariffs.

In June, Trump announced the United States would impose a 25% tariff on goods from India after his administration felt the country had done too little to narrow its trade surplus with the U.S. and open up its markets to American goods. In August, Trump imposed additional import taxes of 25% on Indian products because of its purchases of Russian oil, putting the combined rate increase at 50%.

With the commitment to stop buying Russian oil and the lower rate, the tariff rate on Indian products could fall to 18%, which is close to the 15% rate charged

on goods from the European Union and Japan, among other nations.

Historically, India's relationship with Russia revolves more around defense than energy. Russia provides only a small fraction of India's oil but the majority of its military hardware.

But India, in the aftermath of the Russian invasion, used the moment to buy discounted Russian oil, allowing it to increase its energy supplies while Russia looked to cut deals to boost its beleaguered economy and keep paying for its brutal war.

The announced tariff reduction comes days after India and the European Union reached a free trade agreement that could affect as many as 2 billion people after nearly two decades of negotiations. That deal would enable free trade on almost all goods between the EU's 27 members and India, covering everything from textiles to medicines, and bringing down high import taxes for European wine and cars.

The deal between two of the world's biggest markets also reflected a desire to reduce dependence on the U.S. after Trump's import tax hikes disrupted established trade flows. While the cost of Trump's tariffs have largely been borne by American businesses and consumers, the taxes can reduce trade volumes among countries.

In recent months, India has accelerated a push to finalize several trade agreements. It signed a deal with Oman in December and concluded talks for a deal with New Zealand.

Trump seemed to hint at a positive call with Modi on Monday morning, posting to social media a picture of the two of them on a magazine cover.

When the pair met last February, the U.S. president said that India would start buying American oil and natural gas. But the talks proved frustrating and the tariffs imposed last year by Trump did little to initially change India's objections.

While the U.S. has been seeking greater market access and zero tariff on almost all its exports, India has expressed reservations on throwing open sectors such as agriculture and dairy, which employ a bulk of the country's population for livelihood, Indian officials said.

The Census Bureau reported that the U.S. ran a \$53.5 billion trade imbalance in goods with India during the first 11 months of last year, meaning it imported more than it exported.

At a population exceeding 1.4 billion people, India is the world's most populous country and viewed by many government officials and business leaders as geopolitical and economic counterbalance to China.

### Central banks dump dollars, turn to gold as confidence wavers

## US allies seek to shield economies from Trump's tariffs

WASHINGTON, Feb 3, (AP): Bullied and buffeted by President Donald Trump's tariffs for the past year, America's longstanding allies are desperately seeking ways to shield themselves from the president's impulsive wrath.

U.S. trade partners are cutting deals among themselves -- sometimes discarding old differences to do so -- in a push to diversify their economies away from a newly protectionist United States. Some European governments and institutions are reducing their use of U.S. digital services such as Zoom and Teams.

Central banks and global investors are dumping dollars and buying gold. Together, their actions could diminish U.S. influence and mean higher interest rates and prices for Americans already angry about the high cost of living.

Last summer and fall, Trump used the threat of punishing taxes on imports to strong-arm the European Union, Japan, South Korea and other trading partners into accepting lopsided trade deals and promising to make massive investments in the United States.

But a deal with Trump, they've discovered, is no deal at all.

The mercurial president repeatedly finds reasons to conjure new tariffs to impose on trading partners that thought they had already made enough concessions to satisfy him.

Just months after reaching his agreement with the EU, Trump threatened new tariffs on eight European countries for opposing his attempts to seize control of Greenland from Denmark -- though he quickly backed down. And last month, he said he'd slap 100% tariffs on Canada for breaking with the United States by agreeing to reduce Canadian tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles.

"Our trading partners are discovering that the largely one-sided deals they concluded with the U.S. provide little protection," said former U.S. trade negotiator Wendy Cutler, senior vice president at the Asia Society Policy Institute. "As a

result, trade diversification efforts by our partners are on turbo charge, looking to reduce dependence on the U.S."

Trump supporters such as Paul Winfree, who was deputy director of the White House Domestic Policy Council during Trump's first term, are wary of the relative decline in U.S. Treasury note holdings by foreign central banks and view the national debt as a vulnerability rivals would like to exploit.

Winfree, CEO of the Economic Policy Innovation Institute, a think tank, said that some of Trump's advisers do not feel America has fully benefited from the dollar's status as the world's dominant currency.

"But the fact remains that every other country is jealous of our status, and many of our adversaries would love to challenge the U.S. dollar and Treasuries," he said. White House spokesman Kush Desai insists America's standing on the global stage has not been diminished.

"President Trump remains committed to the strength and power of the U.S. Dollar as the world's reserve currency," he said.

The most eye-opening deal so far has been the pact announced last week between the 27-country EU and India, the world's fastest growing major economy. Negotiators had been at it for nearly two decades before they closed the agreement.

Likewise, an EU trade deal announced two weeks ago with the Mercosur nations of South America took a quarter century of negotiation. It will create a free trade market of more than 700 million people.

"Some of these deals have been in the works for quite some time," said Maurice Obstfeld, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics and former chief economist at the International Monetary Fund. "The pressure from Trump made them more eager to accelerate the process and reach agreement."

"Our trading partners are discovering that the largely one-sided deals they concluded with the U.S. provide little protection," said former U.S. trade negotiator Wendy Cutler, senior vice president at the Asia Society Policy Institute. "As a

result, trade diversification efforts by our partners are on turbo charge, looking to reduce dependence on the U.S."

### France to replace Zoom

## Europe pushes to reduce reliance on US tech firms

LONDON, Feb 3, (AP): In France, civil servants will ditch Zoom and Teams for a homegrown video conference system. Soldiers in Austria are using open source office software to write reports after the military dropped Microsoft Office. Bureaucrats in a German state have also turned to free software for their administrative work.

Around Europe, governments and institutions are seeking to reduce their use of digital services from U.S. Big Tech companies and turning to domestic or free alternatives. The push for "digital sovereignty" is gaining attention as the Trump administration strikes an increasingly belligerent posture toward the continent, highlighted by recent tensions over Greenland that intensified fears that Silicon Valley giants could be compelled to cut off access.

Concerns about data privacy and worries that Europe is not doing enough to keep up with the United States and Chinese tech leadership are also fueling the drive.

The French government referenced some of these concerns when it announced last week that 2.5 million civil servants would stop using video conference tools from U.S. providers -- including Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Webex and GoTo Meeting -- by 2027 and switch to Visio, a homegrown service.

The objective is "to put an end to the use of non-European solutions, to guarantee the security and confidentiality of public electronic communications by relying on a powerful and sovereign tool," the announcement said.

"We cannot risk having our scientific exchanges, our sensitive data, and our strategic innovations exposed to non-European actors," David Amiel, a civil service minister, said in a press release.

Microsoft said it continues to "partner closely with the government in France and respect the importance of security, privacy, and digital trust for public institutions."

The company said it is "focused on providing customers with greater choice, stronger data protection, and resilient cloud services -- ensuring data stays in Europe, under European law, with robust security and privacy protections."

Zoom, Webex and GoTo Meeting did not respond to requests for comment.

French President Emmanuel Macron has been pushing digital sovereignty for years. But there's now a lot more "political momentum behind this idea now that we need to de-risk from U.S. tech," Nick Reiners, at the Eurasia Group.

"It feels kind of like there's a real zeitgeist shift," Reiners said.

It was a hot topic at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting of

global political and business elites last month in Davos, Switzerland. The European Commission's official for tech sovereignty, Henna Virkkunen, told an audience that Europe's reliance on others "can be weaponized against us."

"That's why it's so important that we are not dependent on one country or one company when it comes to very critical fields of our economy or society," she said, without naming countries or companies.

A decisive moment came last year when the Trump administration sanctioned the International Criminal Court's top prosecutor after the tribunal, based in The Hague, Netherlands, issued an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, an ally of President Donald Trump.

The sanctions led Microsoft to cancel Khan's ICC email, a move that was first reported by The Associated Press and sparked fears of a "kill switch" that Big Tech companies can use to turn off service at will.

Microsoft maintains it kept in touch with the ICC "throughout the process that resulted in the disconnection of its sanctioned official from Microsoft services. At no point did Microsoft cease or suspend its services to the ICC."

Microsoft President Brad Smith has repeatedly sought to strengthen trans-Atlantic ties, the company's press office said, and pointed to an interview he did last month with CNN in Davos in which he said that jobs, trade and investment, as well as security, would be affected by a rift over Greenland.

"Europe is the American tech sector's biggest market after the United States itself. It all depends on trust. Trust requires dialogue," Smith said.

Other incidents have added to the movement. There's a growing sense that repeated EU efforts to rein in tech giants such as Google with blockbuster antitrust fines and sweeping digital rule books haven't done much to curb their dominance.

Billionaire Elon Musk is also a factor. Officials worry about relying on his Starlink satellite internet system for communications in Ukraine.

Washington and Brussels wrangled for years over data transfer agreements, triggered by whistleblower Edward Snowden's revelations of U.S. cyber-snooping.

With online services now mainly hosted in the cloud through data centers, Europeans fear that their data is vulnerable.

U.S. cloud providers have responded by setting up so-called "sovereign cloud" operations, with data centers located in European countries, owned by European entities and with physical and remote access only for staff who are European Union residents.

The idea is that "only Europeans can take decisions so that they can't be coerced by the U.S.," Reiners said.

# Features

ARAB TIMES

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2024

## Honor underscores his influence on Afrobeats

# Fela Kuti's Grammy lifetime award is a major win for African music

LAGOS, Nigeria, Feb 3, (AP): Fela Kuti became the first African to be awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Recording Academy at the Grammys Special Merit Awards.

He was honored posthumously on Saturday alongside Chaka Khan, Cher, Carlos Santana and Whitney Houston.

The award underscores the artist's contribution to music and as the inspiration of one of the most popular contemporary African music genres, Afrobeats. Nigerian music critics welcomed the recognition as a reflection of his enduring influence.

"What the recognition means locally is the inspiration Fela has provided for over 50 years," Joey Akan, a Nigerian music critic and founder of Afrobeats Intelligence, told The Associated Press.

Fela, a saxophonist and father of Afrobeats - different from Afrobeats - known more popularly by his first name, was born in 1938 in colonial Ni-

geria. His music career, which spanned decades between the late 1950s and up to the 1990s across multiple countries, is a signature blend of high-octane horn, jazz, and funk with Yoruba rhythms.

To Nigerians, he wore many hats: a pioneering musician, an activist who was a thorn in the side of Nigeria's successive military rulers, a cultural reference in the fight against Western imperialism, a chain-smoking serial polygamist.

But for the music part, a notable theme in his decades' worth of work is his protest against Western cultural hegemony, which some critics say the Recording Academy is a part of. He railed against the neocolonial vestiges of British rule in Nigeria and the corrupt postcolonial leadership of his birth country, especially the military governments.

In his 1977 track "Colonial Mental-ity," he sang "De ting wey black no good/Na foreign things them dey like/

No be so?" ("The things that are Black are inferior/It is foreign ones they like. That is not so?")

In a 1989 polemic, "Beasts of No Nation," he railed against the United Nations and almost every global leader of the time. "Dem call the place United Nations/Hear oh another animal talk/Wetin united inside United Nations?" ("They call the place United Nations/Hear another nonsense narrative/What is united in the United Nations?")

He was jailed many times by Nigerian autocratic governments for his criticism, most notably for 20 months by Nigeria's then-junta leader Muhammad Buhari in 1984. In 1977, nearly 1,000 soldiers stormed his self-styled Kalakuta Republic, his residence in Lagos, and burned it down. His mother, Fumilayo Ransome-Kuti, a prominent activist, died from injuries sustained in the raid.

"Regardless of the contrast with what Fela represented and what the award



Women sit under portraits of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti at the New Afrika Shrine in Lagos, Nigeria, on Sunday, Oct. 21, 2012. (AP)

represents, I think it is a net positive for African music." Dolapo Amusat, the founder of WeTalkSound, a Nigerian creative company, told the AP. "And it shows how far Fela's influence is and how widespread his acclaim is."

Fela died in 1997 due to complications from AIDS. His legacy helped create one of the most successful periods in Nigerian music, with artists like Burna Boy and Wizkid often referencing Fela.

In recent years, music from Africa has gained significant recognition at the Recording Academy. In 2024, the academy introduced the Best African music performance category. Burna Boy, Tems, and South Africa's Tyla have won various awards at the ceremonies since 2020.

Many global artists, including Beyoncé, Mos Def, Nas, and J.Cole have also sampled Fela, with his songs soundtracking many Hollywood productions.

## Powerful recognition

### Bad Bunny's big win seen as boost for US Latinos

LOS ANGELES, Feb 3, (AP): The record that won album of the year at the 2026 Grammy Awards Sunday night - Bad Bunny's "Debí Tirar Más Fotos" - is the one many industry experts labeled the most deserving, and therefore an unlikely candidate for victory.

In the same breath, the Grammys - not a place historically known for fervent political messaging - was filled with celebrities taking anti-Immigration and Customs Enforcement stances. Of the nine televised awards handed out to seven different artists, nearly half addressed immigration in their acceptance speeches.

Both feel like a surprise. But it is no accident.

The Grammy Awards have long been criticized over a lack of diversity, with a history of artists of color, women, rap, Latino and R&B musicians being snubbed for top prizes.

In the past few years, however, that reputation has started to become challenged as the Recording Academy worked to add thousands of new voters across a variance of backgrounds. The results are notable: 3,800 new Recording Academy members were added in 2025. Half - 50% - are 39 and under, 58% are people of color and 35% identify as women. (Last year all Latin Grammy voting members were invited to join the Recording Academy, though it's not clear how many became Grammy voters.)

The 2025 Grammy ceremony seemed to reflect these changing dynamics as well, Beyoncé and Kendrick Lamar won major categories. And in 2026, that trend appears to have continued.

Bad Bunny is one of only a few Latino album of the year winners, a short list that includes Santana in 2000 for "Supernatural" and Stan Getz and João Gilberto's "Getz/Gilberto" in 1965.

"There's so much amazing Latin music that has been overlooked and that's part of what is so beautiful about this moment," says Vanessa Diaz, co-author of "P FKN R: How Bad Bunny Became the Global Voice of Puerto Rican Resistance." "And that's why it feels like a win."

By a number of metrics, "Debí Tirar Más Fotos" was 2025's most-streamed release, globally. But it is not only a commercial success story, it is an artistic one.

#### Tradition

The album is a love letter to Puerto Rico that marries folkloric tradition in local Borinquen genres like bomba, plena, salsa and música jibara with contemporary, internationally recognized styles like reggaeton, trap and electronic pop. That combination of new and old is something the Recording Academy has historically celebrated - looking at you, Bruno Mars' retro hooks - but to be recognized for an all-Spanish language release is uncharted territory.

The album is also political, but its messages are not exclusive to Puerto Rican or even Latino identity, says Albert Laguna, associate professor of ethnicity, race and migration and American studies at Yale. "The lyrics on this album align with global struggles," he says. Take, for example, "Lo que le pasó a Hawaii" ("What happened to Hawaii?"), a rallying cry for cultural autonomy in an era of neocolonialization.

Bad Bunny won with a career-defining album on the year of its eligibility - differing from Beyoncé's "Cowboy Carter" victory in 2025, which some viewed as the Recording Academy attempt to course correct after not awarding her the top prize in past years, like in 2017 when the decade-defining "Lemonade" was nominated, or 2023 when "Renaissance" was eligible.

In the case of Bad Bunny, the Recording Academy is meeting the pop culture zeitgeist where it is at, celebrating an artist at the peak of their popularity: Next week Bad Bunny will perform at the Super Bowl halftime show, an event that is gearing up to be a landmark moment for Latino culture.

It is also a powerful recognition of his talents at a time when some communities have voiced anxieties about even speaking Spanish in certain public spaces in the US amid growing anti-immigrant sentiment and raids.

"A lot of people feel like this is a tense moment, it's a difficult moment. And here's someone giving us a sonic language in which to narrate this complex present," Laguna says. "There's pleasure, in political critique, that the music makes possible in a beautiful way. And I think that's very much welcomed."

Anti-ICE sentiment permeated all corners of Sunday's Grammys as immigration enforcement surges in the United States.

During the CBS broadcast, Bad Bunny, Billie Eilish and first-time Grammys winner Olivia Dean used their time on screen to send a message. "No one is illegal on stolen land," said Eilish. "(Expletive) ICE."

"I'm up here as a granddaughter of an immigrant," said Dean. "I am a product of bravery, and I think that those people deserve to be celebrated."

But the comments actually began at the pre-televised Premiere Ceremony, in which 80 Grammys were handed out.

There, Shaboozy accepted his first Grammy with tears in his eyes. "I want to thank my mother ... an immigrant in this country," he said.

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

Kehlani did the same: "Imma leave this and say, (expletive) ICE."

Backstage, SZA similarly cursed ICE and stressed the importance of being able "to disseminate mutual aid."

"I'm scared," Gloria Estefan said backstage after winning an award. "There are hundreds of children in detention centers. ... I don't recognize my country in this moment right now."



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, 2026, in Los Angeles. (AP)

## Music



The team from 'KPop Demon Hunters' pose in the press room with the award for best song written for visual media for 'Golden' during the 68th annual Grammy Awards on Sunday, Feb. 1, in Los Angeles. (AP)

### First Grammy win highlights genre's global appeal

## S.Korea cheers K-pop's 'Golden' moment

SEOUL, South Korea, Feb 3, (AP): South Koreans celebrated on Monday as the song "Golden" claimed K-pop's first Grammy Award, a milestone that critics say highlights the genre's global appeal and signals broader acceptance in the American mainstream.

The Grammy win for "Golden" - from the Netflix animated film "KPop Demon Hunters" - which also contended for song of the year, could help strengthen K-pop's US foothold and boost the genre's prospects for future awards, music critic Lim Hee-yun said.

The win for best song for visual media capped a highly visible night for K-pop at the Grammys - an institution where the genre has long been undercelebrated despite its massive international following.

Rosé of the juggernaut girl group Blackpink joined Grammy favorite Bruno Mars on stage to belt out their megahit "APT," which was a song of the year nominee. The girl group Katseye, created by a partnership between South Korea's HYBE and US label Geffen Records, earned two nominations, including best new artist, for their song "Gabriela."

The awards captured a moment in which K-pop is surging as a youth-driven global phenomenon and increasingly attracting interest from the US film and music industries.

American legacy studios, struggling to reach younger audiences, have taken note of K-pop's viral strength on social media and short-form platforms - a momentum that has driven collaborations such as Rosé and Bruno Mars and projects like Katseye and "KPop Demon Hunters," according to Lim Hee-yun.

There is debate over whether "Golden," an English-language pop song from a Sony Pictures Animation film, qualifies as K-pop. Still, the Grammy award sparked joy in South Korea, where the film inspired Demon Hunters-themed ramen and boosted tourism to Seoul's old fortress walls and other cultural sites featured in the film.

"It feels unreal," said Kim Na-young, a 50-year-old who said she saw the movie at least five times. "Sony made it, Netflix released it, but the film was definitely about Korea."

"KPop Demon Hunters" follows the three members of the fictional Korean girl group HUNTR/X as they use their music and martial arts skills to keep demons out of the human world.

The film went on to become Netflix's most popular release of all time, with songs like "Golden" and "Soda Pop" climbing global music charts and its characters becoming popular Halloween costume choices in the United States. The singers behind HUNTR/X - Ejae, Audrey Nuna and Rei Ami - gained huge followings.

After winning their award at the Grammys' Pre-awards Ceremony, the songwriters of "Golden" delivered their acceptance speech in both English and Korean, highlighting its bilingual appeal.

#### Historical

"This is just crazy because this is like a historical moment for you know, as being a Korean American," said Ejae, who co-wrote and provided the lead vocals for the song. "It's a song that also represents Korea."

Some South Koreans saw the Grammy win as the latest significant moment marking the rise of South Korean pop culture, following the 2020 Oscar triumph of Bong Joon Ho's "Parasite."

"When Parasite won, it felt like South Korean culture had entered the global mainstream. The Grammy win takes that recognition even further," said Park Jeong-eon, 48, recalling trips abroad in the 2000s when she felt that South Korea was little known.

Seo Ga-yeon, who studies K-pop at a university, said she could emotionally relate with the personal story of Ejae, who struggled as a young K-pop trainee in South Korea before establishing herself as an artist

in the United States.

"I think it was above all her outstanding vocal performance - overflowing with emotion, as if she was singing about her own life, almost like a cry - that made 'Golden' a success," Seo said.

South Korea's governing Democratic Party said the Grammy win was a historically significant moment in which K-pop "finally overcame the long-standing Grammy barrier."

The Recording Academy had long overlooked major K-pop acts like BTS. Some analysts question whether "Golden" should truly be considered K-pop's first Grammy win.

"The film, of course, used K-pop as material and helped bring it global attention, but I feel there's a distance between 'Golden' and K-pop," said Jinno Lim, another music critic, who described the Grammy win as recognition of K-pop's growing international appeal rather than a victory for the genre itself.

Lim Hee-yun said "Golden" sounds more like American pop - "Katy Perry or early Lady Gaga" - than a typical K-pop idol track, which may have helped it reach a broader audience. While K-pop groups usually have four or more members who rotate vocal parts to engage fans, "Golden" is carried almost entirely by a single lead vocalist.

Group composition, precision in style and choreography, and passion - almost religious - fan bases are key elements that define K-pop, he said, though the genre has become increasingly difficult to pin down musically.

"For people who knew little about K-pop, or had only heard of BTS or Blackpink, 'KPop Demon Hunters' certainly boosted awareness of the K-pop world and even sparked interest in traveling to South Korea," Lim Hee-yun said. "K-pop groups are likely to receive far more attention in the future than they would have without the film."

## Variety

**LOS ANGELES:** Chuck Negron, a founding member of Three Dog Night whose lead vocals powered a string of hits including "Joy to the World," "One" and "An Old Fashioned Love Song" for one of the top rock acts of the late 1960s and early '70s, died Monday. He was 83.

He died of complications from heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease at his home in the Studio City neighborhood of Los Angeles, according to his publicist Zach Farnum.

Negron also sang lead on "Easy To Be Hard" and "The Show Must Go On." The band's other hits include "Black and White," "Mama Told Me (Not to Come)," "Never Been to Spain" and "Shambala."

In December 1972, the band hosted and performed on the inaugural edition of Dick Clark's "New Year's Rockin' Eve."

By 1975, album sales had declined and the band

had its last Billboard Hot 100 hit with "Til the World Ends." Internal strife fractured the group and it fell apart the next year.

In 1981, the group reunited, but Negron was dismissed in late 1985 because of recurring drug issues.

In 1967, Negron joined Danny Hutton and Cory Wells to form Three Dog Night, a vocal trio with roots in R&B, rock 'n' roll, and urban doo wop. They found success two years later with their first million-selling single "One," written by Harry Nilsson.

Negron engaged in heavy drug use during the band's quick ascension to the top of the charts. He spent his fortune on drugs and even ended up on Los Angeles' Skid Row for a time. (AP)

□ □ □

**NEW YORK:** Cher may have wanted to turn back time on her rather chaotic Grammys presenting experience. But the pop legend's obvious good humor made her series of flubs one of the most enjoyably meme-worthy moments of the night.

In what amounted to a Grammys version of John Travolta's Adele Dazeem moment at the Oscars - if much more understandable - Cher, presenting record of the year at Sunday's show, seemed to momentarily award it to the late Luther Vandross. (AP)

□ □ □

**NEW YORK:** But the entertainment giant cautioned that in the second quarter its Experiences division, which includes its theme parks, will likely see modest operating income growth due in part to a decline in visits from international tourists to the US. There's been a drop in foreign visitors to the US attributed to several factors, including President Donald Trump's return to the White House, tariffs, an immigration crackdown and repeated jabs about the US possibly trying to acquire Canada and Greenland. (AP)



Tourists pay a fee to access the Trevi Fountain, in Rome, Monday, Feb. 2. (AP)

## Visitors welcome charge as small price for comfort

### Rome implements Trevi Fountain fee to control tourist flow

ROME, Feb 3, (AP): Tourists hoping to get close to the Trevi Fountain had to pay 2 euros (\$2.35) starting Monday as the city of Rome inaugurated a new fee structure to help raise money and control crowds at the one of the world's most celebrated waterworks.

The first tourists to pass through the new ticket check seemed nonplussed by the tariff, noting it was a small price to pay for quality access to a fountain made famous by Federico Fellini's movie "La Dolce Vita."

"Before, there were problems accessing the fountain. There were a lot of people. Now, it's very easy," said Ilhan Musbah, a tourist from Morocco. "You can take photos, you feel good, you're comfortable, and on top of that 2 euros is not much."

The tourist fee was rolled out in conjunction with a new 5-euro (nearly \$6) tourist ticket fee for some city museums. In both cases, Rome residents are exempt from the fees and the extra revenue will actually expand the number of city-

run museums that are free for registered Roman residents.

It's all part of the Eternal City's efforts to manage tourist flows in a particularly congested part of town, improve the experience and offset the maintenance costs of preserving one of Rome's cultural heritage. Officials estimate it could net the city 6.5 million euros (\$7.6 million) extra a year.

The city decided to impose the Trevi Fountain fee after seeing positive results already from a yearlong experiment to stagger and limit the number of visitors who can reach the front edge of the basin by imposing lines and pathways for entrance and exit.

"I think tourists were shocked by the fact that the city of Rome is only asking for 2 euros for a site of this level," Alessandro Onorato, Rome's assessor of tourism, said Monday. "I believe that if the Trevi Fountain were in New York, they would have charged at least \$100."

The fee follows a similar ticketing system at Rome's Pantheon monument and the more complicated tourist day-

tripper tax that the lagoon city of Venice imposed last year in a bid to ease overtourism and make the city more livable for residents. The Italian fees still pale in comparison to the 45% price hike that French authorities announced for the Louvre Museum for most non-European visitors, where tickets can now run to 32 euros (\$37) from 22 euros.

The Trevi fee, which can be paid in advance online, enables tourists to get close to the fountain during prime-time daylight hours. The view for those admiring the late Baroque masterpiece from the piazza above remains free, as it is up close after hours.

The towering fountain features the Titan god Oceanus flanked by falls cascading down the travertine rocks into a shallow turquoise pool, where Marcello Mastrianni and Anita Ekberg famously took their nighttime dip in "La Dolce Vita." While bathing is prohibited nowadays, legend has it that visitors who toss a coin over their shoulders and make a wish will return to Rome.

## Craft

'The art of 'hat' is a form of worship'

### Iraqi calligrapher finishes colossal Quran manuscript

ISTANBUL, Feb 3, (AP): Iraqi calligrapher Ali Zaman gazes with pride at his masterpiece - a colossal, handwritten manuscript of the Quran that has taken six years of craft and devotion to complete.

The finished work consists of 302 double sided scrolls, each measuring 4 meters (13 feet) in length and 1.5 meters in width. The sheets, resembling heavy parchment, were custom made for Zaman with a blend of traditional materials including eggs, corn starch and alum.

"Anytime I think of this Quran ... it gives me very nice feeling that the mighty God gave me the life to be able to finish this thing and complete it. I feel very proud," the 54-year-old told The Associated Press at a mosque in Istanbul where the manuscript is kept.

Islamic calligraphy is regarded as one of the most valued artistic traditions in the Muslim world. The art form served to preserve and embellish Islam's holy book and was later also used to adorn mosques, palaces and manuscripts.

In Turkey, it flourished during the Ottoman era when the art was supported by the state and calligraphers developed distinctive styles.

Today, Istanbul is considered an important center for the art, known as "hat" in Turkish.

Art expert Umit Coskun says that because of the Islamic tradition's restrictions on depicting figures, calligraphy became a central form of artistic expression. He describes "hat" as a form of worship.

"The art of hat is not just calligraphy, it is seen as a means of worshiping God and coming closer to Him," Coskun says. Zaman was born in Ranya, a town in Sulaymaniyah governorate, in Iraq's northern semi-autonomous Kurdish region.

He moved his family to Istanbul in 2017 to pursue his Quran project and to hone his craft because, he says, the art of calligraphy is more valued in Turkey than in his home country.

Zaman says he developed an interest in Islamic calligraphy around the age of 12 when he was first exposed to it in Iraq.

"The art of calligraphy was very attractive to me ... I felt that I could find my soul in it," he said.

Each sheet of the manuscript was entirely handwritten. Zaman says he labored from dawn to dusk over a period of six years in a small room reserved for him at the Mihrimah Sultan Mosque in Istanbul.

The manuscript is being touted as the world's largest, though it has not received that recognition officially. Ac-



Iraqi calligrapher Ali Zaman works on a scroll of a massive handwritten manuscript of the Quran, Islam's holy book, at the Mihrimah Sultan Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey, Jan. 14. (AP)



Rekar Zaman, son of Iraqi calligrapher Ali Zaman, holds a scroll of a massive handwritten manuscript of the Quran, at the Mihrimah Sultan Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey, Jan. 14. (AP)

cording to Guinness World Records, the largest printed Quran was achieved by the Holy Quran Museum in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, in March 2025. Zaman's son remembers long absences while his father worked on the project. "We only saw him when we would bring him food

or when he came home at night to sleep," said Rekar Zaman. "Thank God, we see more of him now."

The manuscript is stored in stacked scrolls, and covered for protection from dust and moisture, at the mosque where he created it.

His ultimate wish is for it to go to a buyer who can put it on public display.

"I want for this Quran to be in a country - in a museum, or in a place that is special for calligraphy - where it can be appreciated and valued," Zaman said.

**'Arts venue will be closed for repairs'**

### Kennedy Center won't be torn down: Trump

WASHINGTON, Feb 3, (AP): President Donald Trump said Monday that he's "not ripping down" the Kennedy Center but insisted the performing arts venue needs to shut down for about two years for construction and other work without patrons coming and going and getting in the way.

The comments strongly suggested that he intends to gut the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as part of the process.

"I'm not ripping it down," the Republican president told reporters in the Oval Office. "I'll be using the steel. So we're using the structure."

Such a project would mark the Republican president's latest effort to put his stamp on a cultural institution that Congress designated as a living memorial to President Kennedy, a Democrat. It also would be in addition to attempts to leave a permanent mark on Washington through other projects, the most prominent of which is adding a ballroom to the White House.

Shortly after taking office last year, Trump dismissed Kennedy Center board members who had been appointed by Democratic presidents and replaced them with loyalists, who voted to make him chairman. He helped choose the recipients of the 2025 Kennedy Center Honors, a program he avoided during his first term. He later hosted the event, and the board voted late last year to rebrand the Kennedy Center by adding his name to the building and website.

Trump announced Sunday on social media that he intends to temporarily close the performing arts venue on July 4 for about two years "for Construction, Revitalization, and Complete Rebuilding," subject to board approval.

The announcement followed a wave of cancellations by leading performers, musicians and groups since the president took over leadership of the arts institution. Trump did not mention the cancellations in his announcements, or during his comments Monday.

Kennedy Center Arts Workers United, which includes several unions representing the institution's arts workers, said in a statement that it was aware of Trump's announcement but had received no formal notice or briefing about his plans. The group pledged to enforce its members' contractual rights.



A bronze sculpture of President John F. Kennedy is displayed in the John F. Kennedy Memorial Center For The Performing Arts, Monday, Feb. 2, in Washington. (AP)

"Should we receive formal notice of a temporary suspension of Kennedy Center operations that displace our members, we will enforce our contracts and exercise all our rights under the law," the statement said. "We expect continued fair pay, enforceable worker protections, and accountability for our members in the event they cannot work due to an operational pause." Recalling his past career in construction and real estate, Trump said, "you want to sit with something for a little while before you decide on what you want to do." Speaking of the Kennedy Center, he said: "We sat with it. We ran it. It's in very bad shape," asserting that the building is "run down," "dilapidated" and "sort of dangerous."

Roma Daravi, a Kennedy Center spokesperson, said in a social media post that "decades of gross negligence" has led to \$250 million of deferred maintenance needs and that temporarily closing the institution "is the most logical choice to allow for com-

prehensive renovations, efficient project completion, and responsible use of taxpayer dollars."

Deborah Rutter, the Kennedy Center president who was ousted by Trump, declined comment Monday. In the past, she has said allegations from Trump and others about the center's management were false.

A representative for David Rubenstein, the board chairman who was also pushed out by Trump, said Rubenstein was not available Monday to comment.

Trump, citing the complaints of a workman he said has been laying marble at the Kennedy Center, said the closure is needed because "you can't do any work because people are coming in and out."

He pegged the cost at about \$200 million, including the use of "the highest-grade marbles, the highest-grade everything."

"We're fully financed and so we're going to close it and we're going to make it unbelieveable, far better than it ever was, and we'll be able to do it properly," Trump said.

Congress earmarked \$257 million for the Kennedy Center in a tax cut and spending bill that Trump signed into law last summer.

The White House said after the president spoke that some of the maintenance includes work on the building's structural, heating and cooling, plumbing, electrical, fire protection and technical stage systems. Work on the building's exterior, security standards and parking are also included.

Daravi, the Kennedy Center spokesperson, de-

clined comment when asked how the closure would affect the annual Mark Twain Award and Kennedy Center Honors events this year.

Trump said last October, also on social media, that the venue would stay open during construction. But on Monday he said that plan was no longer feasible.

"I was thinking maybe there's a way of doing it simultaneously but there really isn't, and we're going to have something that when it opens it's going to be brand new, beautiful," Trump said.

"The steel will all be checked out because it'll be fully exposed," he said. "It's been up for a long time, but anybody knows it was in very bad shape. Wasn't kept well, before I got there," he said. "So we're going to make it, I think there won't be anything like it in the country."

## Dog Show

### Paws and partners shine

### Westminster couples bond over dogs, and each other

NEW YORK, Feb 3, (AP): Must love dogs. Really, really love dogs.

The Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show spotlights the bond between people and dogs. But reaching the United States' premier canine event also can be about another kind of love.

"For me, it would be very hard to do this without somebody who was as vested in it as I am," said two-time Westminster-winning handler Bill McFadden, who's half of a dogdom power couple. His wife, Taffie McFadden, handled the second-place winner in 2019, and she and Bono the Havanez were among past finalists who appeared Monday evening in a special tribute to Westminster's 150th annual show.

Yes, the McFaddens - who met at a dog show in the late 1970s and married in 1985 - have faced and sometimes beaten each other at various shows. And no, there are no hard feelings.

"I think some of my best memories are watching Taffie win best in show," Bill said Saturday while the couple readied for Westminster. "If one of us takes the big ribbon home, it's awesome. Doesn't matter which one."

After starting with agility and other sports on Saturday, the storied show got down to its traditional business Monday. Dogs ranging from teeny Chihuahuas to towering Irish wolfhounds started competing in the multi-round, breed-by-breed competition that leads to the best in show award Tuesday night.

### Showcase

Some finalists were chosen Monday, starting with Zaida, an Afghan hound who has twice won the World Dog Show, a major international showcase. She'd never gotten this far at Westminster before, and handler Willy Santiago told the crowd he'd been waiting for "this day for all my life."

"She's the dog that makes me feel everything can happen," he said, choking up.

Zaida's rivals will include a Lhasa apso named JJ, who won the massive AKC National Championship show in December.

"He's a show dog all the time," breeder, handler and co-owner Susan Giles of Manakin Sabot, Virginia, said in an interview earlier Monday. A Lhasa owner for 53 years, she said JJ is everything the breed is supposed to be, though he departs from one norm for a breed that's generally reserved with strangers: "He'll talk to everybody."

Also advancing were Graham, an old English sheepdog whose grandfather, Swagger, was runner-up at Westminster in 2013, and Cookie, a Maltese who pulled off an upset in the toy dog semifinals. Cookie bested two-time prior Westminster finalist and former AKC National Champion ship winner Comet the shih tzu.

Graham loves showing. "He comes from a long line of dogs that love it, and we're just happy to be on the end of his lead," handler and longtime breeder Colton Johnson told the audience.

Three more finalists will be chosen Tuesday night.

A number of veteran Westminster handlers are married couples, and no wonder.

The McFaddens, for instance, travel the country to 150 to 200 dog shows a year and share their home with a varying cast of canines that need feeding, exercise, grooming and training.

"I can't even imagine trying to date and explain to somebody, 'Now, I'm going to be gone five days a week, and I'm going to have like 20 dogs with me,'" said Bill McFadden, who largely credits his wife "for any semblance of order that we have" at their home on five acres (two hectares) in Acampo, California.



Wilbur the beagle, a blue triangle beagle canine actor known for his role in 'The Rip,' jumps onto his handler's legs at the 150th Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, Monday, Feb. 2, 2026, in New York. (AP)

## Variety

**BUDAPEST:** A China-Hungary musical joint premiere was held Monday evening in Budapest as the European tour of "The New Four Seasons of Hungary and China Concert" opened at the Liszt Academy of Music.

The concert featured The Hungarian Four Seasons by Hungarian composer Peter Stefan and The Chinese Four Seasons by Chinese composer Wen Ziyang.

Hungarian pianist Gergely Kovacs performed Stefan's piano work, which incorporates more than 50 Hungarian folk melodies and depicts scenes of the changing seasons. Chinese violinist Lu Siqiang led the United Chinese-Hungarian Chamber Orchestra in performing Wen's The Chinese Four Seasons, a composition inspired by China's traditional 24 solar terms.

Although created in different cultural contexts, both works reflect a shared understanding of time and seasonal change. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

**VATICAN CITY:** Michelangelo's "The Last Judgment," the imposing fresco of heaven and hell which dominates the Sistine Chapel, is undergoing its first major restoration in three decades, the Vatican said Monday.

The Sistine Chapel will remain open to visitors during the three-month cleaning, albeit with scaffolding partially obstructing the view of the fresco, the Vatican Museums said in a statement.

The cleaning, the first major restoration since 1994, will remove microparticles buildup on the plaster from so many people visiting each day. The museum called the film a "widespread whitish haze, produced by the deposition of microparticles of foreign substances carried by air movements." (AP)

□ □ □

**LONDON:** A British think tank raised concerns about the health of the artificial intelligence (AI) news environment, calling for the government's engagement in fostering rules, including fair payment and transparent source disclosure of the AI-generated news.

In a report released this week, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) said that AI tools are rapidly becoming the primary gateway through which the public accesses news, fundamentally reshaping the news ecosystem. (Xinhua)

## Findings may improve understanding of infant learning

## 2-month-olds see the world in more complex way than experts thought

NEW YORK, Feb 3, (AP): A new study suggests that babies are able to distinguish between the different objects they see around them at 2 months old, which is earlier than scientists previously thought.

The findings, published Monday in *Nature Neuroscience*, may help doctors and researchers better understand cognitive development in infancy.

"It really tells us that infants are interacting with the world in a lot more complex of a way than we might imagine," said lead author Cliona O'Doherty. "Looking at a 2-month-old, we may not think that they're understanding the world to that level."

The study looked at data from 130 2-month-olds who underwent brain scans while awake. The ba-

bies viewed images from a dozen categories commonly seen in the first year of life, such as trees and animals. When babies looked at an image like a cat, their brains might "fire" a certain way that researchers could record, O'Doherty said. If they looked at an inanimate object, their brains would fire differently.

The technique - known as functional magnetic resonance imaging, or fMRI - allowed scientists to examine visual function more precisely than in the past. Many previous studies relied on how long an infant looked at an object, which can be difficult to assess at younger ages. Some of those past studies suggested that infants as young as 3 to 4 months could distinguish between categories such as animals



In this undated photo, baby Sadie attends her 2-month fMRI scan with her mother Donna at Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience in Dublin, Ireland. (AP)

and furniture.

"What we're showing is that they really already have this ability to group together categories at two months," O'Doherty said. "So it's something much more complex than we would've thought before."

In the new study, many of the babies returned at 9 months, and researchers successfully collected data from 66 of them. In the 9-month-olds, the brain was able to distinguish living things from inanimate objects much more strongly than in the 2-month-olds, O'Doherty said.

Someday, researchers said, scientists may be able to connect such brain imaging to cognitive outcomes later in life.

Liuba Papeo, a neuroscientist at the National Center for Scientific

Research in France, said the number of babies in the study is one thing that makes the work "impressive and unique." Brain imaging with very young infants presents challenges.

"One - perhaps the most obvious - is that the infant needs to (lie) comfortably in the fMRI scanner while awake without moving," she said in an email.

O'Doherty, who did the work at Trinity College Dublin in Ireland, said the key was making the experience as comfortable as possible for the babies. Inside the scanner, they reclined on a bean bag so they were snug.

The images "appear really big above them while they're lying down," she said. "It's like IMAX for babies."

## 'High nanoplastics exposure risks kidney damage'

## Personalized vaccines trial offers hope for kids with aggressive brain cancers

SYDNEY, Feb 3, (Xinhua): Australia has launched a world-first clinical trial using personalized mRNA vaccines to treat children and adolescents with advanced or treatment-resistant brain tumors.

The PaedNEO-VAX study, co-led by Australia's University of Queensland (UQ) and the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI), will enroll patients at eight pediatric hospitals across Australia, offering new hope for families facing the country's deadliest childhood disease, said a UQ statement on Tuesday.

Clinical lead Jordan Hansford from SAHMRI said the trial was available for pediatric patients with relapsed and unresponsive high-grade brain tumors, including gliomas and medulloblastomas.

Phase I will assess safety, followed by Phase II to test effectiveness and impact on survival and quality of life, Hansford said.

The trial's scientific lead Brandon Wainwright from UQ's Frazer Institute said personalized mRNA cancer vaccines had shown promising results in adults with rare and hard-to-treat cancers, including pancreatic cancer and melanoma.

"After identifying unique cancer markers in each child's tumor using genome sequencing and advanced data analysis, we will select tumor-specific vaccine targets," Wainwright said.

Customized vaccines for each child will be manufactured in the Australian state of Queensland by Southern RNA and sent to trial sites for dosing within about 10 weeks of trial enrollment, backed by 2.58 million Australian dollars (1.81 million U.S. dollars) in federal funding, researchers said.



New Australian research warns that high nanoplastics



A full moon is seen shining over NASA's SLS (Space Launch System) and Orion spacecraft, atop the mobile launcher in the early hours of Sunday, Feb. 1, at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. (AP)

'Review data, rerun test'

## NASA plans March launch of moon rocket after fuel leaks

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Feb 3, (AP): NASA said Tuesday it will now target a March launch of its new moon rocket after running into exasperating fuel leaks during a make-or-break test a day earlier.

The space agency said in a statement that the launch delay will "allow teams to review data and conduct a second wet dress rehearsal" before the flight test.

The leaks - reminiscent of the rocket's delayed debut three years ago - sprang just a couple hours into the daylong fueling operation Monday at Kennedy Space Center and called into question how soon astronauts could take off.

NASA said the four astronauts tasked for the flight will be moved out of their nearly two-week quarantine. NASA added they will enter quarantine again "about two weeks" before the next launch window for the trip around the moon.

The agency gave no indication of an official launch target in March, saying teams need to first "fully review data from the test, mitigate each issue, and return to testing." Before Tuesday's postponement, the earliest NASA could have launched commander Reid Wiseman and his crew to the moon was no sooner than Sunday.

Launch controllers Monday began loading the 322-foot (98-meter) rocket with super-cold hydrogen and oxygen at midday. More than 700,000 gallons (2.6 million liters) had to flow into the tanks and remain on board for several hours, mimicking the final stages of an actual countdown.

But excessive hydrogen quickly built up near the bottom of the rocket. Hydrogen loading was halted at least twice as the launch team scrambled to work around the problem using techniques developed during the previous Space Launch System countdown in 2022. That first test flight was plagued by hydrogen leaks before finally soaring without a crew.

NASA also noted in its statement that delays were incurred in close-out operations during the test as well as recurring audio dropout issues for ground crew communications.

The four astronauts assigned to the mission - three Americans and one Canadian - monitored the critical dress rehearsal from nearly 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) away in Houston, home to the Johnson Space Center.

The space agency only has a few days in any given month to launch the rocket, and the extreme cold already had shortened February's launch window by two days. Running behind because of the bitter cold snap, the countdown clocks began ticking Saturday night, giving launch controllers the chance to go through all the motions and deal with any lingering rocket problems. The clocks were set to stop a half-minute before reaching zero, just before engine ignition.

The nearly 10-day mission will send the astronauts past the moon, around the mysterious far side and then straight back to Earth, with the goal of testing the capsule's life support and other vital systems. The crew will not go into lunar orbit or attempt to land.

NASA last sent astronauts to the moon during the 1960s and 1970s Apollo program. The new Artemis program aims for a more sustained lunar presence, with Wiseman's crew setting the stage for future moon landings by other astronauts.

## More cold

## Phil sees shadow, winter continues

PUNXSUTAWNEY, Pa., Feb 3, (AP): Punxsutawney Phil predicted six more weeks of wintry weather Monday, a forecast sure to disappoint many after what's already been a long, cold season across large parts of the United States.

His annual prediction and announcement that he had seen his shadow was translated by his handlers in the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club at Gobbler's Knob in western Pennsylvania.

The news was greeted with a mix of cheers and boos from the tens of thousands who braved temperatures in the single-digits Fahrenheit to await the annual prognostication. The extreme cold kept the crowd bundled up and helped keep people on the main stage dancing.

Usually guests can come up on stage and take pictures of Phil after his prediction, but this year the announcement said it was too cold for that and his handlers were afraid to keep him out too long. Instead, the audience was asked to come to the stage, turn around and "do a selfie."

The club says that when Phil is deemed to have not seen his shadow, that means there will be an early spring. When he does see it, it's six more weeks of winter. Phil tends to predict a longer winter far more often than an early spring.

The annual ritual goes back more than a century, with ties to ancient farming traditions in Europe. Punxsutawney's festivities have grown considerably since the 1993 movie "Groundhog Day," starring Bill Murray.

Phil isn't the only animal being consulted for long-term weather forecasts Monday. There are formal and informal Groundhog Day events in many places in the U.S., Canada and beyond.

Michael Venos, who tracks Groundhog Day predictions at [countdowntogroundhogday.com](http://countdowntogroundhogday.com), said the early results Monday indicated a split verdict.

Agreeing with Punxsutawney Phil that more winter weather is on the way this year have been General Beauregard Lee, a Georgia groundhog, and groundhog mascot Dover Doug in Pennsylvania.

## Experts warn against unregulated supplements

## Do you really need to control your cortisol? Probably not, doctors say

NEW YORK, Feb 3, (AP): Cortisol, what is known as the stress hormone, is the talk of the internet.

Wellness influencers warn about the various symptoms of chronically high cortisol: waking up at 3 a.m., swollen "cortisol face" and accumulating belly fat. And many offer diet and exercise routines that they claim will help.

But do you really need supplements and advice from influencers to control your cortisol? Doctors say it's very unlikely.

Don't be so quick to label this hormone as a villain, they say. And if you suspect something is off, talk to a professional.

Here's what to know.

Cortisol is a hormone and you need it to survive. It comes from the adrenal glands, located above the kidneys, and is one of many hormones at play in times of stress. It can influence inflammation, the immune system, metabolism, blood pressure and many other bodily functions.

Cortisol is incredibly attuned to your body and environment. It fluctuates throughout the day, rising in the morning when you wake up and falling at night before you go to sleep. It also rises when you're sick or in other times of stress, doctors say.

"Our cortisol level is regulated by the minute," said Dr. Roberto Salvatori, a Johns Hopkins University endocrinologist. "It is very sensitive."

It's rare that people have a disorder where cortisol on its own is the cause. If a person's cortisol level is chronically low, doctors would diagnose them with adrenal insufficiency. This includes an autoimmune condition called Addison's disease, in which the immune system attacks the adrenal gland.

People with Cushing's syndrome have cortisol levels that are too high. Among its causes are tumors, which are usually benign, in the adrenal or pituitary glands. It is treated with medication, surgery or both.

The symptoms of either high or low cortisol are wide-ranging and can overlap with signs of other health issues.



A German soccer fan reacts at a fan zone after a quarter final match between Germany and Spain at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Berlin, Germany, July 5, 2024. (AP)

sues.

Adrenal insufficiency can manifest as fatigue, unintentional weight loss, low blood pressure and loss of appetite. Cushing's syndrome comes with weight gain, high blood pressure, brittle bones, weight gain around the face and belly, abnormal hair growth in women, sleep issues and more.

Diagnoses take time, multiple tests and an understanding of a patient's overall health, doctors said. Cortisol can be measured through the patient's saliva, blood or urine.

"There's a lot of nuance to interpreting cortisol and that's what makes me a little bit nervous about patients getting cortisol testing for themselves without having some kind of physician oversight," said Dr. Katie Guttenberg, an endocrinologist at UTHealth Houston.

A one-off cortisol blood test won't provide useful information for most people, she said, and could lead to unnecessary stress and medical follow-ups. For example, women who are on birth control will have falsely high cortisol blood results, because of how the medicine works in the body.

Endocrinologists say there are no proven over-the-counter treatments for high or low cortisol, despite claims that supplements like ashwagandha and magnesium are helpful in "lowering cortisol."

Beyond Cushing's syndrome, chronically high cortisol is a concern, said Dr. James Findling, an endocrinologist with the Medical College of Wisconsin, but more research into treatments is needed.

He worries about people taking unregulated supplements when it's not always clear what's in them.

"They're not innocuous," Findling warned.

Even in patients who have Cushing's syndrome, the medications have to be carefully dosed, Salvatori said, because an overcorrection could drive cortisol levels too low and cause other health issues.

Salvatori notes there is a condition called "pseudo Cushing's syndrome," which is often milder but causes some of the same physical effects despite the patient not having a tumor. It can be caused by alcoholism and other chronic issues.

## Local residents grapple with health issues

## Forever chemicals everywhere as PFAS in carpet mills contaminate drinking water

NEW YORK, Feb 3, (AP): A major investigative collaboration among five newsrooms shows how chemicals used to make carpets stain-resistant have contaminated swaths of the South.

In the mills of northwest Georgia, workers treated carpets with these chemicals starting in the 1970s. Carried in manufacturing wastewater, the chemicals spread into rivers and, ultimately, drinking water.

The odorless and colorless compounds - called PFAS by scientists and known colloquially as forever chemicals because they take decades or more to break down - are now everywhere in the region. That includes in people, where PFAS circulate in blood and lodge in some organs.

As the carpet industry grappled with the risks to human health and the environment, its executives coordinated privately with the local public water utility in ways that would effectively shield their companies from oversight. And carpet makers kept using PFAS for years - even as scientific evidence solidified concerns in the 2000s and 2010s about the threats they can pose, including certain cancers and a compromised immune system.

Major carpet companies say they have complied with all regulations and have stopped using PFAS. They point out that their suppliers falsely assured them older formulations of the chemicals were safe.

The full story of Georgia's power structures prioritizing a prized industry over public health is emerging through interviews and court records from lawsuits against the industry and its chemical suppliers. The reporting shows how the economic engine that sustained northwest Georgia polluted parts of Alabama and South Carolina, too.

Here are takeaways from the investigation's reporting on the toxic legacy of the South's carpet empire. Some linked chemicals may have restrictions.

Carpet making in the US has been



Faye Jackson gets her blood tested at a medical clinic in Calhoun, Ga., on Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2025, as her daughter Marie waits outside for her turn. Their blood tests revealed they have PFAS levels above the safety threshold outlined by national health experts. (AP)

centered in northwest Georgia for decades. Fleets of semi-trucks stamped with logos of the world's largest carpet companies rumble around a region where textiles have employed families for generations. Some of those local residents have health conditions linked to forever chemical exposure.

"Around here, you have to understand the people. That's all we know, right?" said Marie Jackson, a former carpet worker who has PFAS in her blood and nodules growing on her thyroid gland.

"You go in, you know your job, you do your job, you go home."

Reporting by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The Associated Press and FRONTLINE (PBS) showed how a lack of state and federal regulations let carpet companies and their chemical suppliers legally switch among different versions of PFAS. For decades, mills of the two largest carpet companies - Shaw Industries and Mohawk Industries Inc. - sent PFAS-polluted wastewater through sewer pipes for treatment that did not remove the chemicals. Much of the tainted water ended up in the Conasauga River.

Both Shaw and Mohawk said that they stopped using PFAS in 2019 and that they have operated in accordance with permits issued by Dalton Utilities, the local water provider. The utility said it takes direction from federal and state regulators, who have not prohibited PFAS in industrial wastewater.

In South Carolina, detective work identified PFAS contamination - a discovery that led to a lawsuit and then a possible path for companies to reduce future pollution.

The Post and Courier traced a local river watchdog's discovery of forever chemicals to a river by a Shaw Industries factory. Instead of fighting in court, Shaw proposed a solution: Install a special filtration system called granular activated carbon to capture PFAS before it leaves the factory. The watchdog group agreed and withdrew the lawsuit.

## The Conversation

## From ski jumping to speedskating

## Winter sports represent physics in action

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

By Amy Pope  
Clemson University

During the 2026 Winter Olympics, athletes will leap off ramps, slide across ice and spin through the air. These performances will look different to my students who have studied physics through sports. These feats will be something the students have already measured, modeled or felt. As a physicist, I help my students see the games as a place where classroom lessons come to life.

I spend a lot of time thinking about how abstract ideas such as kinematics, forces, energy, momentum and motion are understood in the real world. Recently, I listened to a meeting of the Clemson football team's offense to gain an appreciation for what my student-athletes do. But I came out with an idea for a new introductory physics class.

While sitting in the back row, listening to the coach break down the Tigers' upcoming game, I realized that I could understand every single word said, despite never having played football. Most of the guys were called Sam or Mike, and they continually talked about gaps and boxes. I knew the terminology. I followed the diagrams. I could repeat the language. And yet, I understood absolutely nothing about how that information translated into a strategy for winning the game.

It dawned on me that my confusion is likely similar to how many students experience physics. They can follow the individual pieces, equations, definitions and vocabulary, but they have trouble connecting those pieces to real-world meaning. Physics makes sense as a subject of study, yet it often seems disconnected from everyday life.

I created Clemson's Physics of Sports class to close the gap. The course begins not with abstract problems or idealized systems, but with sports that people already care about. The class then reveals the physics that make those activities possible.

Many introductory, algebra-based physics courses have students study frictionless blocks sliding down imaginary planes. In my course, students analyze the newest Olympic sports.

Ski mountaineering, making its Olympic debut in 2026, requires athletes to climb steep, snow-covered slopes entirely under their own power. My students uncover an elegant physics problem involving friction, the force that resists sliding between surfaces.

To accelerate uphill, the skis must experience a small amount of friction while moving in the forward direction. However, the same ski must provide enough friction in the opposite direction to prevent the skier from sliding back down the slope.

Skiers resolve this contradiction using climbing skins on their skis that are engineered to grip the snow in one direction while allowing smooth sliding in the opposite direction. In class, students examine how the skin material's design helps climbers summit the mountain efficiently.

Students also look at how specialized materials assist in ski jumping.

The skintight suits skiers wear are not for aesthetics; they help control the physics of air. Loose fabric increases drag and can even generate lift, much like a wingsuit worn by skydivers. Tight-fitting clothing minimizes these effects, making competition fairer by leveling the field for all athletes.

When it comes to skating, small changes in physics can set medalists apart from the rest of the field. In class, students investigate how speedskaters can lean dramatically toward the ice without falling by analyzing their centripetal acceleration and the forces acting on their bodies during high-speed turns. Centripetal acceleration is the accelerating force directed toward the center of a turn. It keeps the skater moving in a curved path rather than moving along a straight path.

Figure skating provides another striking example where small changes in body positioning can dramatically affect the athlete's performance. Angular momentum, which describes how much rotational motion an object has, depends on both how fast the object spins and how its mass is distributed. Angular momentum allows skaters to control how many times they spin in midair.

In class, students don't just watch the elite athletes - they model these concepts with their own movements. By sitting on a rotating stool with weights in their outstretched hands, students emulate a figure skater by pulling their arms inward and spinning much faster as their mass moves closer to their axis of rotation.

By studying sports, students begin to see physics not as a collection of formulas but as a framework for understanding how the world works. A basic understanding of physics allows students to critically evaluate everyday claims, ranging from viral sports clips to misleading headlines and exaggerated performance claims.

In highlight reels, for example, athletes often appear to steer left or right after taking off on a jump. Physics students know that can't be the case - once airborne, there is no way to change that path without pushing on something.

Elite athletic performances aren't the only places to see physics in action, of course. The same principles underlie most everyday experiences. With sports as an entry point, students can learn a language that allows them to interpret the physical world around them.

Physics does not live only in textbooks or exams. It is written into every stride, turn and jump, at every level, from recreational activities to Olympic competitions. (AP)

## Milan-Cortina poised for Olympic breakthroughs



Chinese short track speed skater Lin Xiaojun (left) attends a training session ahead of the upcoming Milan-Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics in Beijing, China. (Xinhua)

## New sports, new stars



**BEIJING, Feb 3, (Xinhua):** With snow having settled deep across the Alps, blanketing the mountains of northern Italy in white, preparations for the Milan-Cortina 2026 Olympic Winter Games are entering their final stretch.

Four years after Beijing hosted the 2022 Winter Olympics under unprecedented pandemic conditions, Milan-Cortina 2026 will unfold in a very different global landscape.

Organizers say the challenge now is not simply to host another successful Games, but to define a distinctive Italian approach, rooted in culture, landscape, and innovation.

Milan-Cortina 2026 will mark a Winter Games jointly hosted by a global metropolis and an Alpine mountain town. Roughly 2,900 athletes from around the world are expected to compete for 116 gold medals, spread across Italy's cities, valleys, and peaks.

The opening ceremony will be held on February 6 at Milan's iconic San Siro stadium. Legendary Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli will lend his voice to the spectacle, joining a lineage of global stars who have helped turn Olympic ceremonies into cultural touchstones.

The Games will conclude on February 22, with the closing ceremony to be staged at the Verona Arena. Built nearly 2,000 years ago, the amphitheater has long hosted operas, concerts, and cultural festivals.

Northern Italy itself offers a rare blend of jagged Alpine ridgelines and tranquil lakes, along with medieval towns and modern cities. Skiing and skating are deeply rooted in daily life, forming a local winter culture that spans generations.

Milan-Cortina 2026 will be the most

spread-out Winter Olympics ever, spanning two regions - Lombardy and Veneto - and the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano. From Milan, Italy's cultural and financial centre, to the alpine town of Cortina d'Ampezzo, the Games will be staged across a wide range of settings with deep sporting traditions.

"It will showcase an Italian vision of the Winter Olympics - bold, inspiring and beautifully diverse," said organizing committee president Giovanni Malago. "It will weave together majestic Alpine valleys, dynamic metropolitan centers, and some of the most breathtaking landscapes our country has to offer."

The Games' mascots are Tina and Milo, a sister-and-brother pair of stoats symbolizing the meeting of nature and city life. Their names draw directly from the host cities - Tina from Cortina, Milo from Milan - while six snowflake companions, known as Flo, represent teamwork, resilience, and the pursuit of limits.

Milan-Cortina 2026 will be the first Winter Olympics fully built on a multi-hub hosting model. Competition venues will be divided into four clusters:

the urban hub of Milan, and the mountain venues of Cortina, Valtellina, and Val di Fiemme.

Milan will anchor the Games culturally and ceremonially, serving as the core hub for ice sports, while the mountain clusters will stage snow events. Tradition will also be reimagined. Organizers say that for the first time, the symbolic lighting and extinguishing of the Olympic flame will be doubled, with two Olympic cauldrons symbolizing unity across distance.

On the field of play, ski mountaineering will make its Olympic debut, blending uphill skiing, climbing and high-speed descents into one of the most physically demanding sports on snow.

The Milan-Cortina Games will also feature more women's events than any Winter Olympics in history. Of the 116 events, 50 are women's competitions, and 12 are mixed, meaning women will compete in a record 53.4 percent of events. Female athletes will comprise 47 percent of all participants.

Four women's events will debut, including dual moguls, doubles luge, large hill ski jumping, and sprint ski mountaineering. For the first time, men and women will race identical distances in cross-country skiing.

Italy has long been fertile ground for winter sports champions, having hosted World Cups, world championships, and previous Winter Olympics.

China arrives with momentum of its own. At Beijing 2022, the delegation claimed nine gold medals, its best Winter Olympic performance ever. Now, Chinese athletes are preparing for another push, with strengths concentrated in short track speed skating, freestyle skiing, and snowboarding.

Alongside young talents like Gu Ailing and Su Yiming, veterans also remain central to the narrative. Aerials star Xu Mengtao, 35, is set to compete in her fifth Olympic Games and chase new heights with her 40 World Cup wins and seven crystal globes.

## 'Rozier should receive \$26.6 million salary despite charges'

MIAMI, Feb 3, (AP): An arbitrator has decided Miami Heat guard Terry Rozier should be receiving his \$26.6 million salary for this season despite being on administrative leave while facing federal gambling-related charges, the National Basketball Players Association said.

Rozier's paychecks for this season have been placed into an interest-bearing account. While the collective bargaining agreement between the league and its players allows for the withholding of salary in certain situations, the union argued that Rozier's case did not apply.

"We are pleased with the arbitrator's ruling and remain committed to ensuring Terry's due process rights are protected and that he is afforded the presumption of innocence throughout this process," the NBPA said in a statement first released to ESPN and then to other outlets.

The arbitration ruling essentially means nothing to the Heat, who have

had Rozier's salary on their books this season and counting against their cap.

Rozier was arrested in October as part of a sprawling probe that saw charges brought against more than 30 people, including Portland coach Chauncey Billups.

Federal officials alleged that Rozier conspired with associates to help them win bets based on his statistical performance in a game when he was with the Charlotte Hornets on March 23, 2023 - more than seven months before the lien was prepared and nearly eight months before it was formally filed.

Rozier played sparingly in that game and gamblers who wagered that he would finish "under" certain statistical totals won those bets.

The Heat acquired Rozier from the Hornets on Jan. 23, 2024, in exchange for Kyle Lowry and a 2027 first-round draft pick. The NBA was aware of unusual prop bet activity surrounding Rozier's performance in that Hornets game against the New Orleans Pelicans.

cans; it was flagged by sportsbooks that afternoon.

The league looked into the matter and did not find enough evidence to sanction Rozier and has since noted Rozier cooperated with that probe. The Hornets have not said if they were aware of any federal probes into Rozier's conduct at that time.

Details of the federal investigation were not disclosed to the Heat when the trade was made. It seems unlikely that Miami would have gone forward with the trade had it known there was a potential of charges being filed.

Rozier's lawyers have asked for the charges against him to be thrown out, arguing that the government overreached by turning a private dispute over bettors' use of nonpublic information into a federal case. Rozier has pleaded not guilty to wire fraud conspiracy and money laundering conspiracy charges. He was released on \$3 million bond and is due back in court in March.

Ancelotti keeps Brazil World Cup squad open

## Ancelotti keeps Brazil World Cup squad open

## Argentina must stay humble at World Cup, says former forward Saviola

RIO DE JANEIRO, Feb 3, (Xinhua): Argentina must guard against complacency at this year's FIFA World Cup despite entering the tournament as favorite, former forward Javier Saviola said.

The Albiceleste will be aiming for its fourth consecutive major tournament victory, having won the 2022 World Cup in Qatar and the past two Copa America titles.

"I think that after becoming world champion, yes, Argentina arrives as favorite," Saviola told reporters during an event in Rio de Janeiro.

"But I also think you have to go about things with humility and keep your feet on the ground because we know that World Cups are serious business. We know there are tremendously competitive teams that will do everything possible to win," he said.

Saviola, who represented Argentina at the 2006 World Cup in Germany and earned 39 caps for his country, said Lionel Scaloni's team would benefit from having an established squad led by Lionel Messi, that is used to playing together.

"For the most part, the players who were a part of the last World Cup will be there again this time," the former Barcelona and Real Madrid player said.

"There is a lot of excitement and a lot of expectation that Argentina can once again be the best national team in the world. They have the squad and the coaching staff to achieve it." The World Cup will be played in the United States, Mexico and Canada from June 11 to July 19.

Three-time World Cup champion Argentina has been drawn in Group J along-side Algeria, Austria and Jordan.

Brazil manager Carlo Ancelotti said Monday he is close to finalizing his squad



Inter Miami's Lionel Messi acknowledges fans before the start of an international friendly soccer match against Colombia's Atletico Nacional in Medellin, Colombia. (AP)

## British soccer union wants fewer headers for pros, and none for kids

## Industrial / Commercial Plot for Rent

Strategic location in East Ahmadi - on 3 streets. For rent a service/industrial/craft plot in an excellent location in East Ahmadi with an area of 1250 m2, On three streets.

Wide frontage of 50 meters.

Large yard from three sides ideal for large car parking-lot and other utilization.

Ideal for the following uses :

• Main showroom.

• Service center or commercial complex.

• Commercial market or administrative office.

• Factory or craft facility

• Super market

For inquiries : 50023226

The guidelines from the Professional Footballers' Association, which represents current and former players in the Premier League, the FA Women's Super League and the English Football Leagues, recommend no more than 10 headers per week - including practice - for professionals. Children under 12 shouldn't head the ball at all, the PFA said, part of a chronic traumatic encephalopathy prevention protocol designed to reduce head impacts across a player's lifetime.

"CTE is preventable. Period," Dr. Adam White, Director of Brain Health at the PFA, said on Monday at the first-ever Global CTE Summit, which was held in San Francisco while the NFL descended on the Bay Area for Sunday's Super Bowl.

"It is the principles of less heading, less force, less often and later in life that matter," White told The Associated Press. "These could apply to any sport and are the best hope we have of stopping current and future players from the same fate as former generations."

The degenerative brain disease now known as CTE was studied by boxers more than a century ago as punch drunk syndrome and first diagnosed in American football players in 2005. It has since become a concern in ice hockey, soccer and other contact sports and among combat veterans and other



Brann's Fredrik Pallesen Knudsen, left, goes for the header with Sturm's Maurice Malone during the Europa League opening phase soccer match between Sturm Graz and SK Brann in Graz, Austria. (AP)

ers who sustain repeated blows to the head.

A 2017 study found CTE in 110 of 111 brains donated by former NFL players. The disease can only be identified post-

humously through an examination of the brain.

The NFL, college football and many other sports have instituted protocols that guide teams and athletes on returning to play after sustaining a possible concussion.

But the British soccer protocol is the first comprehensive plan to combat CTE by addressing the less dramatic, sub-concussive blows that can be common in practice, according to Chris Nowinski, the founder of the Concussion and CTE Foundation.

Among the more recent concerns are the routine head hits sustained by football linemen, and those from soccer players heading the ball. Research funded by the union and the Football Association found that Scottish pros have a risk of dementia that is 3.5 times greater than the general population; studies of brains from British soccer players found the majority had CTE, including Jeff Astle, Gordon McQueen and Chris Nicholl.

The protocol also includes annual education, support for research and care for ex-players who suspect they are living with CTE. It follows the publication of a CTE prevention framework published in 2023 by researchers assembled by the Concussion and CTE Foundation and Boston University's CTE Center.

Company concludes sponsorship of 22nd Asian Men's Handball Championship

## Zain Kuwait reaffirms role as key partner of the local sports scene

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Zain Kuwait successfully concluded its sponsorship of the 22nd Asian Men's Handball Championship (Road to Germany), hosted by Kuwait at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Sports Complex, with the participation of 15 national teams, as part of the qualifiers for the 2027 World Championship in Germany. Through this initiative, Zain reaffirmed its role as a key partner in supporting the local sports scene.

Zain took part in the closing ceremony, attended by former Minister of Information and Culture and former Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al Mutairi, Asian Handball Federation President Bader Al-Theyab, and Kuwait Handball Federation President Shabeeb Al-Hajri.

During the ceremony, Zain Kuwait's Community Partnerships Team Leader Faisal Al-Duwaihees honored Al-Azraq goalkeeper Hasan Safar with the tournament's Best Player award on the sidelines of the event.

Zain congratulated Kuwait's national handball team on its standout performance throughout the tournament, after Al-Azraq delivered an impressive run that culminated in securing third place and clinching qualification to the 2027 World Championship in Germany, reflecting the strong technical capabilities and wide fan base of Kuwaiti handball.

The company also congratulated Bahrain's national team on winning the title for the first time in its history.

This comes as an extension of Zain's approach to supporting major regional tournaments hosted by Kuwait, showcasing the country's organizational excellence and sporting presence at both the local and continental levels, within an ongoing strategic partnership with the Kuwait Handball Federation.

Zain expressed its thanks and appreciation to the Federation for its significant efforts in delivering this outstanding edition of the Asian championship.

Zain's support for the tournament aligns with its vision to empower young athletes, spotlight national talents, and reinforce the values of fair competition within a healthy sporting environment that positively impacts society.

It also contributes to strengthening Kuwait's position as a dynamic regional sports hub through hosting high-caliber continental tournaments.



Al-Mutairi, Al-Theyab, and Al-Hajri honor Bahrain's national team with the championship title.



Al-Duwaihees honors Al-Azraq star Hasan Safar with the tournament's Best Player award.



Zain is proud to have been part of this continental sporting event hosted on Kuwaiti soil.

## Charlotte roars back from 22-pt hole to sink Pelicans

Short-handed Rockets edge Pacers



Houston Rockets center Alperen Sengun (28) drives past Indiana Pacers forward Benedict Mathurin (00) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Indianapolis. (AP)

CHARLOTTE, N.C., Feb 3, (AP): LaMelo Ball overcame an early head-to-head collision with coach Charles Lee to score 24 points, and the surging Charlotte Hornets fought back from a 22-point deficit to beat the New Orleans Pelicans 102-95 on Monday for their seventh straight win.

Kon Knueppel added 17 points, hitting four 3s, and Brandon Miller and Grant Williams each scored 16 as Charlotte pulled within a half-game of the Atlanta Hawks for the 10th spot in the Eastern Conference.

The Hornets overcame 17 turnovers while matching their longest winning streak since March 2016.

Trey Murphy III scored 27 points to lead the Pelicans, who have lost six of their last nine. Zion Williamson finished with 14 points and 11 rebounds, while Derik Queen had 16 points.

### Rockets 118, Pacers 114

In Indianapolis, Alperen Sengun matched his season high with 39 points, and Jabari Smith Jr. added 19 to help short-handed Houston

overcome the absence of All-Star forward Kevin Durant to beat Indiana.

Durant sat out, coach Ime Udoka said, after spraining his left ankle when he stepped on a fan's foot. The Rockets already were missing center Steven Adams, who is expected to miss the rest of this season following surgery on his injured left ankle, so Sengun did the heavy lifting.

He made 13 of 25 from the field and 13 of 18 from the free-throw line including 8 of 12 during the fourth quarter. Houston won its

third straight, got its fifth victory in six games and captured its third straight on the road.

All-Star forward Pascal Siakam

finished with 27 points and Benedict Mathurin added 25 to lead the Pacers, who charged back from a 12-point deficit in the third quarter to take the lead. But they didn't have quite enough to extend their winning streak to a season-best three straight.

### Grizzlies 137, Timberwolves 128

In Memphis, Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 30 points, Ty Jerome added 19 and Memphis built a 20-point

lead in the second half and held on for a victory over Minnesota.

Memphis maintained a double-digit advantage through much of the fourth quarter. Minnesota, behind Donte DiVincenzo and Anthony Edwards, seemed poised to overtake Memphis, but the Grizzlies never let the Timberwolves within nine points and snapped a six-game losing streak.

Jaylen Williams scored 18 points for Memphis, while Cam Spencer and Vince Williams Jr. added 16 points apiece.

Edwards led Minnesota with 39 points and seven rebounds. Jaden McDaniels scored 29 points and DiVincenzo finished with 21, including 13 in the fourth. Minnesota had its four-game win streak halted.

### 76ers 128, Clippers 113

In Inglewood, Tyrese Maxey scored 29 points, including seven 3-pointers, Dominik Barlow added 26 points and 16 rebounds, and Philadelphia beat Los Angeles for their fourth consecutive victory.

The game featured two big names who weren't selected as All-Star reserves: Joel Embiid of the Sixers and Kawhi Leonard of the Clippers.

Embiid had 24 points as he continues to gain full strength after a right ankle injury. The Sixers improved to 11-10 without Paul George, who is serving a 25-game suspension for violating the NBA's anti-drug program.

## Sudan's Amer completes Kazma's foreign line-up

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Kazma Club has completed its foreign-player roster after signing Sudanese professional Amer Abdullah on a six-month deal.

Amer becomes Kazma's fifth foreign player, joining Algerians Idriss Chaabi and Moaz Haddad, Yemeni Nasser Mohamad, and Cameroonian Didier Lamkel.

The club made significant changes to its foreign contingent during the winter transfer window, which closed last Saturday, parting ways with four players: Jordanians Anas Al-Awadat, Ali Azayza, and Youssef Abu Jazar, along with Beninese striker Samson Akinyoola.

Kazma explained that Al-Awadat returned to Al-Wehdat of Jordan due to personal circumstances that required his presence in his home country, while Azayza was loaned to Al-Shabab of Saudi Arabia. Both players, whose contracts run until June 2028, are set to return to Kazma at the end of the current season.



Amer Abdullah celebrates after scoring a goal.

Meanwhile, the club terminated Abu Jazar's contract after head coach Dragan Tadic was unconvinced by his level, while Akinyoola's contract was canceled after he suffered an injury expected to keep him sidelined for nearly two months.

Amer, born in 1999 to an Australian father, previously played for Australian clubs Avondale and Green Gully. He also impressed at the Arab Cup finals held in Qatar last December, scoring against Senegal in the group stage and earning praise from fans.

Benzema joins Al-Hilal to present a threat to Ronaldo's title hopes

RIYADH, Feb 3, (AP): France icon Karim Benzema swapped one Saudi club for another on Monday when joining Al-Hilal from rival Al-Ittihad - a move that could be bad news for Cristiano Ronaldo.

The former Ballon d'Or winner has joined Saudi Pro League leader Al-Hilal, which is one point ahead of Ronaldo's Al-Nassr.

Ronaldo is still waiting for his first league title since moving to Saudi Arabia in 2022 and has seen his main rival strengthen with the addition of five-time Champions League winner Benzema.

The former Real Madrid striker, a teammate of Ronaldo's at the Spanish giant, led Al-Ittihad to the title last year, as well as the King's Cup.

Al-Hilal is Saudi Arabia's most successful team with 21 league titles and four Asian Championships.

Last year it stunned Manchester City at the Club World Cup 4-3 and knocked out Pep Guardiola's team.

Coached by two-time Champions League finalist Simone Inzaghi, it represents a major threat to Ronaldo's hopes of being crowned league champion after sparking a wave of top soccer players - including Benzema - to move to the Saudi league.

Benzema's deal comes at a time when there are reports Ronaldo is unhappy about a lack of transfer activity from Al-Nassr.

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund is the majority owner of Al-Hilal, Al-Ittihad and Al-Nassr.

Al-Hilal is accustomed to making



In this file photo, Al-Ittihad's Karim Benzema celebrates at the end of the Soccer Club World Cup first round soccer match between Al-Ittihad and Auckland City FC at King Abdullah Sports City stadium in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

spectacular signings, having lured Neymar from Paris Saint-Germain in 2023. It previously tried to sign Kylian Mbappe for a world record \$322 million and last year moved for Manchester United captain Bruno Fernandes.

Ronaldo joined Al-Nassr after leaving Man United as a free agent in 2022. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner has become the face of soccer in Saudi Arabia but his only trophy has been the Arab Champions Cup.

He was absent from Al-Nassr's Saudi Pro League match against Al-Riyadh on Monday amid reports he is unhappy.

Aghli Nayef captures Al-Nawasi Cup



Al-Roumi and Al-Kandari present the 'Marbat Al-Nawasi' Cup to the winner.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The horse "Aghli Nayef", owned by Al-Fahran Stables, claimed the Al-Nawasi Stable Cup, sponsored by Allam Ali Al-Kandari, for purebred Arabian horses of Egyptian bloodlines, after winning the 1,600-meter race in a time of 2:02.10. The victory came in the seventh race of the 14th meeting at the Hunting and Equestrian Club.

In other results, "Mahmas", owned by Al-Owaimer, won the Al-Anbaa Newspaper Cup in the fifth race, while "Batal Dubai", owned by Al-Shouri, captured the Hunting and Equestrian Club Cup in the sixth race.

At the conclusion of the event, Hamad

### Best of the Rest

**Tigre edges Racing with late goals:** Ignacio Russo and Gonzalo Martinez struck late as Tigre continued its impressive start to the season with a 3-1 home win over Racing in Argentina's Apertura tournament.

Tigre's David Romero opened the scoring just before halftime when he dribbled half the length of the pitch before rounding goalkeeper Facundo Cambeses and rolling the ball into an empty net.

The visitors equalized in the 80th minute through Gabriel Rojas, whose first-time effort from 20 yards flew in off the gloves of Felipe Zenobio.

Russo restored his side's lead against the run of play five minutes later with a long-range shot on the counterattack. (Xinhua)

# ARAB TIMES

Kuwait's No.1 English Newspaper

## For Subscriptions and Complaints

Please Call

**51508991  
51526559**





Athletes from France walk inside the Olympic Village ahead of the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan, Italy. (AP)

- See Page 14

# Sports

## Kuwait Club edges Muharraq to keep semifinals hopes alive

Two sides meet again on February 9 in Manama

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3:** Kuwait Club claimed a 107-101 victory over Bahrain's Muharraq in the first leg of the West Asia Super League (WASL) Gulf zone semifinals at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex.

The two sides will meet again on February 9 in Manama, Bahrain. Kuwait Club needs a win to secure a semifinal spot, while a Muharraq victory would push the contest to a deciding match on February 16 in Kuwait. The winner will face Saudi Arabia's Al-Ittihad in

the semifinals. Meanwhile, Qatar's Al-Arabi will take on UAE's Shabab Al-Ahli, with the victor set to meet Al-Ula from Saudi Arabia.

Elsewhere, Al-Qadsia faces a straightforward clash against Al-Sahel tonight at 7:30 pm in Round 13 of the domestic league, while Al-Arabi and Al-Nasr will meet at 5:00 pm. Both games will take place at the Federation Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex.

Al-Qadsia, second in the standings with 22 points, is the favorite against seventh-placed Al-Sahel, who has 14 points. In contrast, the encounter between sixth-placed Al-Nasr (15 points) and eighth-placed Al-Arabi (13 points) promises a closer contest.

The league follows a three-round format, with the top four teams advancing to the semifinals, played as best-of-three series.



Kuwait Club player soars over an opponent to score.

## West Asia Volleyball Club Championship kicks off in Kuwait

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3:** The 4th West Asia Club Volleyball Championship begins today at the Volleyball Federation Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex, hosted by Kuwait Club and running until February 14. The tournament features 11 teams divided into three groups:

Group A: Qatar's Al-Rayyan (defending champion), Oman's Majis, Iraq's Gaz Al-Janoub

Group B: Host Kuwait Club, Lebanon's Shabab Al-Batroun, Qatar's Al-Wakrah, Bahrain's Al-Ahli

Group C: Kuwait's Burqan, Saudi Arabia's Al-Ittihad, Oman's Al-Seeb, Bahrain's Dar Klab

The opening day features three matches: Al-Rayyan vs. Majis at 2:00 pm, Al-Ahli vs. Al-Wakrah at 4:00 pm, and Kuwait Club facing Shabab Al-



A file photo of Kuwait Club and Burqan players fighting for the ball.

Batroun at 6:00 pm.

Kuwait Club prepared with a training camp in Turkey, playing four friendly matches. The team will rely on professional players, including Estonian Vino, Canadian Hough, and Kazma's Brazilian Costa, while welcoming back Abdulaziz Al-Anzi from Al-Nasr.

The preliminary round follows a single round-robin format, with the top two teams from each group plus the two best third-placed teams advancing to the knockout quarterfinals. Semifinals and finals are also played in knockout format, with the champion earning direct qualification to the Asian Club Championship as West Asia's representative.

In the previous edition (2025, Bahrain), Al-Rayyan won the title, with Al-Ahli (Qatar) second, Al-Ahli (Bahrain) third, Al-Salam (Oman) fourth, Masaifi Al-Shamal (Iraq) fifth, and Al-Qadsia (Kuwait) sixth.

## Arab Squash Federation renews confidence in Waleed Al-Sumai'i



Highlights from the Arab Squash General Assembly.

**MANAMA, Feb 3:** The Arab Squash Federation's General Assembly has renewed its trust in Kuwaiti Federation President Waleed Al-Sumai'i, endorsing him as President of the Arab Federation for the 2026-2030 term. The decision was made during a meeting held on the sidelines of the 31st Arab Championship in Bahrain.

The newly formed executive council includes Dr. Ali Jihad (Iraq) and Anas Al-Mutabqani (Saudi Arabia) as Vice Presidents, along with members Yusuf Al-Abd (Egypt), Uday Draghmeh (Palestine), Dhafer Kabara (Lebanon), Shahad Al-Najada (Jordan), and Rasha Feis (Libya).

The meeting was attended by representatives from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Bahrain, and Qatar. The financial and administrative reports were approved in the presence of Secretary-General Fayed Al-Mutairi and Treasurer Waleed Al-Mazidi.

Al-Sumai'i expressed gratitude to Bahrain for hosting the championship and meeting, and thanked the assembly members for their support. He also wished success to all member countries in upcoming championships across all age categories, which will be organized according to a well-planned program.

## Kuwait gears up for Division IV Ice Hockey World Cup



Winter sports officials hold press conference.

cal support, PR, and media to ensure a successful tournament.

The ice arena and its facilities are being prepared to meet international

standards. Organizers are also finalizing arrangements for accommodation, transportation, opening and closing ceremonies, and special fan activities during the event.

Kuwait's national team will undergo a training camp in Sweden before the tournament, followed by a domestic camp. Al-Ajmi expressed confidence in the team's potential to achieve strong results and contend for the championship.

He extended gratitude to the Public Authority for Sport, government entities, and national sponsors for their support, which will help showcase the tournament in a distinguished

## Paris Saint-Germain quiet during the window

## City goes big again as Premier League clubs dominate transfer window

**LONDON, Feb 3, (AP):** Manchester City went big again in the January transfer window and will hope it reaps more rewards than last year.

City was the biggest spender as Premier League clubs dominated the midseason window - splashing out a reported \$115 million on Antoine Semenyo and Marc Guehi to boost its four-pronged trophy pursuit. Last year City spent more than \$200 million in a bid to salvage its campaign but still ended up emptyhanded for the first time in eight years.

City's outlay in this window was less but still represented a big chunk of the spending from England's top flight, which was around \$500 million, according to stats website Transfermarkt.

Premier League clubs outspent their rivals in Spain, Italy, France and Germany.

Crystal Palace signed Wolverhampton striker Jorgen Strand Larsen on deadline day for a club record fee, reportedly up to \$65 million.

Last year's Champions League winner Paris Saint-Germain was quiet during the window but looked to the future with the signing of 18-year-old midfielder Duro Fernández from Barcelona. The most eye-catching signing in France was Lyon's loan deal for Brazil forward Endrick from Real Madrid, who scored a hat trick in only his second game for his new club.

One of the biggest moves of deadline day came in Saudi Arabia, where Karim Benzema swapped Al-Ittihad for league leader Al-Hilal.

Premier League champion Liverpool is already planning for next sea-

son after its title defense unraveled early. Liverpool secured a deal for French defender Jeremy Jacquet, who will join from Rennes in the summer.

Palace was the second biggest spender in England with a reported outlay of around \$105 million, following the signing of Strand Larsen.

The London club's defense of the FA Cup came to an end in humiliating fashion at the hands of non-league Macclesfield last month.

Palace also had to cope with the departure of captain Guehi to Man City, while manager Oliver Glazner announced he is leaving at the end of the season.

Striker Jean-Philippe Mateta was also expected to leave in this window, but reports on Monday said a move to AC Milan fell through.

The signing of Strand Larsen followed a deal for Brennan Johnson and the loan of Evann Gueudan.

"I'm coming in to hopefully help win some games and bring the team back to where it was at the start of the season, because obviously that was amazing," Strand Larsen said.

Wolves made late moves for England midfielder Angel Gomes on loan and striker Adam Armstrong. Sunderland signed Ecuador winger Nilson Angulo, Chelsea winger Tyrone George went to Everton on loan and Luca Netz joined Nottingham Forest.

Man City midfielder Kalvin Phillips went on loan to second-tier Sheffield United on Monday.

Atletico Madrid signed Nigeria forward Ademola Lookman from Atalanta on deadline day and Mex-

ico midfielder Obed Vargas from Se- at Sounders.

Atletico previously sold midfielder Conor Gallagher to Tottenham and let Giacomo Raspadori go to Atalanta.

The London club's defense of the FA Cup came to an end in humili-

ating fashion at the hands of non-

league Macclesfield last month.

Palace also had to cope with the departure of captain Guehi to Man City, while manager Oliver Glazner announced he is leaving at the end of the season.

Striker Jean-Philippe Mateta was also expected to leave in this window, but reports on Monday said a move to AC Milan fell through.

The signing of Strand Larsen followed a deal for Brennan Johnson and the loan of Evann Gueudan.

"I'm coming in to hopefully help

win some games and bring the team

back to where it was at the start of

the season, because obviously that

was amazing," Strand Larsen said.

Wolves made late moves for Eng-

land midfielder Angel Gomes on loan

and striker Adam Armstrong. Sun-

derland signed Ecuador winger Nil-

son Angulo, Chelsea winger Tyrone

George went to Everton on loan and

Luca Netz joined Nottingham Forest.

Man City midfielder Kalvin Phillips

went on loan to second-tier Sheff-

ield United on Monday.

Atletico Madrid signed Nigeria

forward Ademola Lookman from

Atalanta on deadline day and Mex-

ico midfielder Obed Vargas from Se-

at Sounders.

Atletico previously sold mid-

fielder Conor Gallagher to Totten-

ham and let Giacomo Raspadori go

to Atalanta on deadline day and Mex-

ico midfielder Obed Vargas from Se-

at Sounders.

Atletico previously sold mid-

fielder Conor Gallagher to Totten-

ham and let Giacomo Raspadori go

to Atalanta on deadline day and Mex-

ico midfielder Obed Vargas from Se-

at Sounders.

Atletico previously sold mid-

fielder Conor Gallagher to Totten-

ham and let Giacomo Raspadori go

to Atalanta on deadline day and Mex-

ico midfielder Obed Vargas from Se-

at Sounders.

Atletico previously sold mid-

fielder Conor Gallagher to Totten-

ham and let Giacomo Raspadori go

to Atalanta on deadline day and Mex-

ico midfielder Obed Vargas from Se-

at Sounders.

Atletico previously sold mid-

fielder Conor Gallagher to Totten-

ham and let Giacomo Raspadori go

to Atalanta on deadline day and Mex-

ico midfielder Obed Vargas from Se-

at Sounders.

Atletico previously sold mid-

fielder Conor Gallagher to Totten-

ham and let Giacomo Raspadori go

to Atalanta on deadline day and Mex-

ico midfielder Obed Vargas from Se-

at Sounders.

Atletico previously sold mid-

fielder Conor Gallagher to Totten-

ham and let Giacomo Raspadori go

to Atalanta on deadline day and Mex-

ico midfielder Obed Vargas from Se-

at Sounders.

Atletico previously sold mid-

fielder Conor Gallagher to Totten-

ham and let Giacomo Raspadori go

to Atalanta on deadline day and Mex-

ico midfielder Obed Vargas from Se-

at Sounders.

Atletico previously sold mid-

fielder Conor Gallagher to Totten-

ham and let Giacomo Raspadori go